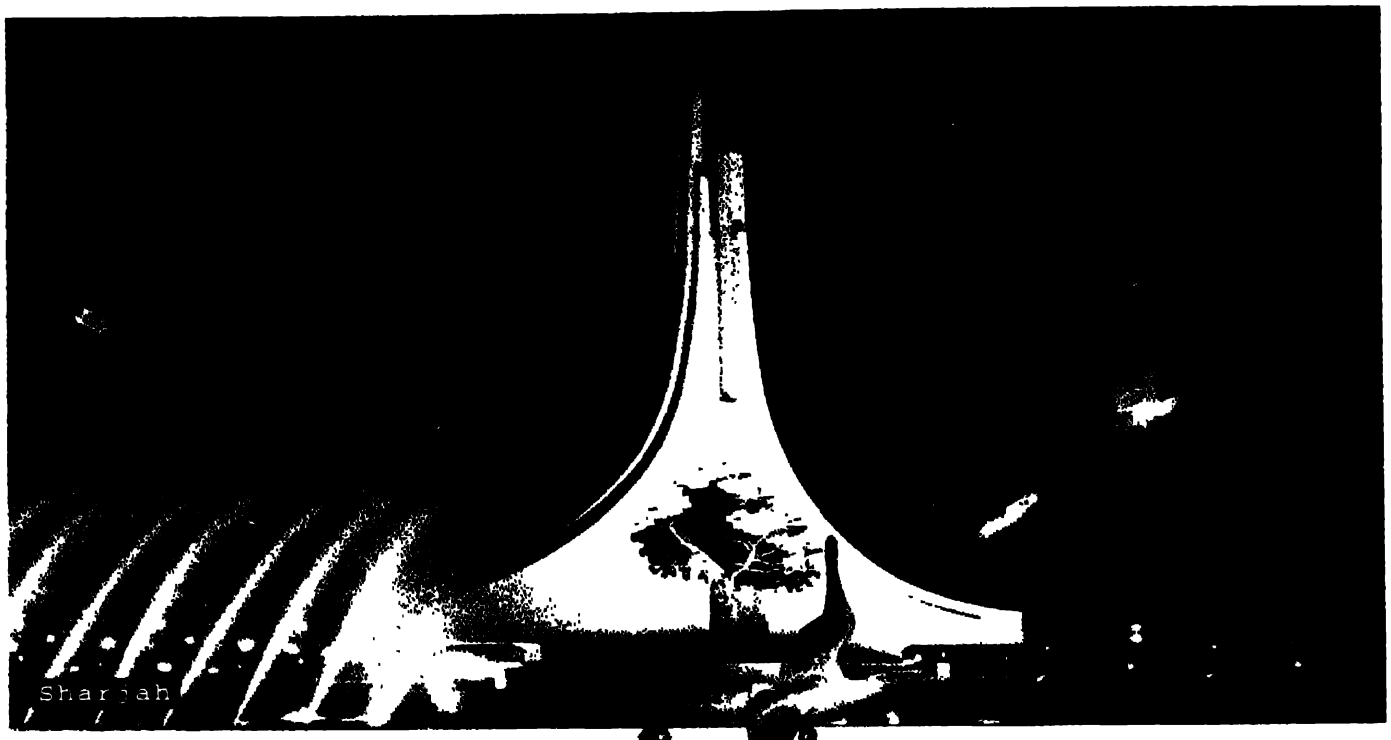

Also winging its way to Muscat, Kuwait, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, Male, Kathmandu and Dhaka.

इंडियन एयरलाइन्स
Indian Airlines
WELCOME ABROAD

7 JANUARY 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

True Blue?

■ Jagmohan Mundhra knows that sex sells, whether in Hollywood or India, and so he has taken the shortest route to success by making semi pornographic films ('Namaste Hollywood', November 12).

He has to his credit a long list of sex-filled productions and note the titles: *Night Eyes, Tropical Heat, Wild Cactus, LA Goddess, The Other Woman, Illicit Behaviour*.... etc, etc.

When in the US, friends will advise you to see at least one 'Jag' movie as the Indian versions are heavily censored.

But get Mundhra to admit he makes porn films, he will vehemently defend his art saying they are celebrations of love.

Tarak Banerjee,
Calcutta

Mira Nair: From *Salaam Bombay* to hello Hollywood

■ It is nice to learn that Asians, Indians in particular, are making a niche for themselves in a fiercely competitive sphere like film-production in Hollywood

In India films are made on small budgets. Some blockbusters may have a staggering budget of Rs 10 crore. But compare this with an average Hollywood production which requires $30-35 million. With such a small budget we should not expect Hollywood extravaganza in Indian films.

Even with this limited resource the Indian film industry has been able to make films which have been technically brilliant.

Dipankar Koley,
Jhikra (Howrah)

■ It needs more than talent to be successful in Hollywood. That in the face of stiff competition from established directors, Indians like Mira Nair have found a foothold there speaks volumes of her calibre.

But as Indians, filmmakers like her should first find recognition at home before seeking fame abroad.

Satyajit Ray, with his wealth of talent, could have easily shifted to Hollywood but he stayed in India and worked in Indian conditions (dilapidated studios, powercuts, poor facilities) and yet went on to win laurels at every international festival.

Debashish Sen,
Calcutta

■ The Magazine gives extensive coverage to anything Hollywood, neglecting the domestic scene.

Mira Nair, Radha Bharadwaj and others are indeed talented directors who could make a name for themselves in an alien territory. But we have talented women back home, too Aparna Sen and Debashree Roy, for instance. They did a marvellous job in Rituparno Ghosh's *Unishe April*.

Shouldn't the Magazine have done a story on them?

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ The Magazine keeps forgetting that it caters to adults as well as children and that it should not publish anything which shocks young and impressionable minds

Shuhcen Jahan,
Calcutta

INSIDE

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THERE IS a definite correlation between foods, moods, numbers and seasons. Unravelling the numeral significance of Indian cuisine

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HERE ARE some tips on how to make your honeymoon most enjoyable and memorable

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COVER STORY

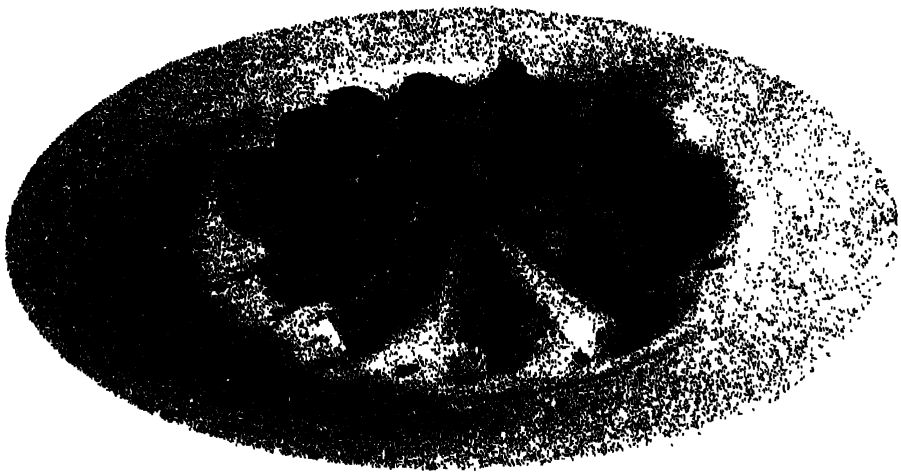
Food For THOUGHT

***Jiggs Kalra** and **Pushpesh Pant** educate us about the numerology of gastronomy*

THE INDIAN CIVILISATION has always had a fascination for numbers. Which is not surprising considering that we were the people who unravelled the mystery of mathematics. Be it philosophy, polity or culture, there is no dearth of numeral references.

The Pantheon of Hindu Gods totals *taentis koti* or 330 million

A human being is destined to go through *chaurasi lakh yoni* or an 8.4 million cycle of births -- from the lowest insect to the highest man, where he can exert for *moksha* or final deliverance



In the context of food, there are three *gunas*, *saatvik*, *rajasik*, *tamasik*, which Sri Krishna refers to in the *Gita*. The word *guna* means inherent properties of different foods which can enhance or reduce the natural inclinations, talents, temperaments and potentials of individuals

The *Upanishad* says, *Na cha vitten tarpaniyo Manushya*, which means that all the riches of this world cannot guarantee this deliverance. To ensure the salvation of the soul, there has to be a *pind daan*. *Pind* is a lump-shaped share. *Daan* is to give away. Together the two words imply an offering of food.

Chaurasi or 84 is the number of *asana* or coital postures referred to in Vatsyana's *Kama Sutra*, the classic aphoristic writing on sex in ancient India. Some of these postures of passion have been frozen in perpetuity on the sculpted friezes at the Khajuraho temples.

Chausath or 64 are the *kala* or useful arts, in which a bride-to-be must be well versed. Among these, the art of cooking is pre-eminent.

Chhappan or 56 are the *bhog* or offerings of food to be made to the Gods. The number, perhaps, has been arrived at by multiplying the number of days — SEVEN — with that of EIGHT *prahar*.

Then comes *shodash* or sweet 16, the magical year the maiden is said to bloom (*shodashi*) and the age when a boy attains maturity and expects to be treated like a friend by his father. To quote the original verse in Sanskrit: *Prapte shodashe varshe, putra mitra samacharet*. Sixteen is the number of *samskara*, the Hindu rites of passage through life. Among the *samskara*, there are many rites which emphasise the culinary For example, *anna prashan* is the occasion which celebrates the child's weaning from milk and his introduction to foodgrains. *Namkaran* (the christening ceremony) *upanayan* (the thread ceremony), *vivaha* (the marriage ceremony), *shradh* (the funeral ceremony) and many more have customary feasts prescribed in great detail. Sixteen also, are the prescribed *shringar* or beauty treatments from top to toe. It is not just mind-boggling figures that have received attention, the count from one to ten has been enriched with a great wealth of mythological and cultural information.

The key word in the context of food, and all other aesthetics, is *rasa*, which can crudely be translated as 'juicy essence' or 'sap'. However, it would be more apt to adopt the implied meaning of savouring or deeply enjoying a sensuous experience. It is the same word which is used in the course of appreciation of music, dance, literature, sex or food

ONE: The *Veda* says, *Eko sud kavayah bahudha vadanti*. Which means ONE is the Supreme Being whom the poets describe in different manifestations. The foundations of the *Vedanta* philosophy propunded by Adi Shankara rest on *advait* or monoism. *Anna* stands in solitary splendour with Brahman. In fact, *Anna* is synonymous with Brahman (*anna vai Brahma*) because it sustains life

The Grand Mughal Akbar had bestowed upon his most favourite nine nobles the title of *Navratna*. Quite a few of these worthies were connoisseurs of food. Todar Mal and Birbal are remembered today as patrons of Delhi Kayastha cuisine and the delicacy *Do Piaza* immortalises another, *Abdurrahim Khankhaana*

TWO. *Dwaita* is dualism and makes a distinction between the *brahman* (Universal Soul) and the *atman* (Individual Self) The dialectical relationship between *purush-prakriti* which, on a cosmic plane, is interpreted as an interplay of matter and energy and man and nature. On a mundane level, this dualism recognises the essential difference between man and woman

In the domain of food, there are several inseparable pairs — *dal-roti* (lentil and unleavened bread), dal-bhaat (lentil and rice), *poori-bhaji* (fried bread and tempered vegetables), *dahi-bhalla* (yoghurt and lentil dumplings), *doodh jaleb* (milk and syrup-soaked sweet 'pretzels' made with *khoya* or flour) *mewa-mishri* (dried fruits/nuts with candied sugar), *thanda-garam* (cold and hot), *meetha namkeen* (sweet and salty), *kucha khana-pukka khana* (food eaten informally and food eaten in a ritually prescribed manner).

THREE. *Trimurti* is the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh — the Lord in his three manifestations of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. The rock-cut sculptures at Elephanta present a majestic image of *Trimurti* The realms, too, are three: *aakash, prithvi, pataal* The confluence of three rivers — Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati — is the most sacred.

In the context of food, there are three *gunas* — *sattvik, rajasik, tamasik* — which Sri Krishna refers to in the *Gita*. The word *gun* means inherent properties of different foods which can enhance or reduce the natural inclinations, talents, temperaments and potentials of individuals *Satvik* food is conducive to noble pursuits and *rajasik* to heroic, while *tamasik* food keeps the individual shackled to the baser instincts

FOUR. *Chaturvarnya* is the cornerstone on which the Hindu social system rests Four are the *varna* or castes and four are the *ashram* or stages in life. Four, again, are the *purushartha* or principle objectives in life: *dharma* (religion), *artha* (material success), *kama* (sensual satisfaction), *moksha* (liberation from the bondage of *karma* or cycle of rebirth).

The number four is also correlated to the concept of *char rinh* or four eternal debts; *devrinh* (to the Gods), *gururinh* (to the teachers), *pitririnh* to the ancestors, *putrarinh* (to the progeny). To discharge these debts, an elaborate ritual of feasting and feeding the *brahmans* is prescribed in the *Dharma Shastra*. In folk idiom, too, four is considered auspicious and the host normally tries to form a quartet of guests The classic accompaniments of *Khichri* are the foursome of *dahi papad ghee achaar* — yoghurt, *poppadom*, clarified butter, pickle.

Different elements have to blend for truly savouring the taste. These basic taste sensations have to be harmoniously blended like instruments and notes in a musical composition to create symphonic melody

FIVE. *Kshiti* (earth), *jala* (water), *pavak* (fire), *gagan* (ether), *sameer* (air), are the five elements And, five ingredients — *doodh* (milk), *dahi* (yoghurt), *ghee* (clarified butter), *madhu* (honey), *sharkaru* (crystalline sugar) — go in to the making of *panchamrit* The therapeutic and restorative properties of this ambrosial offering to the Gods are recounted in the sanskrit *shloka*:

Akaal mrityu harnam,
Sarva vyadhi vinashanam,
Vishno padodakam pitva,
Shirsa dharyamyham.

or

Takes away the fear of untimely death,
and vanquishes diseases all,
Sip this Nectar that washes the Lord's feet,
Place it on the head and let not a

drop fall.

On many celebratory occasions, like marriage, there is a ritual exchange of *panch-mewa* (five dried fruits/nuts) and *panch-phal* (five fresh fruits)

SIX. The seasons are six: *grishma* (summer), *varsha* (monsoon), *sharad* (autumn/fall), *shishir* (winter), *hemant* (the season of thaw), *vasant* (spring). And there are six sensations that the palate recognises: *lavana* (salt), *madhur* (sweet), *katu* (bitter), *amla* (acid), *tikshna* (pungent), *kashaila* (astringent)

SEVEN. The spectrum is resplendent with seven vibgyorous hues. Seven are the days in the week, symbolising the seven horses yoked to the solar chariot, while the night sky sparkles with the *saptarshimandal* or the constellation named after the seven sages. Seven are the sacred cities which promise deliverance:

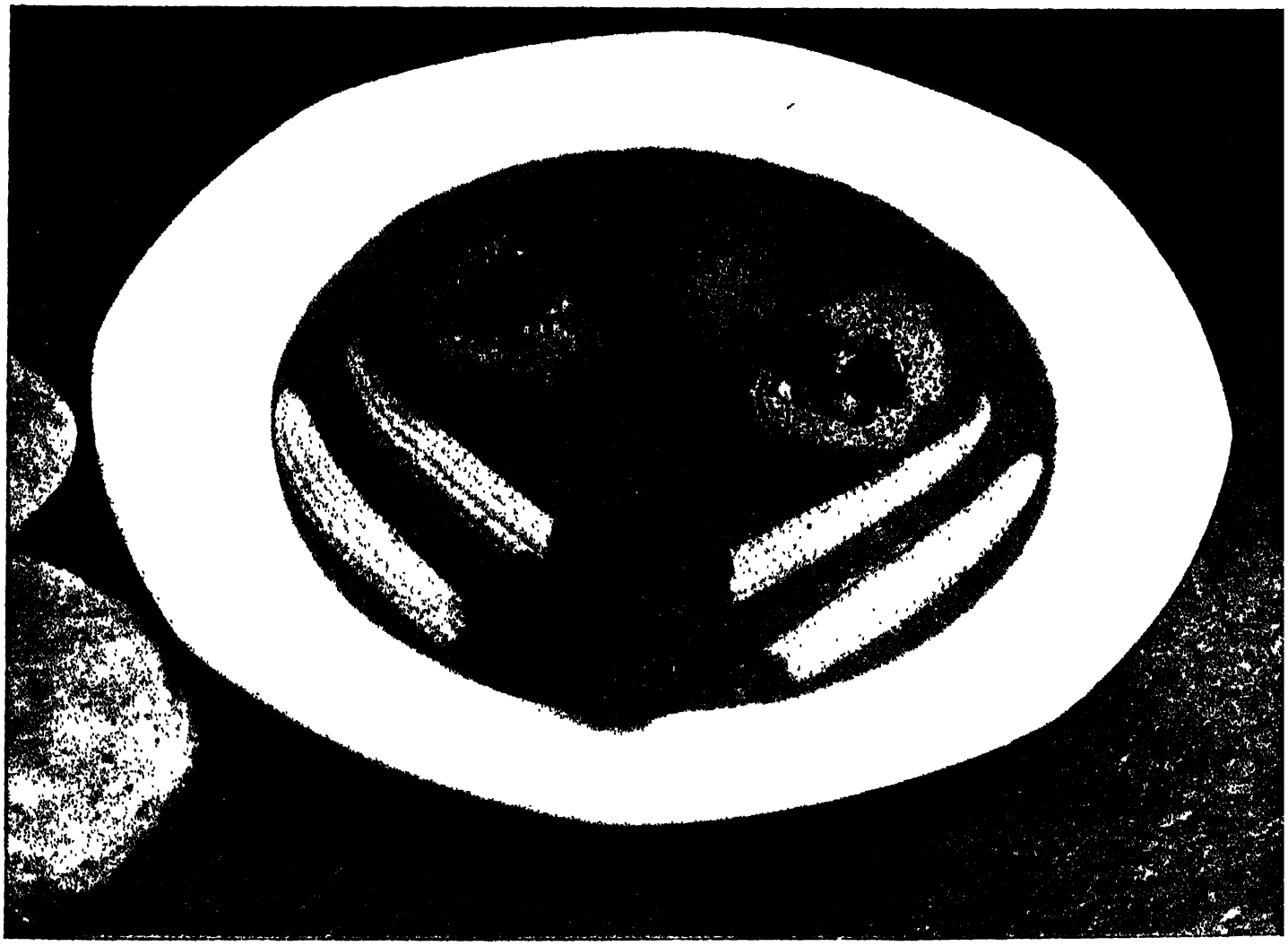
Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika, Puridwaravati charva saptaita moksha dayika

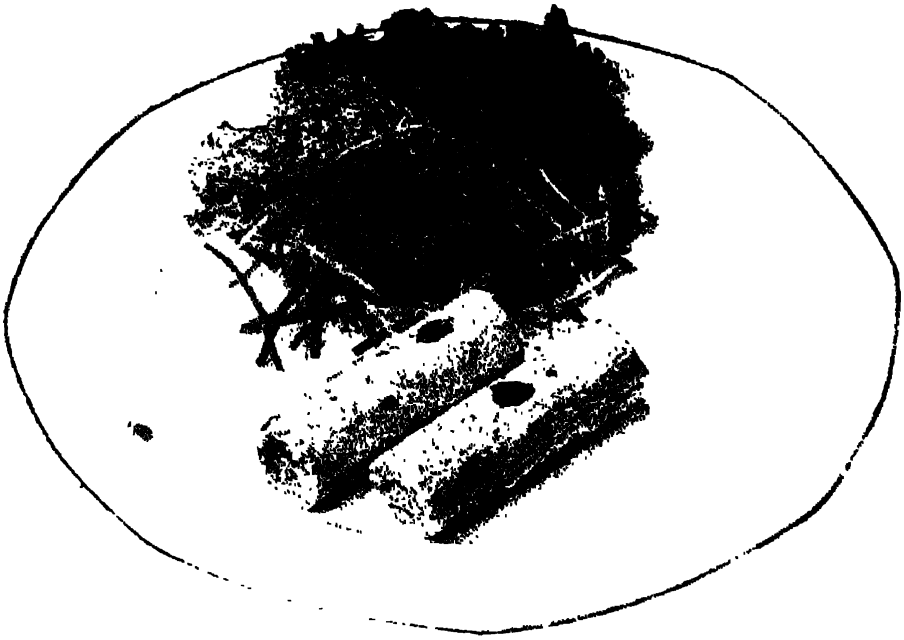
And seven are the sacred rivers which are invoked at the time of ritual ablutions performed by a pious Hindu everyday:

Ganga, Yamunascharva, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmade, Sindhu, Kaveri Jale Asmin Sannidhi kuru

EIGHT. The day and night are divided into eight *prahara* or three-hourly unit of time which prescribe the hours of watch. Eight is also considered to have magical properties when metals are used in combination. Idols and rings made with *ashtadhatu* or an alloy of eight metals — *sona* (gold), *chandi* (silver), *peetal* (brass), *tambu* (copper), *teen* (tin), *jasta* (zinc), *para* (mercury). Some of these gems and metals are crucial ingredients in Indian therapeutics. According to the *Ayurveda*, no arbitrary line is drawn separating medicine and food. *Sone-chandi ke varq* are common enough

Great delicacies, like all great works of art, are effective mood manipulators. This is more so in the case of ritual, celebratory and funeral feasts. Take for instance the menus prescribed for Muhurram, which declare a *tarq-e-lazzat* or a voluntary forsaking of taste. At the same time, what is being spread on the *dastarkhwan* should not lack in respect nor appear too frugal





The element of fun and frolic is incorporated in the *adbhut* and *hasya rasa*. The Lucknow nawabs have become legendary for their exploitation of these two *rasas*. For example, there was this nobleman who once instructed his chef to devise a complete menu comprising exclusively of sweets. The confections were so cleverly concocted that in appearance they mimicked the classic savoury delicacies like *kebab, mussalam, quorma* and *biryani*

The concept of *guna* and *tahseer* of various ingredients tells us that there are inherent properties which can accentuate or mitigate the effects of seasons and mediate moods

What many do not know is that innumerable recipes make use of the other metals as well.

In the context of food, the numbers seven and eight are significant as they emphasise the element of variety for each day of the week and the appropriateness of the diet according to the three-hourly division of the day. As mentioned above, this is how we get *chharman bhog*.

NINE.. *Navagraha* or the nine planets — *Surya* (Sun), *Chandra* (moon), *Mangal* (Mars), *Buddha* (Mercury), *Guru* (Jupiter), *Shukra* (Venus), *Shani* (Saturn), *Rahu* (Ascendant Node), *Ketu* (Descendant Node) are believed to exercise a decisive influence on the affairs of man on earth. To ward off any evil planetary influences, the *navaratna* or the nine gems — *hirak* (diamond), *moktik* (pearl), *mannik* (ruby), *panna* (emerald), *neelam* (sapphire), *pokhraj* (topaz), *praval* (coral), *firoza* (turquoise) — are resorted to. Like metals, many Indian recipes are enriched by precious gems and jewels.

There are nine *rasa*: *samyog* and *viyog shringar* (erotic/romantic moods of union and separation, respectively), *veer* (heroic), *roudra* (wrathful), *hasya* (comic), *vibhatsa* (repugnant), *adbhut* (amazing), *karuna* (compassionate) and *shant* (tranquil).

The key word in the context of food — and all other aesthetics — is *rasa* — which can crudely be translated as 'juicy essence' or 'sap' However, it would be more apt to adopt the implied meaning of savouring or deeply enjoying a sensuous experience. It is the same word which is used in the

course of appreciation of music, dance, literature, sex or food

In essence, *rasa* means evocation or enhancement of a mood appropriate to the time and place, providing cathartic release, euphoria or tranquility. In Indian culinary philosophy, food is the ultimate mood manipulator. Which is why there is a specific diet prescribed for the celibate and the newlywed, the working man and the renunciate.

The Grand Mughal Akbar had bestowed upon his most favourite nine nobles the title of *Navratne*. Quite a few of these worthies were connoisseurs of food. Todar Mal and Birbal are remembered today as patrons of Delhi Kayastha cuisine and the delicacy *Do Piaza* immortalises another -- *Abdurrahim Khankhaana*.

TEN. In the Hindu system, there are ten directions: four cardinal -- north, east, west, south, four that divide the cardinals diagonally -- north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west, two about you -- above and below.

These ten directions were to provide guidance while constructing a *yagna vedi* or a sacrificial alter. It is not to be forgotten that a *yagna* or a sacrifice was essentially an offering of food to the Gods. The *mantras* were chanted to the accompaniment of pouring of *ghee* in the fire.

One could argue justifiably, that there are basically ten *rasa*. So what is the TENTH *rasa*?

To answer that, we must glean another interesting insight from the *Natyashastra*. How does *rasa* -- essential sensual enjoyment -- spring forth? Says Bharat Muni: *Vibhavanubhav sanchari sanyogad nishpattih*. Translated, it connotes, *rasa* emerges when ever present and the transient emotions, passions and moods coincide. This implies the intervention of some external agency or sensory stimuli.

So also is the case with the basic sensations of taste. Different elements have to blend for truly savouring the taste. These basic taste sensations have to be harmoniously blended like instruments and notes in a musical composition to create symphonic melody. This we submit is the TENTH -- and the quintessential -- flavour.

Fortified with this knowledge, we can approach the enigma of the TENTH culinary *rasa*. Different *rasa* reflect different moods. Library works and artistic performances strive to evoke -- and enhance -- a particular mood. Great delicacies, like all great works of art, are effective mood manipulators. This is more so in the case of

ritual, celebratory and funeral feasts. Take for instance the menus prescribed for Muhurram, which declare a *tarake lazzat* or a voluntary forsaking of taste. At the same time, what is being spread on the *dastarkhwan* should not lack in respect nor appear too frugal. The *karun rasa* is invoked by using a white *dastarkhwan* and serving a white sweet rice. On happier occasions, the *dastarkhwan* would have been of any bright and cheerful hue, and the rice coloured.

The element of fun and frolic is incorporated in the *adbhut* and *hasya rasa*. The Lucknow nawabs have become legendary for their exploitation of these two *rasas*. For example, there was this nobleman who once instructed his chef to devise a complete menu comprising exclusively -- sweets. The confections were so cleverly concocted that in appearance they mimicked the classic savoury delicacies like *kebab*, *mussalam*, *quorma* and *biryani*. In fact, even the serving plates were fabricated with sugar. Thus were the guests delightfully deceived!

In Ayurvedic as well as *Unani* texts, there is a strict correaltion between certain foods, moods and seasons. For example, *grishma* and *varsha ritu* are asociated with *onyog shringar*. On the other hand, *hemant* and *vasant* celebrate *sanyog shringar*.

The concept of *guna* and *tahseer* of various ingredients tells us that there are inherent properties which can accentuate or mitigate the effects of seasons and mediate moods.

From this we can conclude that to enhance culinary pleasure, the basic flavours and the different *rasas* have to be blended appropriately -- or fused, if you please. This is the TENTH *rasa*. The key to sublime culinary pleasure -- *anand* or bliss -- is fusion.

The first tentative steps toward this *rasa* were taken in 1986 when we started to work on what we called one spice cooking. Before you get the wrong impression, let us hasten to add that this did not mean that we used only 'one spice'. In fact, there was no change in the cooking technique. We used all the spices that went into providing body to a gravy, but in carefully measured quantities for harmonious balance. The delicacy was 'finished' with 'one-spice'. In this case, an aromatic spice sensitively selected to enhance the flavour of the dish in question, that took the place of the until-then ubiquitous *garam masala*.

The repeated use of *garam masala* at the beginning, the end and on every occasion in between, was jettisoned. More important, we started plating the food with an assortment of vegetables and fruits to provide roughage. Needless to say, the vegetables were usually tossed and seasoned with a complimentary, aromatic spice -- not a *melange* of spices. This, we felt, would provide balance. The reason for plating food was to bring about the hitherto hidden beauty of the cuisine of the subcontinent and to make Indian cuisine universally appealing. This fusion -- that is what we called it and many a senior chef subsequently climbed on to the bandwagon -- propelled an Indian chef to the semi-finals of the Culinary Olympics.

Rasa Fusion found its niche in 1991 when we did our first dinner in Singapore for the Home Nursing Foundation, the Lion City's leading charity. The Singaporeans were astonished to encounter tastier -- read that as subtly spiced -- and attractive Indian food. Ever since they have become addicted to the wonders of India's culinary art. The Foundation has invited us every year since to showcase *fusion* cuisine to complement the charity's annual exhibition cum sale of the jewellery collections.

This response -- and success -- has encouraged us to think that in the near future the *Fusion Rasa* is set to conquer the global palate. ■

WHERE DO WE GO TO PLAY?

This cry is repeated in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi, as children find fewer and fewer playgrounds available to them

When the bell rings to announce lunch-time in Calcutta's South Point school, seven-year old Aditya Chatterjee doesn't rush out on the lawns to play catch with his friends. No, it's not that Aditya isn't fond of games, or that he doesn't *have* any friends. The sad truth is that his school — among the best in Calcutta —doesn't have a garden that Aditya can play in.

Aditya's parents are planning to shift him to a 'greener' school, but not many children in Calcutta have that option available to them. Priya, for instance, a 14-year-old student from Patha Bhavan, which has small clay courts rather than a proper playground for its students. "I would have left and joined another school if I could," admits Priya ruefully. "But it's too late now."

Children in such other metros and Delhi and Bombay are in much the same predicament. In Bombay, for example, the rules of the municipal corporation stipulate that for every school that comes up in Bombay, there should be a playground in the vicinity. But according to Alex Vaz, secretary of the Bombay School Sports association, of the 250 schools affiliated to his association, only five per cent have their own playgrounds. And with the pressure on real estate being what it is in Bombay, almost every playground in the city appears to be embroiled in a controversy as residents struggle to protect it from builders.

In Delhi, the situation is slightly better — but only slightly. According to

Some parts of Delhi have good recreational facilities

Jagdish Vadia

Jagdish Yadav

Playgrounds a must in Delhi's civic rules

Professor S.C. Gupta of the department of urban planning at the School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi, after 1962 a layout plan for a colony was only approved if it provided for 9.55 square meter space per person for facilities for health, education and recreation. Of this, five square meters was to be left for open spaces. Similarly for schools, building plans were approved only if they set aside 50 per cent of the total area for playgrounds.

Thus, such colonies in Delhi as Vasant Vihar, Sunder Nagar, Rajinder Nagar and Patel Nagar have adequate facilities for children to play. But such areas as Hauz Khas, South Extension and Green Park, which were either developed before 1962 or by private parties, the situation is much worse

It's not as if Bombay doesn't have such rules also. According to the city's development control rules, formulated in 1991, 15 per cent of the land should be reserved as open space in plots between 1,000 and 2,500 square meters. And 20 per cent of the land is to be set aside for open space in plots between 2,500 and 10,000 square meters. In areas above 10,000 square meters the proportion of open space to be reserved is 25 per cent.

But over the years, land set aside for playgrounds has been dereserved to accommodate more buildings Resourceful residents have, therefore, tried to develop little playgrounds within the society, by putting in a sladder, a see-saw or even a swing in the compound so that children don't remain cooped up at home all day long Some buildings in Bombay, which are situated on busy streets, have even developed terrace playgrounds for the children of residents

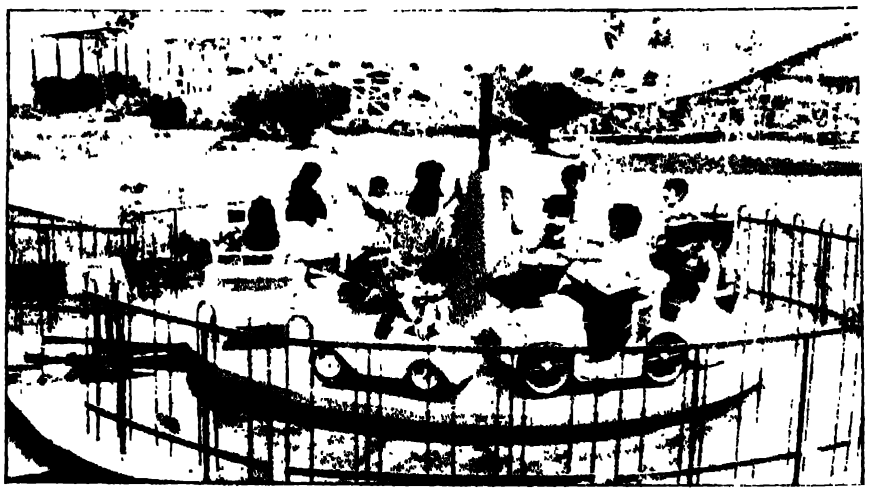
In Calcutta, only 6 per cent of the city's land area comprises open spaces, even though according to the rules of town planning every city needs at least 33 per cent open space Of this 6 per cent, the Maidan accounts for 750 acres and Dhakuria Lake and Subhas Sarovar make up another 450 acres. And since most schools don't have a patch of green either, children often have nowhere to go when they want to play

Most parents, therefore, try and organise some sort of recreational facilities within the house. Rajrupa Chakraborty, for instance, who is the mother a three-year-old girl. "I have set up a swing and some games on my terrace to keep my daughter busy," she says. "At least that will keep her away from the television for a few hours."

But Deepa Mukherjee, a housewife who lives in Bandstoni, doesn't even have that option The playground closest to her house -- Ashok Park -- has been handed over to a promoter, with just a little area reserved for the annual Durga Puja

Her outrage is shared by Nandini Mukherjee, a resident of a multi-storied complex on Camac Street "I feel annoyed, agitated and very, very angry," she says. "I have two children and our's is an office area So, going to the park means crossing innumerable streets, encountering heavy traffic on thoroughfares, and dodging endless pedestrians Only then can I reach Allen Gardens on Park Street - - which is today less of a park and more of a den of the three P's pimps, prostitutes and peddlers of drugs -- or Woodburn Park

Bombay boasts of such amusement parks as Esselworld and Fantasyland But these are not really a viable alternative to playgrounds as most middle-class parents can ill-afford the cost of visiting them regularly The entrance ticket to Esselworld, for instance, is Rs 125 for an adult and Rs 100 for a child



Bombay's Esselworld: Costly amusement

"Besides," says Alka Marathe, a working mother, "the cost of simply getting there is very high as it is on the other end of the city and one has to use every method of transport — train, bus and boat — to get there. Just the journey itself takes half the day. Then, you're not allowed to take food inside and everything in the shops there is priced two or three times above the market rate. A single trip to Esselworld ends up costing me Rs 2,000 for four, and I can't think of going there more than twice a year."

And anyway, amusement parks are not really an alternative to large open spaces where children can play cricket, football, volleyball or just run around. "Ideally," says urban planner Narendra Panjwani, "about 20 to 25 per cent of the area of a settlement should be open space." In other words, for an area housing 10,000 to 20,000 people there should be at least one open space of around 5,000 to 10,000 square feet.

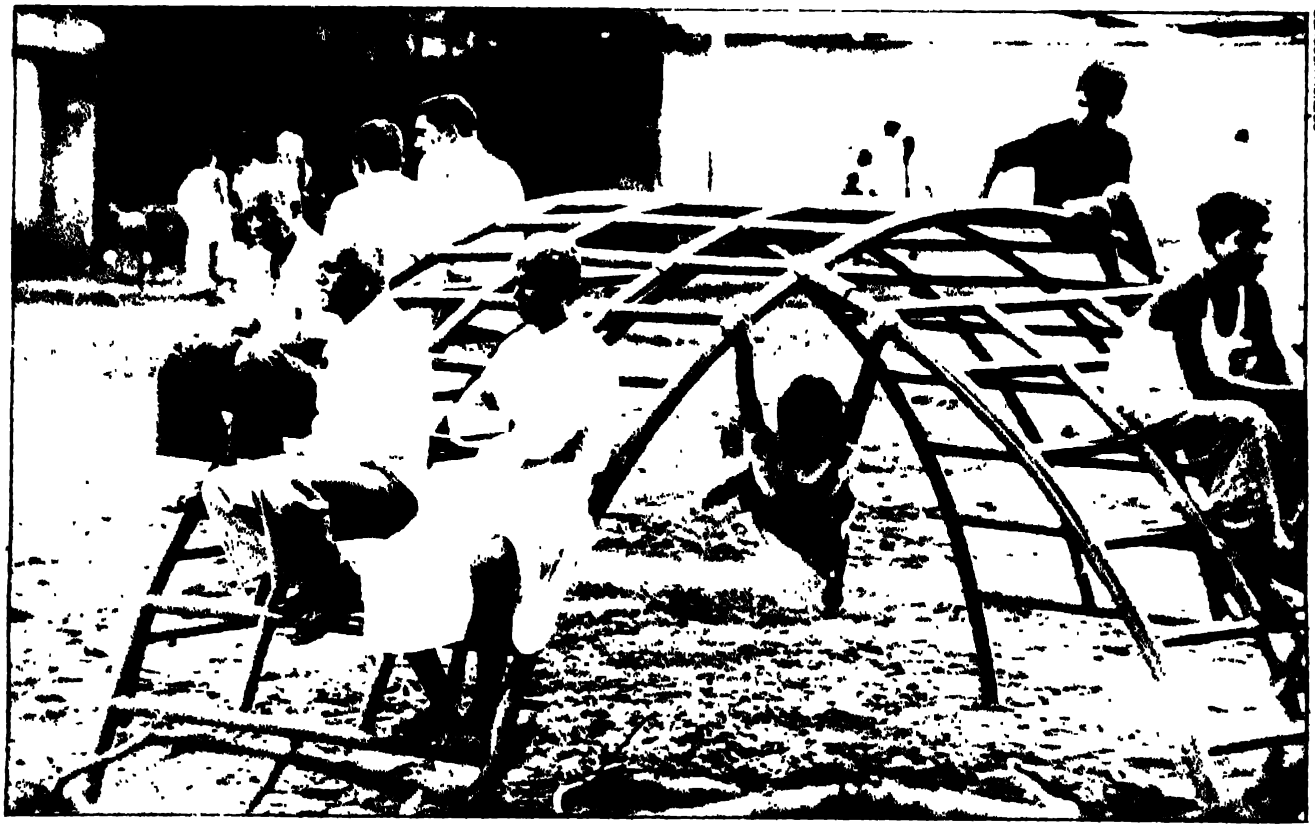
While it may not be possible to put aside 20 per cent for open space in a city like Bombay, at least 10 per cent of the area should be reserved. Former municipal commissioner of the city, J.B. D'Souza agrees: "The number of playgrounds in our cities is not even one-fourth of what they ought to be."

Even in Delhi, where most colonies have a playground, these spaces are often encroached upon by slum dwellers. And residents of the colony have taken to using them to hold wedding receptions, *jagrans*, fairs, exhibitions and the like, leaving the kids with no place to go.

Some bodies like the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) have now come up with schemes to get the residents involved in the maintenance of neighbourhood parks. According to director, horticulture, MCD, D.P. Singh, the corporation has come up with the 'Adopt a park and road verge' scheme. Under this, private bodies, corporate concerns and residents' welfare associations adopt particular parks in their area and maintain and beautify them.

This scheme has been particularly successful in such areas as Lajpat Nagar, Kalkaji and South Extension in south Delhi, where residents have pooled in as much as Rs 2,00,000 for maintenance of the grounds and for keeping them out of the bounds of marria-

A playground in Chinchpokli, Bombay



Sandesh Rokade

ge parties and *jagrans*.

In Bombay, too, there are some areas where the 20 per cent open space requirement is fulfilled. Five Gardens in Matunga, for instance, where the residents have de-grassed the gardens and use them as playgrounds instead. Suburbs like Bandra, too, have some amount of green spaces In Malad, however, the problem of finding open space is acute as it is in Mankhurd, where the only playground was sold off to real estate developers late last year.

The Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) maintains 199 playgrounds and 424 gardens in the city. But most of the time, says Alex Vaz, they are let out to circuses, fairs, wedding parties or used for commercial activities. "In fact," says Vaz, "not even 10 per cent of these playgrounds are even open to the public as they are being leased out all the time."

According to Panjwani, large grounds and sports complexes are not that good an idea. In Andheri, for instance, the mammoth Sports Municipal Complex that was set up on prime land at the cost of crores of rupees, now seems to be only used for holding beauty contests, dance competitions and weddings Only the swimming pool of the complex is available to members while the vast stadium lies empty when there is no commercial activity in progress.

On the other hand, Maharashtra chief minister Manohar Joshi has announced that from now on no commercial activity of any kind will be allowed on Shivaji Park in Dadar. The ground will only be used for sports events and public meetings.

Chatrabhuj Narsee, who began a 'Save Our Parks' campaign in the city five years ago after a playground in the vicinity of Jamnabai Narsee School, run by his family, came under threat, agrees that sports complexes are not a viable alternative "Playgrounds are the best form of recreational space for children," he says, adding, "The only maintenance they need is a few truckloads of mud after the monsoons. But the municipal corporation is not willing to do even that."

"Open spaces should be maintained as open spaces," says former Test cricketer Dilip Vengsarkar. "No construction should be allowed on them." Vengsarkar himself was involved in a controversy the year before last when he tried to set up a cricket academy on a portion of the Oval Maidan. The academy has been functioning since October this year, and Vengsarkar points out, "We have not taken over the entire Oval Maidan. Everybody is free to play there"

Arup Banerjee

A school in Calcutta: All work and little play

But maintenance of these grounds is often a major problem. Vengsarkar has tried to combat the problem of encroachment in his portion of the Oval Maidan by employing guards, but the BMC hasn't followed suit. In fact, a number of illegal structures have come up in Azad Maidan, opposite the BMC headquarters, but even then the corporation is unmoved

This indifference has meant that parks often prove to be a nuisance rather than a boon to residents and passers-by. They are often frequented by drug-peddlers and prostitutes and double as public toilets. "It is impossible for a woman to walk safely across one of these maidans," says Vaz. He draws particular attention to the Vallabh Bhai Patel Stadium, "where no decent person can go as he is bound to be robbed or even killed"

Stray dogs that wander in also pose a hazard to schoolchildren. "I remember how a schoolboy was bitten by a dog on one of my grounds and the BMC official just threw his hands up and said that there was nothing that he could do, ' remembers an indignant Vaz

In Delhi, too, such big open areas as Subhash Park and Qudsia Park in North Delhi and Queen's Park in Central Delhi, have been lost to the public And with the demise of neighbourhood parks as well, says Dr Aruna Broota, noted clinical psychologist, children no longer have a place where they can develop social skills, learn to win and lose, or even just run wild

According to Dr Broota, this is a dangerous development as children who are deprived of social interaction often begin to show signs of delinquent behaviour. And in extreme cases, the games of the playground are replaced by alcoholism, theft, drug use and vandalism.

Surely, it is much easier to replace the playgrounds than to deal with the consequences of their demise

Reported by Vaishali Honawar in Bombay, Geeta Sharma in Delhi and Trina Mukherjee in Calcutta

TRIBUTE

MUSIC WAS HIS MISSION

The Pandit Ravi Kichlu Foundation, in memory of the great vocalist, held the second Golden Talent Contest recently to scout for new talent

He was a man of convictions; humble and unassuming; uncompromising on his ideals and music was his life. And love; music in its most pure and classical form. That was Pandit Ravi Kichlu, the doyen of the fabled Agra *gharana*

An exceptional blend of a versatile vocalist — he was at ease singing anything from *dhrupad, dhamar, khayal, thumri, ghazal* to Bengali *ragpradhan* and *Rabindrasangeet*; an outstanding sportsman — he excelled as a state-level cricketer - - and a wonderful person.

Pandit Kichlu, who had made music his life's mission, was just not happy in exploring the diverse facets of Hindustani classical and semi-classical music He wanted to discover and create new masters who would carry on the tradition of classical music

But as destiny would have it, Pandit Kichlu passed away, his dreams unrealised. It was left to wife Veena Kichlu to give shape to Pandit*ji*'s grand vision of spearheading a movement as it were for classical music. The Pandit Ravi Kichlu Foundation was formed in 1994 to scout for new talent and also to promote them, specially those from less privileged backgrounds

"When you are an *ustaad* the world is at your feet But to reach that level of professional excellence you need a forum, which is what Pandit Kichlu wanted to provide to aspiring singers," elucidates Veena Kichlu

Spurred by the overwhelming response to their first talent hunt contest, the RKF organised their second Golden Talent Contest on December 25, 1995 (December 25 being Pandit Kichlu's birth anniversary) at the G D. Birla Sabhaghar where participants performed before an invited audience and a panel of eminent classical *gurus* like Girija Devi, V.G. Jog, Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Rais Khan and Joya Biswas

"I was really touched by the patience of the judges," recalls Veena Kichlu, "here they were sitting in the auditorium for six hours every day during the four-day contest screening each participant"

This year the focus of the contest was instrumental classical music. Divided into two categories A and B for seniors and juniors, it was a tough proposition selecting the winner as "everyone was so very good" Fourteen-year-old Samanav Sarkar (sitar) walked away with the laurels in the junior section while Purbayan Chatterjee (sitar, again) bagged the best prize in the senior category

RKF has much to thank The Gramaphone Company of India Limited for, it provided free cassettes to the candidates The Foundation also awards a two-year scholarship worth Rs 5,000 annually to the winner. "I know that's a drop in the ocean," says son Neeraj Kichlu, "but at least it will give him some support and incentive"

Pandit Kichlu firmly believed, despite the general loss of interest in classical music, that enough talent lay untapped in the younger generation which needed to be nurtured and projected. And the RKF in its own humble way is trying to fulfil this dream of his.

Susmita Banerjee

A participant at the Golden Talent Contest; (inset) Pandit Ravi Kichlu

Acc No. 24268 Date 21.7.98

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says the full moon focalises the domestic scene. At the same time, you will be working your heart out for rewards and success. These should be forthcoming before January's close, so work with a will. January 8-9 will be important for personal work, as well as professional headway.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

The right time to reach out to people and places by all possible media of transport and communication. You will be inspired to give your best. That will lead to glory and joy, thus fulfilling you. January 10-12 is the time to start important ventures, enterprises, trips and deals. Make the most of it.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

The spotlight will be on finance and family. Get set to travel. Do expect plenty of commuting and movement this week, and even more so, the next 27 days. It would be the right thing to apply your shoulder to the wheel. Visitors, foreigners and friends do descend on you.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

True, there could be some opposition. True also, you will overcome it, or circumvent it, get round it, and thus win the game. Yes, you will be very much before the public eye and image. Romance is your birthright and you shall grab it in happy abundance. Home affairs keep you spinning.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

So much to do and so little to do it in, that you will have to hurry your strokes quite a bit. Even in the home, the pace will be quite hectic, tempers and nerves ruffled. In all fairness, you will be very creative in your work and productivity will be awesome. Also you will manage with aplomb.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Important decisions will be taken and moves will be made. These will have a happy spin-off, therefore, you won't regret it. This is the right time for romance, begetting children, being creative and different, because you will blend beautifully intuition and imagination. Hobbies get a fillip.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

It is very clearly action time, justice time; time to set the record straight; time to get what you want. You will be pulling out all the stops. Renovation/decoration/alteration/installation of gadgets and accessories is a distinct possibility. January 7-9, 12-13 should have prime value.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Contacts, contracts, deeds, documents, tenders, letters, calls, fax, ads, these get fully activated because of your compelling needs and requirements. Heavy demands will be made on your time and energy, and wallet too. You will respond superbly. You will certainly love and at the same time be cherished.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Mars Uranus conjunction gives a rocket thrust to your finances, business, sales techniques, computerisation and automation techniques because Uranus symbolises all of these. The energy of Mars makes it very productive. Finances and deals complete the scene for you.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Ganesha says sun-Jupiter-Uranus trio gives a cutting edge over others in terms of romance, confidence, promotion and most importantly, sheer capacity for happiness. You should be able to pulverise the opposition, gain your end, get money, be family oriented and achieve success.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Uranus enters your sign from January 13, therefore, you will sense the strong originality and humour associated with it, from the next month. Journey, confidence, beadth of vision, desire to take risks and move house will be in sharp evidence. Personal progress is also envisaged this week.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Children, romance, housing and moving, keep you on your toes. 1996 is very clearly for new offers, perks, promotion and more responsibilities. January shows the way and therefore it is doubly important. Finances and health show an upward graph and that is cause enough for elation.

BIRTHDAYS

January 7: **While you will have to struggle and face flak, you will have the spirit to overcome, because of the excellent moon-Pluto formation.**

January 8: **Mars-Uranus conjunction will be noteworthy for the forward thrust it gives to your entire life. Pleasing results will be felt in property matters.**

January 9: **Moon-Jupiter trine makes you enthusiatic and quite optimistic, characteristics which will stand you in good stead.**

January 10: **Moon square Uranus signifies a certain tension and uneasiness which could flare up, unless you consciously do away with it.**

January 11: **Mars sextile Pluto helps you in all organisational as well as creative matters, thus guaranteeing an almost unlimited arsenal of good fortune. Even confirmed bachelors may marry.**

January 12: **Moon trine Mercury means excellent going for salesmen, editors, sailors, pilots, executives, musicians and singers. Yes, it does mean success in general.**

January 13: **Moon-Saturn trine leads to journey, ceremony, partnerships at all levels, tremendous intuitive and psychic abilities, says Ganesha.**

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P. C. CHANDRA
JEWELLERS
GOLD
A jewel of jewels

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC-741	0800	1 2 3 6	IC-742	1030	1 3
			IC 743	1250	4 7
IC-743	0920	daily	IC-744	1150	daily
[illegible]					
S2-026/027	0850	1 2 4 5	S2 028/005	2005	1 2 4 5 7
[illegible]					
PF-301	0830	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1500	2 4 6
			PF 303	1500	1 3 5
[illegible]					
IC 721	1250	1 3 4 5 7	IC-722	1525	1 3 4 5 7
D2 181	1330	daily	D2 181	1600	daily
[illegible]					
IC 771	0600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
[illegible]					
D5-402	0600	1 5 7	D5 401	1230	2 4 6
IC 544	1115	2 7	IC 543	1035	2 7
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	2140	1 6
VF 106	1030	2 4	VF 105	0950	2 1
VF 106	1740	1	VF 105	1700	1
[illegible]					
IC-676	0730	daily	IC-675	2040	daily
9W 202	0715	1, 3 4 5 6 7	9W-201	0945	1 3 4 5 6 7
D2 102	0920	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC-273	1945	daily	AI 306	1730	5
9W-212	2000	daily	9W 211	1925	daily
D2-104	2005	daily	D2-103	1335	daily
AI-309	1930	6	IC-274	1850	1 7
M9-305	0600	1 2 3 4 5 6	M9-306	1140	1 2 3 4 5 6
M9-307	1700	daily	M9 308	2230	daily
[illegible]					
IC 263	0630	daily	S2 025	0810	1 2 3 4 5 6
S2-026	0850	1 2 3 4, 5	M9 403	0325	daily
M9-304	0905	daily	AI-082	0925	1
IC-812	1515	2 5	IC 806	1150	1 2 3 4 6
IC 402	1715	daily	IC-401	1115	daily
4S-805	1720	1 2 3 4 5 6	S2 005	1855	1 2 3 4 5 7
			IC 811	1715	1 3 5
S2-006	1955	1 2 3 4 5 7	M9 301	1950	daily
M9 302	2030	daily	IC 764	2035	daily
[illegible]					
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5 605	1935	daily
PF 303	0730	3 5	IC 702	1630	1 3 5 7
4S 816	1205	2 4 6	4S-815	1635	1 2 3
4S-812	1205	1 3 5	4S 811	1635	2 4 6
IC 701	1240	1 3, 5, 7	PF 738	1740	3 5
[illegible]					
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
IC-257	1145	4 7	IC-257	1540	4 7
[illegible]					
S2 026/021	0850	1 2 3 4 5	S2 022/00	2005	1 2 3 4 5
[illegible]					
D5-601	0600	daily	D5 605	1935	daily
IC-703	0810	1 3, 5	IC 704	1120	1 3 5
9W 611	1020	daily	9W 612	1310	daily
M9-323	1230	daily	M9 322	1510	daily
PF 301	0830	1, 3 5	PF 302	1500	1 3 5
IC-703	0830	4 7	IC-230	1620	daily
IC-229	1310	daily	4S-811	1635	2 4 6
4S-816/811	1205	2 4, 6	4S-812/815	1635	1 3 5

[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
RJ-185	1445	4	RJ-184	0705	4
[illegible]					
KL-876	0345	7	KL-875	0135	7

DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 204	1220	2 6
HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2015	2 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1715	2 4 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	VF 105	0950	2 4
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	VF 105	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 512	[illegible]	daily
IMPHAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2 6
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 4 5 7
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
SILCHAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 6
TEZPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 6
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 4 6	IC 541	1640	1 4 6

INTERNATIONAL

BANGKOK					
KB 105	0850	6	KB 106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	1
IC 731	0855	2 5	TG 313	1240	1 3, 6
IC 855	1105	4 7	IC 856	1730	4, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
TG-314	1355	1 3 6	IC-732	1505	2 5
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1835	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2150	5 7	RO 075	1700	5 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0800	1	IC-226	1020	1
BG 698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
DHAKA					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG 091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC-723	1250	1 2 3 5 6	IC 724	1520	1 2 3 5 6
BG 094	1905	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1930	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2020	1 5
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
RA 214	1215	2 4 6	RA 213	1130	2 4 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
IC 747	1115	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1435	1 2 4 6
LONDON					
BA 147	2115	5 7	BA 148	1515	5 7
MOSCOW					
SU-536	1755	4	SU 537	1555	4
PARIS					
KB 106	1105	5	KB-105	0810	2 6
KB 106	1325	5			
SINGAPORE					
SQ 415	2345	2 5	SQ-416	2230	2 5
BI 108	0830	7	BI-107	0000	6
SOFIA					
LZ 904	1750	4	LZ 902	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	5	AI 305	1620	6
YANGOON					
IC-225	1540	4	IC 226	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	[illegible]
3095	1[illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	[illegible]	3006
3067	20 [illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	1[illegible] 00	3064
2381	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Grand Chord	16 [illegible]	2382
		Dep Wed Thurs & Sun		
		Arr Tue Wed & Sat		
2303	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible]	16 [illegible]	2304
		Dep Mon Tues [illegible] & Sat		
		Arr Mon Tue [illegible] & Sun		
[illegible]	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible]	10 [illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Mon Tues Wed [illegible] & Sat		
		Arr Mon Tues Thur [illegible] & Sun		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep & Arr Except Sunday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** via Weq	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Tue [illegible] & Sat Arr Tue Wed [illegible] Sat		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Wednesday Arr Friday		
5019	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep & Arr Thursday		
5017	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep & Arr [illegible] Mon Wed & [illegible]		
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	[illegible]	3010
3067	[illegible]	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	[illegible]	[illegible]
3019	[illegible]	**Amritsar Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
5021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
5659	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	[illegible]	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3029	[illegible]	**Coalfield Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3045	18 20	**Asansol Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3015	9 05	**Santiniketan Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri		
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Wed Sat & Sun		
		Arr Tue Wed & Sat		
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express**	[illegible]	1182
		Dep Friday Arr Tuesday		

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	6-5	3144
3111	20-15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express**	20-35	5658
3153	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4 15	5664
3151	11 20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express**		
		Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6005	20 [illegible]	**Madras Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
2665	12-30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	[illegible]	2850
1023	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express**	[illegible]	
		Dep & Arr Except Saturday		
8054	20 [illegible]	**Ahmedabad Express**	[illegible]	
3039	[illegible]	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	[illegible]	
[illegible]	14 [illegible]	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	
7001	8 10	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	[illegible]	
		Dep Sun [illegible] & [illegible]		
		Arr Mon Thurs & Sat		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express**	[illegible]	
		Dep Sunday		
		Arr Monday		
3013	[illegible]	**Tata Steel Express**	[illegible]	
8111	[illegible]	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	[illegible]	
8007	20 55	**Titlagarh Express**	[illegible]	
8015	[illegible]	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	
2704	[illegible]	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Purulia Express**	[illegible]	
		via [illegible] except Sunday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible] Tuesday		
	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible] Saturday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express**	[illegible]	
		Monday [illegible]		
	[illegible]	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express**	[illegible]	
		Saturday only		
	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via [illegible] & Howrah	[illegible]	
		Thursday only		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Vishakhapatnam	[illegible]	
		Saturday only		
6316	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Vishakhapatnam & Howrah	[illegible]	
		Dep Tue & Fri		
		Arr Thu & Sun		
6520	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack	[illegible]	
		Wednesday only		
	[illegible]	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack	[illegible]	
		Monday only		

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2209545-54 for in-coming trains; 2209535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2209466-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

The Last Bout

Fame has but a fleeting hold on the reins in our fast-paced society; so many of yesterday's heroes crumble

Shortly after my return from England, I was walking down the main road of my old home town of Dehra, gazing at the shops and passersby to see what changes, if any, had taken place during my absence. I had been away three years. Still a boy when I went abroad, I was 21 when I returned with some mediocre qualifications to flaunt in the faces of my envious friends. (I did not tell them of the loneliness of those years in exile; it would not have impressed them). I was nearing the clock tower when I met a beggar coming from the opposite direction In one respect, Dehra had not changed The beggars were as numerous as ever, though I must admit they looked healthier.

This beggar had a straggling beard, a hunch, a cavernous chest, and unsteady legs on which a number of purple sores were festering His shoulders looked as though they had once been powerful, and his hands thrusting a begging-bowl at me, were still strong.

He did not seem sufficiently decrepit to deserve of my charity, and I was turning away when I thought I discerned a gleam of recognition in his eyes. There was something slightly familiar about the man; perhaps he was a beggar who remembered me from earlier years. He was even attempting a smile: showing me a few b. en yellow fangs; and to get away from him, I produced a coin, dropped it in his bowl, and hurried away

I had gone about a 100 yards when, with a rush of memory, I knew the identity of the beggar He was the hero of my childhood, Hassan, the most magnificient wrestler in the entire district.

I turned and retraced my steps, half hoping I wouldn't be able to catch up with the man; and he had indeed been lost in the bazaar crowd Well, I would doubtless be confronted by him again in a day or two... Leaving the road, I went into the municipal gardens and stretching myself out in the fresh green February grass, allowed my memory to journey back to the days when I was a boy of 10, full of health and optimism, when my wonder at the great game of living had yet to give way to disillusionments at its shabbiness

On those precious days when I played truant from school — and I would have learnt more had I played truant more often — I would sometimes make my way to the *akhara* at the corner of the gardens to watch the wrestling-pit My chin cupped in my hands, I would lean against a railing and gaze in awe at their rippling muscles, applauding with other watchers whenever one of the wrestlers made a particularly clever move or pinned an opponent down on his back

Amongst these wrestlers the most impressive and engaging young man was Hassan, the son of a kite-maker. He had a magnificent build, with great wide shoulders and powerful legs, and what he lacked in skill he made up for in sheer animal strength and vigour The idol of all small boys, he was followed about by large numbers of us, and I was a particular favourite of his. He would offer to lift me on to his shoulders and carry me across the *akhara* to introduce me to his friends and fellow wrestlers

From being Dehra's champion, Hassan soon became the outstanding representative of his art in the entire district His technique improved, he began using his brain in addition to his brawn, and it was said by everyone that he had the making of a national champion.

It was during a large fair towards the end of the rains that destiny took a hand in the shaping of his life. The Rani was visiting the fair, and she stopped to watch the wrestling bouts When she saw Hassan stripped, and in the ring, she began to take more than a casual interest in him It had been said that she was a woman of a passionate and amoral nature, who could not be satisfied by her weak and ailing husband She was struck by Hassan's perfect manhood, and through an official offered him the post of her personal bodyguard

The Rani was rich and, in spite of having passed her fortieth summer, was a warm and attractive woman Hassan did not find it difficult to make love according to bidding, and on the whole he was happy in her service True, he did

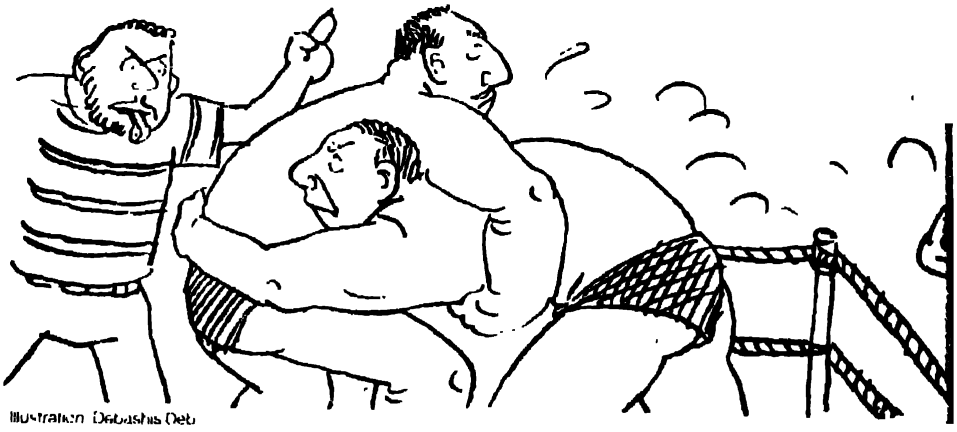


Illustration Debashis Deb

not wrestle as often as in the past; but when he did enter a competition, his reputation and his physique combined to overawe his opponents, and they did not put up much resistance. One or two well known wrestlers were invited to the district. The Rani paid them liberally, and they permitted Hassan to throw them out of the ring. Life in the Rani's house was comfortable and easy, and Hassan, a simple man, felt himself secure. And it is to the credit of the Rani (and also of Hassan) that she did not tire of him as quickly as she had of others.

But Ranis, like washerwomen, are mortal; and when a longstanding and neglected disease at last took its toll, robbing her at once of all her beauty, she no longer struggled against it, but allowed it to poison and consume her once magnificent body.

It would be wrong to say that Hassan was heart-broken when she died. He was not a deeply emotional or sensitive person. Though he could attract the sympathy of others, he had difficulty in producing any of his own. His was a kindly but not compassionate nature.

He had served the Rani well, and what he was most aware of now was that he was without a job and without any money. The Raja had his own personal amusements and did not want a wrestler who was beginning to sag a little about the waist.

Times had changed. Hassan's father was dead, and there was no longer a living to be had from making kites; so Hassan returned to doing what he had always done. wrestling. But there was no money to be made at the *akhara*. It was only in the professional arena that a decent living could be made. And so, when a travelling circus of professionals — a Negro, a Russian, a Cockney-Chinese and a giant Sikh — came to town and offered a hundred rupees and a contract to the challenger who could stay five minutes in the ring with any one of them, Hassan took up the challenge.

Amongst these wrestlers the most impressive and engaging young man was Hassan, the son of a kite-maker. He had a magnificient build, with great wide shoulders and powerful legs, and what he lacked in skill he made up for in sheer animal strength and vigour

He was pitted against the Russian, a bear of a man, who wore a black mask across his eyes, and in two minutes Hassan's Dehra supporters saw their hero slung about the ring, licked in the head and groin, and finally flung unceremoniously through the ropes.

After this humiliation, Hassan did not venture into competitive bouts again. I saw him sometimes at the *akhara*, where he made a few rupees giving lessons to children. He had a paunch, and folds were beginning to accumulate beneath his chin. I was no longer a small boy, but he always had a smile and a hearty back-slap reserved for me.

I remember seeing him a few days before I went abroad. He was moving heavily about the *akhara*, he had lost the lightning swiftness that had once made him invincible. Yes, I told myself

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds..

That had been over three years ago. And for Hassan to have been reduced to begging was indeed a sad reflection of both the passing of time and the changing times. Fifty years ago a popular local wrestler would never have been allowed to fall into a state of poverty and neglect. He would have been fed by his old friends and stories would have been told of his legendary prowess. He would not have been forgotten. But those were more leisurely times, when the individual had his place in the society, when a man was praised for his past achievements and his failures were tolerated and forgiven. But life had since become fast and cruel and unreflective, and people were too busy counting their gains to bother about the idols of their youth.

It was a few days after my last encounter with Hassan that I found a small crowd gathered at the side of the road, not far from the the clock tower. They were staring impassively at something in the drain, at the same time keeping a discreet distance. Joining the group, I saw that the object of their disinterested curiosity was a corpse, its head hidden under the culvert, legs protruding into the open drain. It looked as though the man had crawled into the drain to die, and had done so with his head in the culvert so the world would not witness his last unavailing struggle.

When the municipal workers came in their van, and lifted the body out of the gutter, a cloud of flies and bluebottles rose from the corpse with an angry buzz of protest. The face was muddy, but I recognised the beggar who was Hassan.

In a way, it was a consolation to know that he had been forgotten, that no one present could recognise the remains of the man who had once looked like a young God. I did not come forward to identify the body. Perhaps I saved Hassan from one final humiliation.

(Sanctuary Features)

GILLIAN WRIGHT'S COLUMN

Other Side of Paradise

How many victims have you read about in the papers today? Generally, we just read about them We don't come face to face with them. We certainly don't expect them to make us laugh or to learn about ourselves, although that might come in useful Because sooner or later, in some way or the other, we often become victims ourselves

Last week, I was given a book about a woman who was stabbed 35 times and lived I must say I didn't much fancy reading it But when I did, I put it down only to eat. The book was *A Stranger in Paradise* by Julie Chimes.

Julie was a young British woman whose partner in life, a doctor, attended a 'Self-awareness' course in which you understand yourself better by bringing to the surface all kinds of suppressed emotions. All very well. But the organisers failed to check on the participants' medical history One participant, Helen, was a schizophrenic She decided to stop taking her medicine — to take control of her own life as advocated by the course.

One day, obviously unhappy and in need of company, she came to see Julie, who sat her in the kitchen, gave her a warm jumper to wear and a hot water bottle When Julie went upstairs, Helen took a large, though rather blunt, carving knife from the kitchen drawer. Then, with great force, she proceeded to stab Julie in her chest, stomach, hands, neck and mouth, shouting all the while that she was doing so for God.

Julie describes the struggle between them and it is not as you'd expect. Close to death, the overwhelming feeling she had for her attacker was not hate or fear but love and compassion. As she wavered between consciousness and unconsciousness, she felt herself leaving her body and being swept towards the stars and a vision of reality which filled her with joy. In the last stages of the flight, she heard an inner voice giving her instructions on how to protect herself and how to escape She made it through the front door and down the drive to the road, throwing herself in front of an oncoming car so that the driver would have to run her over or stop She was wrong He drove round her Helen began to cut her throat Then, her jugular exposed, a young man passing by managed to disarm Helen and phone the police One police officer broke all the rules to get her to hospital in time, the hospital just managed to save her life.

Until her operation, Julie was conscious. She remembers very well the constable and crowd that gathered around her as she lay in the road and addressed them in her book: "Dear Policeman, I know that I probably looked and felt dead to you, but the fact of the matter is, I was still alive Telling the gathered congregation, 'she's a gonna' did nothing to motivate them, or me, into the urgent action required to save my life .. "

"Dear Crowd of Onlookers,

'Dying people are not usually deaf. Dying people are not always going to die, and even if they do, they are not as dead as you may think they are'

Whichever one of you it was who told me the ambulances were on strike — thanks a bundle . As for the man who did not want to help keep me warm with his jacket as 'the blood might ruin it', I promise I would have bought you a new one .. "

This victim's guidelines for potential A O S (Accident Onlookers) are as follows: "Dying people are not usually deaf. Dying people are not always going to die — and even if they do, they are not as dead as you may think they are. Don't tell them anything negative. Be gentle and loving. And lastly....if you cannot help...then f _ !"

Throughout, Julie kept her sense of humour. She can really make you laugh in her darkest hour, and make you reconsider how you deal with the sick

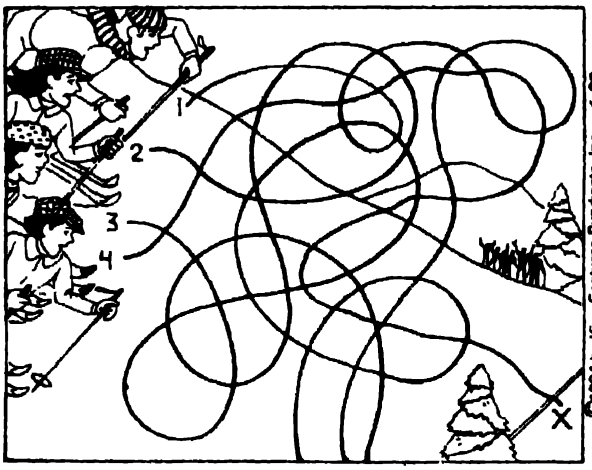
The inner voice she heard did not desert her, either then or in hospital or during the period of shock when she was trying to reorder her life and discover what really mattered. It kept urging her to reflect, and she found that being a victim was also a state of mind At the end of the book she compares the journey through life to a train journey in which she had been travelling in the "life's not fair carriage" She began to explore the whole train and to appreciate the greatness of the journey. She was filled with gratitude that, as she says, "the heart of me is the same as everyone else"

She suffered immense pain and lost a lot of blood, time, energy, her business, her money. Her solicitor was an alcoholic and botched up her compensation case She wasn't insured. Her attacker never stood trial due to insanity. But hers is an inspiring story because of the extent to which she was able to use even this experience to grow In the balance, her own opinion is that she gained more than she lost.

(*A Stranger in Pardise*, by Julie Bloomsbury Publishers, London; 1995, £ 16.99.)

(*Sanctuary Features*)

JUNIOR WHIRL HAL KAUFMAN



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BOUND TO WIN! Just one of four skiers above makes it to the finish line (in a fairly straight run) Which skier?

NAME GAME! Replace one letter in each word to form the name of another animal 1 Cat 2 Dog 3 Mule 4 Moose 5 Monkey No fair peeking below.

1 Hat 2 Hog 3 Mole 4 Mouse 5 Donkey, will do it

1. RAN
2. RAN _
3. RAN _ _
4. RAN _ _ _
5. RAN _ _ _ _
6. RAN _ _ _ _ _

FOUR-A WORDS TO PONDER

LET'S see if you can run out these RAN words Beginning with the word RAN, add a letter in each step to form a new word in accord with the following definitions

1 **Completed in a race (ran in a place)**
2. **Military status**
3. **"Meanwhile, back at the "**
4. **National Park employee.**
5. **Pillage a place** When finished, see if you can make up another list of RAN words

Time limit 2 minutes

1 Ran 2 Rank 3 Ranch 4 Ranger 5 Ransack 6 Randomly

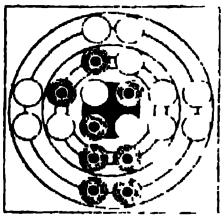
SQAURE DEAL! Rules for scoring in this target-shooting contest call for each set of four small circles that form a square (note two examples indicated by bull's eyes)

Squares may be varying sizes, spread among the 20 small circles shown.

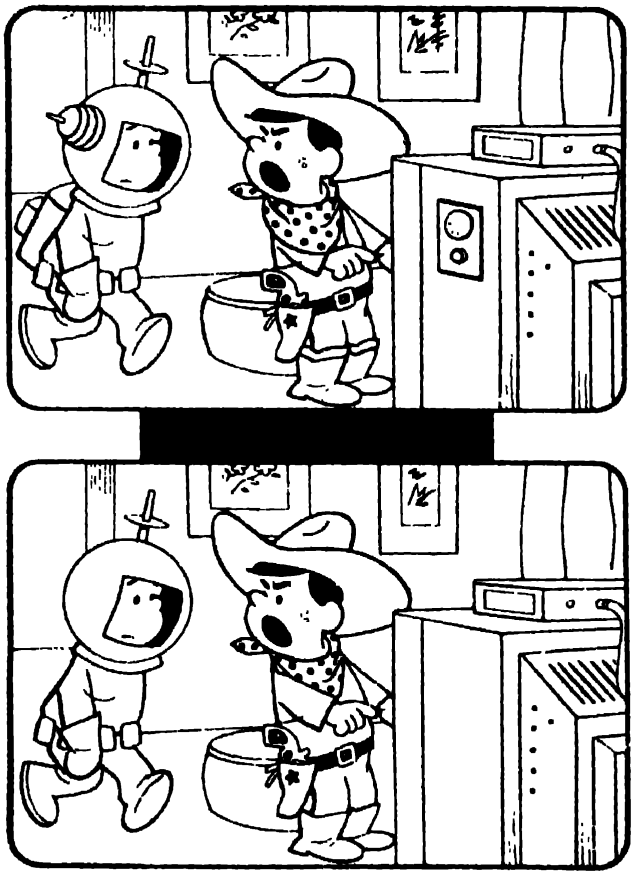
Just for fun, see if you can determine how many different ways there are of forming such squares

Hint: Look for more than 20

[illegible]



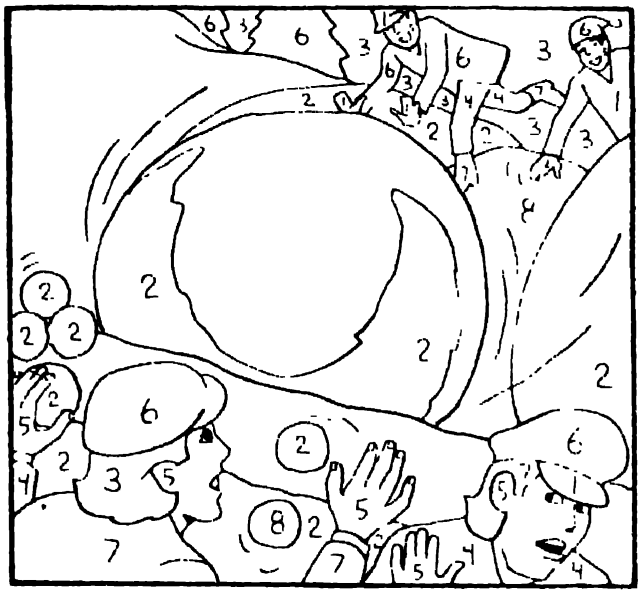
HOCUS-FOCUS



CAN YOU TRUST YOUR EYES? There are at least six differences in drawing details between top and bottom panels How quickly can you find them? Check answers with those below

DIFFERENCES 1 Earpiece is missing 2. Backpack is missing 3 Bandana is moved 4. Boots are different 5 Picture is different 6 Dial is missing.

FUNSPOT



ON A ROLL! Snowball's a-rollin' — watch out below! Add the following colors neatly: 1—Red. 2—Lt. blue. 3—Yellow. 4—Lt brown. 5—Flesh tones. 6—Green. 7—Dk. brown. 8—Purple.

SPELLBINDER

SCORE 10 points for using all the letters in the word below to form two complete words

UNDERDOG

- - - - - - - -

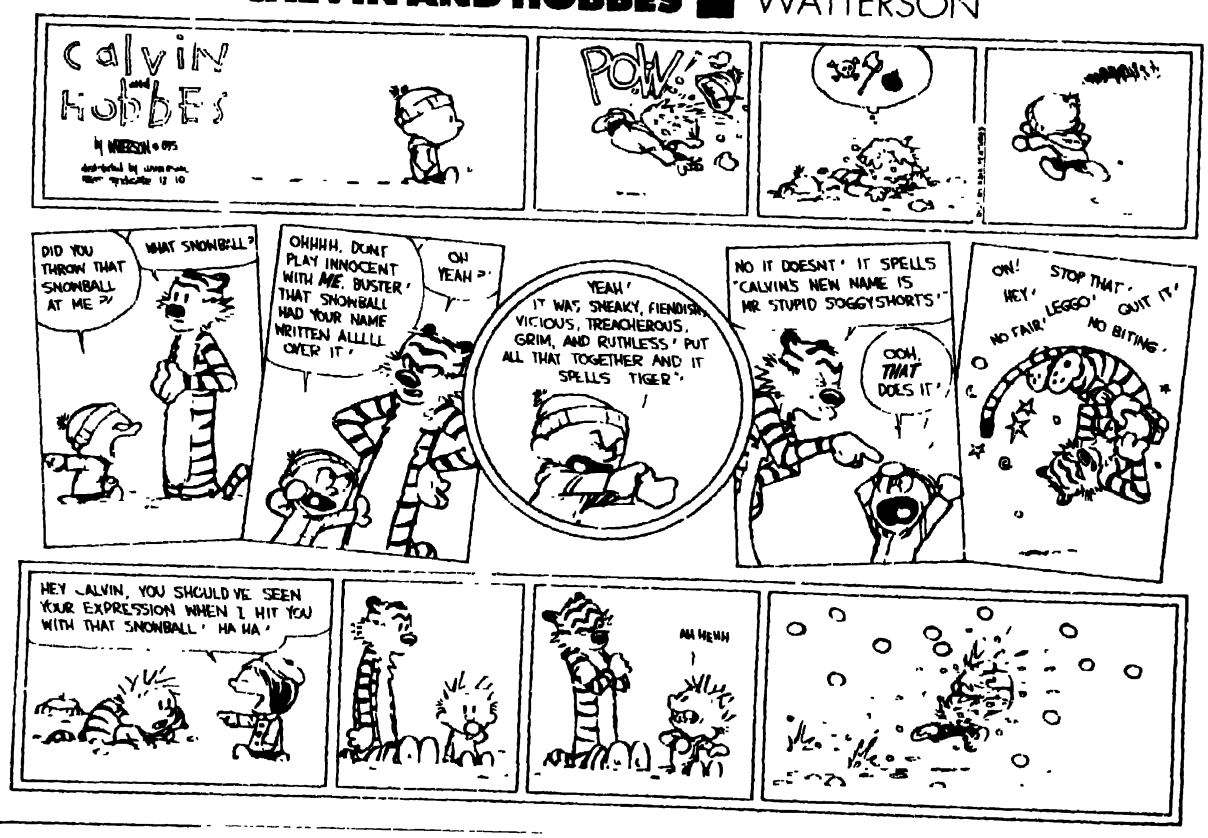
THEN score 2 points each for all words of four letters or more found among the letters

Try to score at least 50 points.

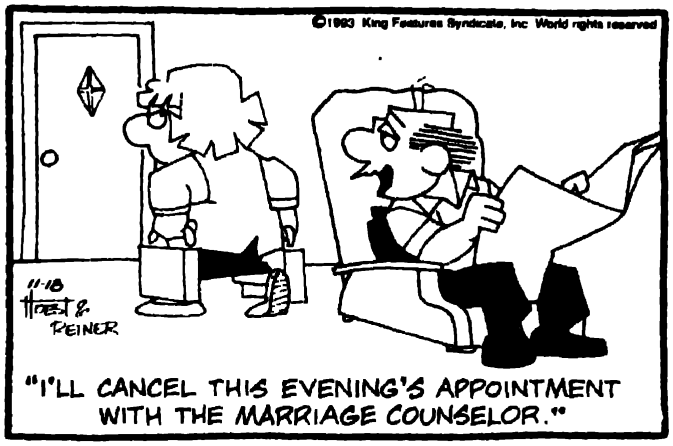
Possible twosome Undo, drag

ARCHIE

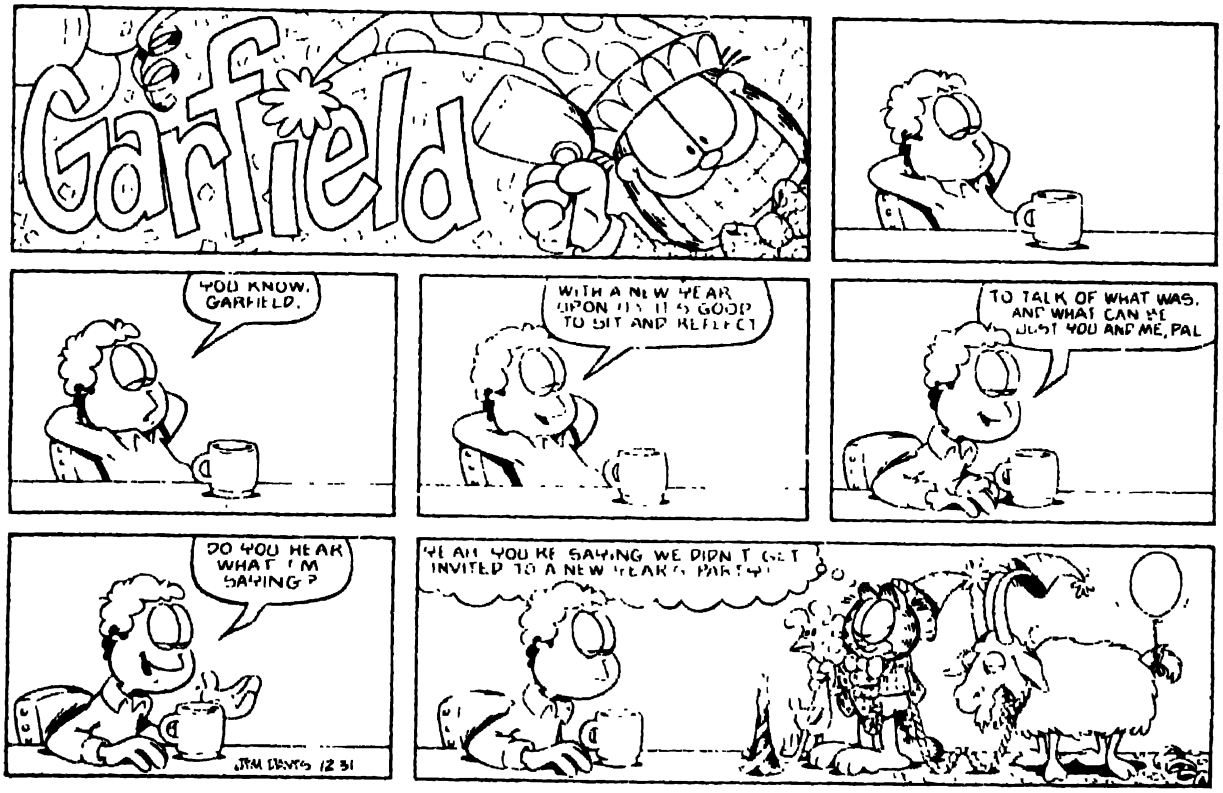
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



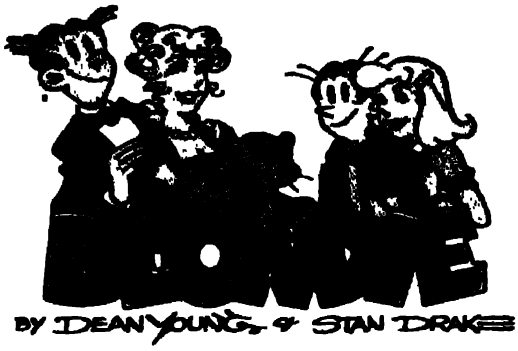
THE LOCKHORNS

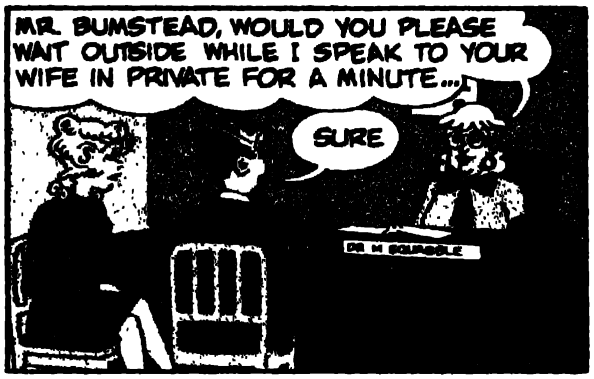


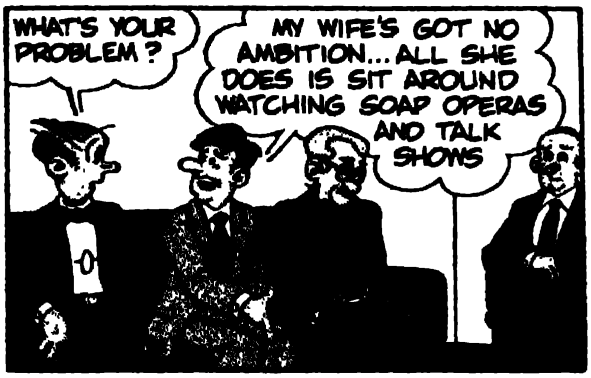
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

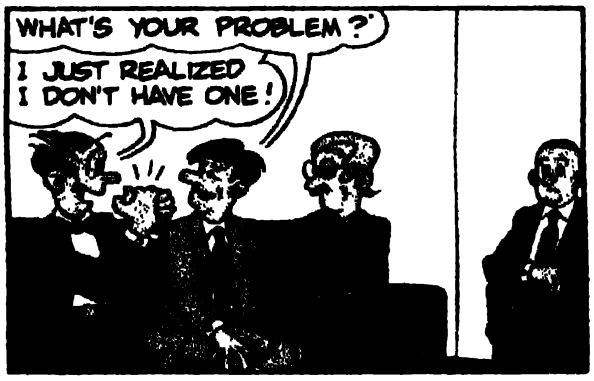


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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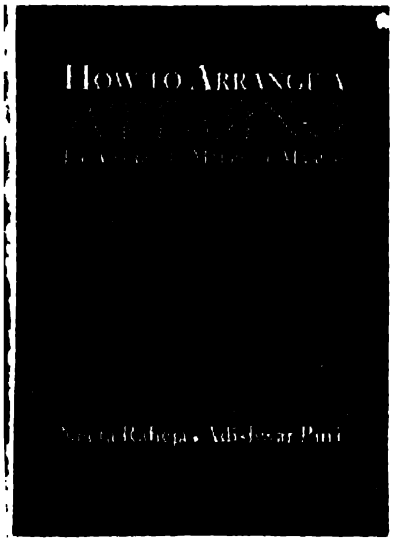
XTRACT

The HONEYMOON

By Neeta Raheja and Adishwar Puri



Extracted from** How to Arrange a Wedding The Complete Marriage Manual **by Neeta Raheja and Adishwar Puri; UBSPD; Rs 150

The word 'honeymoon' is derived from the German word, *flitterwochen*, which literally means 'tinsel weeks', a time for glitter!

The honeymoon is a post-nuptial event that has survived from the days when many a bride was kidnapped by the groom who was disguised and carried off to a secret hiding place to avoid the wrath of her father. With the passage of time, the couple sought a reconciliation with the bride's father by wooing him with dazzling gifts!

The traditional reason for embarking upon a honeymoon was that because of the waning nature of the passion of newly weds, like the 'waning moon', a time should have to be set aside for the couple to have complete privacy. This is a time, not only for uninhibited romance but also for solitude, relaxation and an escape to a place of their choice, out of reach of intruding, if well-meaning, family members and friends.

In India where a majority of weddings are still 'arranged', a honeymoon provides an opportunity for the couple to get to know each other, understand each other, and explore each other's needs and desires.

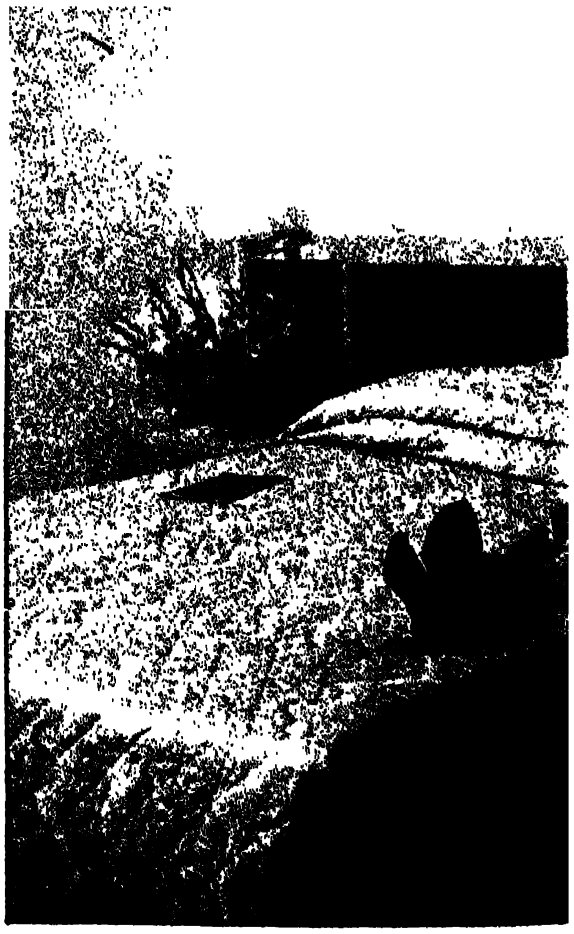
Every newly married couple knows that the essence of a honeymoon is privacy. When away from family and friends, the partners have time to know more about each other and enjoy each other's company.

Plan your honeymoon so that you can visit your 'dream vacation spot' at the best time of the year. Decide where you want to go and make sure that the climate will be what you want it to be, or your 'ideal honeymoon' may end up being a miserable mistake!

Some newly weds do not consider anything but an immediate honeymoon. They may be more romantic but less practical. If you want to take off right after the wedding for the honeymoon of your dreams, you would have to plan your wedding and honeymoon dates carefully, so that everything goes off smoothly. It takes meticulous planning to have an evening wedding and then catch a flight for your honeymoon the following morning! You don't always need to rush from the wedding *mandap* directly to the railway station or airport! An ideal wedding deserves an ideal honeymoon.

Planning Your Ideal Honeymoon

While planning your honeymoon,it is worthwhile to get in touch with a travel agent who specialises in 'honeymoon travel', and who can handle the entire arrangements for you. Such an agent can help you select the best time of the year to travel and offer suggestions for your itinerary. Your costs don't increase



greatly by using a travel agent; their commissions are paid also by the airlines, hotels and so on. Their expertise on hotels, restaurants and available destinations is invaluable, and can be used in making a decision regarding the honeymoon destination.

Would you like a tight 'schedule' honeymoon? Once you have selected your honeymoon destination, ask your travel agent or others about special events that may take place when you plan to be there so that you can include them in your itinerary. It may be worthwhile to make tentative plans and reservations ahead of time so that you have the option to enjoy a 'full and busy honeymoon.

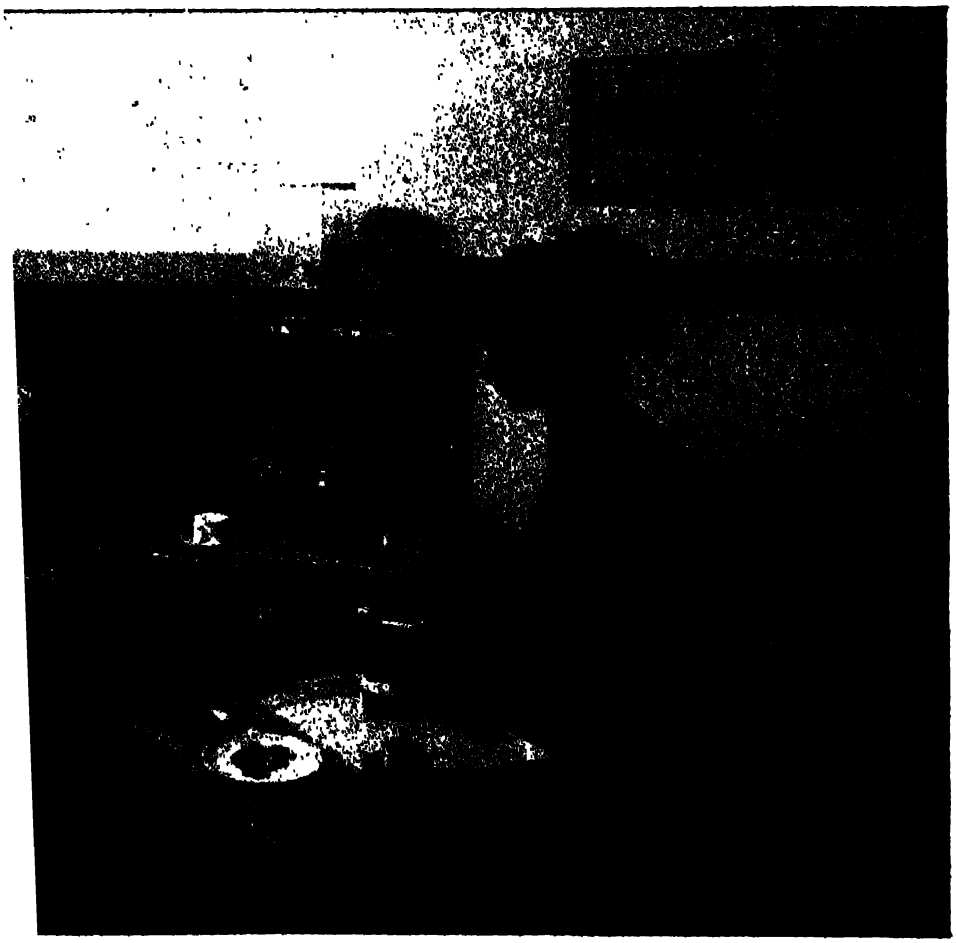
You may, on the other hand, like a *cosy honeymoon*, preferring to relax and not be tied to a rigid schedule. After the hectic wedding preparations and the whirlwind activities of your big day, you may need a few days to unwind and get to know each other better. Make your honeymoon a time for solitude and total relaxation.

Sporting/adventure honeymoon: The adventure lovers can 'take a break' away from the traditional honeymoon destinations and discover romance in an exotic place in an exciting way; for instance, camping in the wilderness, which can be a romantic, back-to-nature experience.

In the winter, ski enthusiasts can enjoy their honeymoon skiing in deep snow. Or else, they can iceskate on a frozen pond or spend the day fishing or trekking and then go back to their cabin and curl up together in front of a huge, crackling fire!

For the art and gourmet enthusiasts: Those who prefer fine wine, 'gastronomic delights' and artistic creations to active sports can draw up for themselves an itinerary of museums, historical sites and gourmet restaurants. Get recommendations from friends, travel agents and travel brochures Plan a week of entertainment to include the theatres, museums, forts and palaces, wines and fine food. Schedule body massage for both of you to ensure complete relaxation. Indulge in the ultimate hedonist's honeymoon!

Nearby getaways: Your honeymoon does not have to be the 'typical vacation' to a far-away destination within the country or overseas. There could be a variety of opportunities available in your surrounding areas, where you can just enjoy the pleasure of each other's company in a romantic setting and avoid the complications (and uncertainties) of making travel plans and bookings much ahead of time.



An experience in luxury: If your budget permits, indulge yourself in a holidy like you see in the movies or TV or read about in the books — a fairy-tale honeymoon set amidst a fairy-tale setting. Book yourself into a contemporary palace hotel. There are varied options available in India. Hotels that are built in the patterns of an old *haveli* (mansion) or the real 'palace hotels' which provide a complete medieval backdrop along with all the modern amenities to make your honeymoon almost too perfect to be true!

What to Pack For a Honeymoon?

This would depend on the itinerary that you choose and also on the weather. Most newly weds tend to overpack, as this is their first 'long trip' together.

If you are going to a beach resort, and you plan to enjoy water sports as well, your luggage should consist of bathing suits and light summer clothing. Remember to take along your *zari* saris and suits in case you have to attend evening entertainment programmes or formal dinners.

For a honeymoon to the hills (say Kullu-Manali) where the climate is markedly colder, you'll have to be prepared for rain and snow. Consequently, heavy woolens are mandatory as also socks, gloves and balaclavas.

Keep your documents, medications, jewellery, cash, traveller's cheques, camera and other such items in a carry-bag which you should keep with you at all times. This would be a safe and wise precaution; after all, you don't want any frustrating mishaps to ruin your dream holiday.

Make sure you take your camera along to capture the most enchanting and romantic moments of your honeymoon. In case you possess a video camera, you could be all the more fortunate in recording (in motion) the captivating and delectable events.

Packing for Honeymoon (Checklist)

Your honeymoon should be the most romantic trip of your life. It will take plenty of planning — ensure everything goes off without a hitch.

Clothing/Footwear

Underwear
Socks/stockings
T-shirts

Pyjamas/bathrobes
Lingerie
Bathing suit/shorts
Comfortable pants
Dress/clothings
Casual and evening wear
Hand bag
Sweater/sweatshirts
Jacket/coat and tie
Dress shoes
Tennis shoes
Clothing/footwear
Sandals/chappals
Jewellery
Jogging suits
Sports clothing
(optional)

Toiletries/other items

Toothbrush/paste
Lotion/Moisturiser
Brush/comb
Make-up
Hair clips/pins
Razor/aftershave/shaving cream/brush
Perfume/cologne
Tampons/pads
Birth control pills
Soap
Nail polish/remover
Nail file
Cotton balls/Q. tips
Nail cutters

Toiletries/other items
Hair spray/mousse
Hair dryer
Towels
Shampoo/conditioner
Mouthwash Aspirin
First Aid kit (travel)
Dental floss

Equipment

Camera/Film
Games books
Address book
Journal/diary
Tickets/itinerary
Passport/credit cards
Suitcases
Traveller's cheques
Cash
Ski gear (optional)
Hiking gear (optional)
Contact lenses
Sun glasses

Handy Documents and Useful Items

Itinerary and tickets: Once you have finalised the travel plans for your honeymoon, gather all the tickets together and review your itinerary. Make sure all the dates and times are correct. Check out all cancellation policies for hotels, car rental, airlines and so forth.

List credit card and other numbers: In a separate diary or journal, list all your credit card numbers, driver's licence number, bank account numbers, traveller's cheques numbers and any important information. In case you lose your wallet or it is stolen, you could easily cancel all your credit cards and order new traveller's cheques without panicking. Ensure a smooth honeymoon for yourself.

Medication: Bring along copies of your doctor's prescriptions, if any, for medication and eyeglasses or contct lenses. While travelling, keep other important medicines within easy reach (say, in your purse) and not in your luggage.

Obtain traveller's cheques: Carry traveller's cheques to avoid the unnecessary tension of possible pilferage of cash. If your wallet is lost or stolen, you can still get your money back; if you carry cash, you are out of luck.

Carry small change: Of course, you will need to carry some cash to start with. Make sure you carry enough small change to tip bellboys and waiters (in hotels), porters, taxi-drivers and others, as well as for small purchases.

Take along credit cards: Take along major credit cards which are accepted almost everywhere. If you run out of money, you can charge meals, hotels and entertainment expenses to your card. You could also get cash from certain banks by showing your credit card.

Exchange foreign currency in a foreign country: If you are honeymooning outside India, wait until you get to the foreign country before you change currency. Change the currency as and when you need it on your honeymoon.

Apply for visas, passports in advance: If you are planning an overseas honeymoon, ensure that you have your passport ready and up to date. Make sure you get the visas from the embassies/consulates of the countries that you plan to visit well in advance, to avoid last-minute hassles when you are ready to travel.

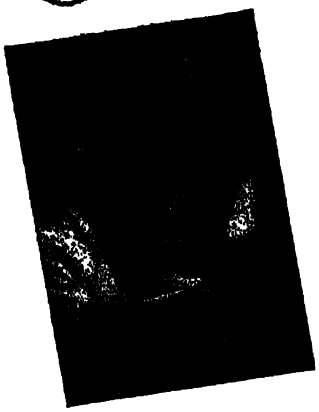
Last but not the least: Don't forget to send a picture postcard to both your parents, wherever you go. They have worked hard and striven to their utmost to make your wedding a perfect one, and they certainly deserve your remembrance and gratitude.

It would be a thoughtful idea to bring back a souvenir for your parents or for your brother or sister or a close friend, as a small thank-you gesture. ■

In

THE PICK OF THE WEEK

VIDEOS



While You Were Sleeping: A very, very Nineties comedy starring Sandra Bullock of *Speed* fame.

Sandra plays a lonely lady dispensing tokens from a Chicago tollbooth as she fantasises about a mysterious blue-eyed commuter (Peter Gallagher) who regularly glides past her

She meets him only when she rescues him off the track where he had been pushed by muggers. Mr Right lay in a coma and may never recover. Bullock meets Peter's kith and kin at the hospital who mistake her for his fiancee.

What follows next is a pot-pourri of hectic mish-mash and maudlin intrigues. The cast includes Bill Pullman who plays a sexy second lead as Peter's kid brother with great finesse. The film is directed by Jon Turteltaub.

HEALTH

Watch the Scale: **Women over 18 and gaining even moderate amounts of weight are at increased risk of a heart attack. This was stated in a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association.***

This finding contradicts Federal guidelines issued in 1990 that declared that moderate weight gains in middle are beneficial. Researchers who observed more than 100,000 women for 14 years determined that those who added just 11 to 18 pounds after they were 18, faced a 25 per cent greater chance of having a heart attack than those who gained less. Women who added 25 pounds or more had doubled or tripled their chance of a cardiac arrest.

BOOKS

Don't Cry Now. A neat thriller involving Bonnie Wheeler, an English teacher and her handsome, once-divorced husband and

their little daughter. It begins with hubby's ex-wife calling up to say that Bonnie and her child are in danger only to end up being killed herself.

Bonnie is saddled with two hostile stepchildren and a husband who stays out nights with some stranger while the killer lurks in the dark. Written by Joy Fielding (William Morrow, $23).

LIFESTYLE

Steamy Perfection: **Maharaja Appliances have devised a way to smoothen a few stubborn wrinkles on your garments. They, in collaboration with Zass AG of Germany, have launched an electric steam iron in all major cities.**

The product has a unique steam burst facility which

removes tough wrinkles in seconds. It also includes a steam control knob, in-built water pump and a special back cover to rewind the cord when not in use. The iron is priced at Rs 1,200.

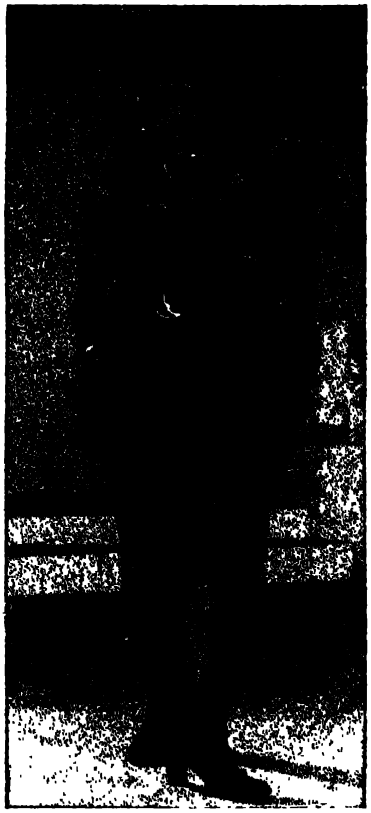
Rub and scrub: The latest in the Everyuth brand, Cadila Healthcare Private Limited, is 'Everyuth Walnut Facial Scrub'.

Following the popular craze for various face-scrubs, the product consists of finely-ground walnut particles that help remove dead-skin cells and debris accumulated on the skin's top-most layer. The scrub is priced at Rs 42.50.

FASHION

Look of 2001: **The International Institute of Fashion Technology organised a '*Haute Couture*' show on December 9, 1995 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, to project the 'new international look' of A.D. 2000.**

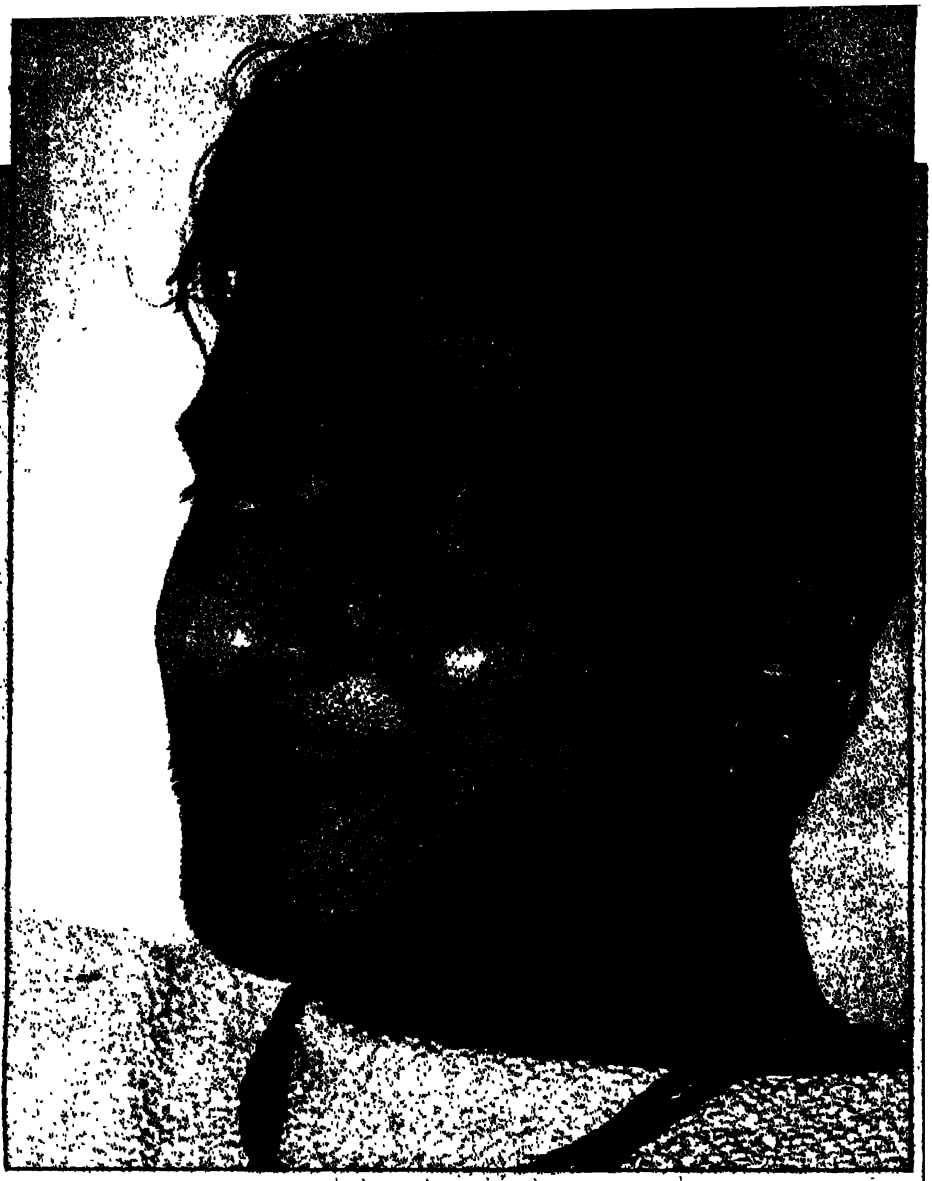
The focus was on international markets like Europe, US, Australia, South Africa and Asian countries. For the various sequences — Renaissance, French Connection, Sun City and many more — the catchwords were elegance, comfort and convenience. The colour palette steered from the bold 'n' wild to the classical. The



aim is to accentuate the figure and enhance the character of the outfit.

The NIFTians managed to spin off a rich tapestry of colours, fabrics and style.

FIRST PERSON



BALLY SAGOO, *the London-based disc jockey, is known for his funky techno-mix chart toppers like* Chura liya *and* Choli ke peeche. *Belting out numbers in both Hindi and English, this singer has popularised Asian songs in the West. Sagoo's rendition of* Mehbooba, mehbooba *is an ever popular number at the world's swankiest discos today. His latest composition, an album with Nusrat Fateh Ali, has a collection of* quawalis *from Lahore.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Love and peace and equal rights.
What is your greatest fear?
Not being able to convince the world that we Asian people can make funky music.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
Being brought up with an Indian background and going into the West with our music.
What do you dislike most in others?
Ignorance, racism and jealousy.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Biting my nails!
What is your most precious possession?
My love in world music will keep me going and going. Also, I love Bass.
What objects do you always carry?
Personal stereo, always, and my hair gel.
What makes you most depressed?
Radio stations that won't play Asian music.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My nails.
What is your favourite word?
Kidda.
What is your favourite journey?
To my studio every day.
What is your favourite dream?
Being Number One with a record in the *gora* chart.
What is your nightmare?
Losing interest in music.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
God.
What is your source of sustenance?
Pass.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I say it was a wrong number.
What has been your happiest moment?
Seeing my baby born on December 91.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Poverty and loneliness.
How do you relax?
With a nice rum and coke with *Chura liya* blasting the speakers.
What do you envy most in others?
Nothing.
How would you like to be remembered?
For my music and, hopefully, for taking Asian music to the West.
How would you like to die?
Peacefully.

What makes you most depressed?

Radio stations that won't play Asian music

What objects do you always carry?

Personal stereo, always, and my hair gel

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Bye-Bye

Autan is a non-greasy, non-sticky transparent lotion with a pleasant fragrance. **I**ts 'quick-dry' action works like an invisible shield against mosquitoes for upto 8 hours. **I**t's gentle on your skin and washes off easily. **A**cross the world, from Cologne to Calcutta, Autan is the most effective way to keep mosquitoes away. **G**et Autan today. **T**ry it tonight. **A**nd watch mosquitoes pack their bags and leave.

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The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Fun Only

■ English plays like *Hotel Motel Patel*, *Bottoms Up*, *Carry On Papa* and *Home Is Where Your Trouser Is* appeal to a select group of audience ('The Low-down' November 19). Who cares for just entertainment and no aesthetic value.

Not everyone gets titillated by the display of a woman's undergarment or the long and beautiful legs of Pooja Bedi on stage. They care for quality entertainment. And in a place like Calcutta, which has a very discerning audience, such flippant productions can never be a hit.

This does not mean Calcuttans look down upon English plays from Bombay, it is that they would rather spend an evening watching a Shakespeare production than spend a an hour or so laughing at idiotic jokes.

N. Mitra,
Calcutta

■ The plays have no story in them, no interesting dialogues, but only crassness and vulgarity in the form of jokes and in the clothes the actors and actresses wear. Is that enough to sustain audience interest?

Dipankar Chakraborty,
Howrah

Carry On Papa: Pooja Bedi adds the sizzle

■ I learnt that plays like *Run For Your Wife* and *Darling Darling* are very popular in Bombay and run to packed houses. Does it link speak volumes of Bombay's poor cultural standard?

Debashish Sen,
Calcutta

■ Calcuttans care for plays, too, but not of the variety that Bombay excels in. On any evening, theatre lovers will be seen crowding before halls in north Calcutta where Aparna Sen, Soumitra Chatterjee or Robi Ghosh could be performing.

Some of these plays are also flippant, lacking in seriousness, but they can grip one's imagination.

Shyamal Basak,
Calcutta

■ We appreciate the Magazine's concern in giving publicity to the theatre which has almost become a dying art today.

Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

Beauty Tips

■ Why don't you introduce a beauty column? Some tips on make-up, skin and hare care would be of great help.

M. Jahan,
Calcutta

Stop! Cop at Work!

■ I congratulate the Magazine for featuring an honest policeman like Banamali Banerjee ('Still Green', November 12) who dared to book the DC, traffic for violating rules.

He should be an example for other policemen to emulate.

Gautam Saha,
Jamshedpur

INSIDE

PAGE 4

Ved Marwah, who has held top police and administrative posts in all the strife-torn states in the country: from Kashmir through Mizoram to Punjab, probes the genesis of terrorism in his new book, *Uncivil Wars*. A profile of the author and an extract.

PAGE 26

Jewels to decorate your hair and nails.

The Golden Temple

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Cover Jagdish Yadav

COVER STORY

An Officer and a Writer

***Sona Thakur** meets super-cop Ved Marwah who has now reinvented himself as an author with a book on the history of terrorism in India*

He looks too donnish to have written what is being touted as the definitive book on terrorism. Tall and loose-limbed, sporting floppy tweeds and a faraway expression, Ved Marwah seems more an amiable academic than the top cop

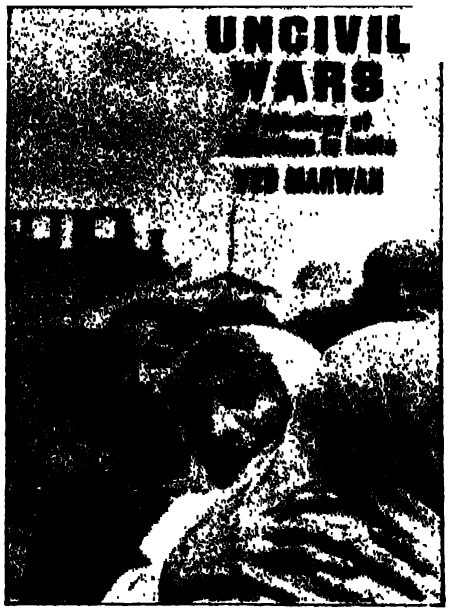
He sits by a window in his cosy office, basking in the winter sun and the afterglow of a well-received book. "I might not have got money out of it, but I have got something more—satisfaction," he says "It was worth all those months of painstakingly writing page after page in long-h .nd," he adds with a laugh.

The work itself is a comprehensive countdown of how dissent in India came to be vocalised in violence. Marwah who has held top police or administrative posts in all the trouble-ridden states of India, from Kashmir through Mizoram to Punjab, probes the genesis of militancy in these areas as well as exploring its progress and the psyche of the militant.

The book, in fact, seems to distill Marwah's sense of being. Touch on any aspect of the life and times of Ved Marwah and he gives it only cursory interest, until matters of state are touched on. That is when Marwah comes alive. For the rest, childhood was "too long ago" to dwell upon and the Partition was "traumatic".

His innate reserve makes him reticent and it is only in flashes that the story of his life rises above the plain recital of a CV. So, back to the Partition. After the cleavage of the country, the Marwah family exchanged a life of landed luxury in Peshawar for a refugee camp in Delhi.

"We finally managed to pick up the threads of our lives when my father set up his bookshop," recalls Marwah. The bookshop, Faqir Chand in Khan Market, went on to become an institution of book-starved Delhi and Marwah's college years were divided between boning up on economics in St Stephen's and helping out at the bookshop during the afternoon.



His first full-time job was with Caltex. "For the first time in a long while I had money in my pocket and even an Ambassador to whirl me around Delhi," he says with a boyish grin. But he soon found that oil sold itself and that he was, after all, only on the MNC's rolls as the "token Indian". "Caltex wasn't too different from St Stephen's and I decided to look for something else."

Which is when he took the civil services exam and found himself as the SDPO (sub-divisional police officer) of Diamond Harbour with a house perched on the edge of a river-turning-into-a-sea.

Life in his parent cadre of West Bengal was a series of quick rises until the Capital decided to have its own service cadre and raided the states for their most able men. So, Marwah found himself coordinating the security of Indira Gandhi. From there it was but a hop, skip and jump to the top via posts as plum as the Commissioner of Delhi Police, director-general of the National Security Guards and Special Secretary in the ministry of home affairs.

And today? "I spent it autographing my book at my wife's new bookshop". Marwah looks distinctly relieved as he reaches the end of his recital—advisor to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir—and slips into the flow of what interests him most—the policy and practice of policing in India. The fiasco over the airdropping from AN-26 is the cause of his current outrage. "We have again exposed ourselves as a soft state, as a country where people wander in and do things that even fiction writers would hesitate to write about because they sound so unrealistic," he says bitingly.

As he seethes about the lack of coordination between security agencies, his own famed falling-out with the doughty K.P.S. Gill over Operation Black Thunder comes to mind. The antipathy between the two officers is said to be legendary and seeps through in the chapter on Punjab.

In person, too, Marwah is as conspi-

Jagdish Yadav

cuously magnanimous: "Differences are bound to crop up between two people with different views of how things should be done. But the important thing is that the differences were sorted out, if not at our level, at the level of the Prime Minister. Those were difficult days. It was difficult to see who was right and who was wrong." All very high-minded, of course, but the effect is rather spoiled by a flash of the old oneupmanship: "After all, it could very well have been me who was wrong."

He then settles down to dissect the differences between terrorism in Punjab and in Kashmir — "The external dimension is presently more prominently in Kashmir and so is the religious fundamentalism" — and finally arrives at the most essential distinction, that in the policing of the two states.

"In Kashmir the police was allowed to decline by sub-standard political decisions. In Punjab, there was a conscious effort to build up the Punjab Police, because it would, ultimately, be the one to face the onslaught. So, it was played up and projected very deliberately, sometimes at the cost of the others, like the NSG in Black Thunder," he says.

The recollection of the old grievance takes him back to Gill. "I wish there had been more building up of the police force than of just one personality. It goes without saying that leadership is important and Mr Gill's leadership played a key role, but I wish it hadn't been entirely personality-oriented," he says regretfully.

Dropping the subject, he moves on to list what it takes to be a Governor in a terrorism-ridden state like Jammu and Kashmir, where good men

Marwah, who has held top police or administrative posts in all the trouble-ridden states of India, from Kashmir through Mizoram to Punjab, probes the genesis of militancy in these areas as well as exploring its progress and the psyche of the militant

have tried and failed on the job. The basic quality, he says, is that the Governor must be many men in one "He must be a good coordinator of the security forces but also must have a fine-honed political intuition which can allow him to create support for the revival of the political process. He must be a good administrator and also an efficient communicator," he says. "But," he adds, "more important, he must get the full support of the Centre."

Having tasted blood with his first book — "It's above Bill Gates' book on the Calcutta best-sellers' list," he says gleefully — Marwah is planning his next. This is also likely to bean off shoot of a research project, this time one which focuses on the several threats to internal security, ranging from communal riots, through caste violence to organised crime. "I've been bitten by the writing bug," he says. "But this time I'll make sure I get over my fear of technology and use the word processor."

EXTRACT

Operation Black THUNDER

In his new book, Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India, ***Ved Marwah*** *tells the inside story of this operation and reveals how Punjab police chief K.P.S. Gill tried to upstage him*

BY VED MARWAH

Extracted from *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* ***by Ved Marwah. An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers India Pvt. Ltd. Published 1995 by Indus. Price: Rs 395***

Fully exploiting the weak response of the Punjab government, the militants once again started operating from the Golden Temple. Fortifications started coming up in full view of the Punjab police and the CRPF, but the government could not make up its mind on how to respond. History was once again repeating itself. The situation was allowed to build up till May 1988. The dismissal of the Barnala government had achieved very little. Governors were being changed frequently and made little impact on the situation.

The government finally made up its mind when S.S. Virk, DIGP, CRPF, was fired at and injured by the militants from inside the Golden Temple. The CRPF deployed at the complex got agitated and the DG, CRPF, had to rush personally to Amritsar to pacify them. It had become obvious that the militants would not stop at anything, unless flushed out once again in a military operation. The strategists among the militants' organisations, both in the country and outside, understood very well the advantages of provoking the government to launch a military operation against the Golden Temple complex. Nothing had done more for their movement and its cause than Operation Blue Star and the events that followed it.

The government was under tremendous pressure and was being criticised for taking no action against the militants. The Governor of Punjab, Sid-

Ved Marwah

Jagdish Yadav

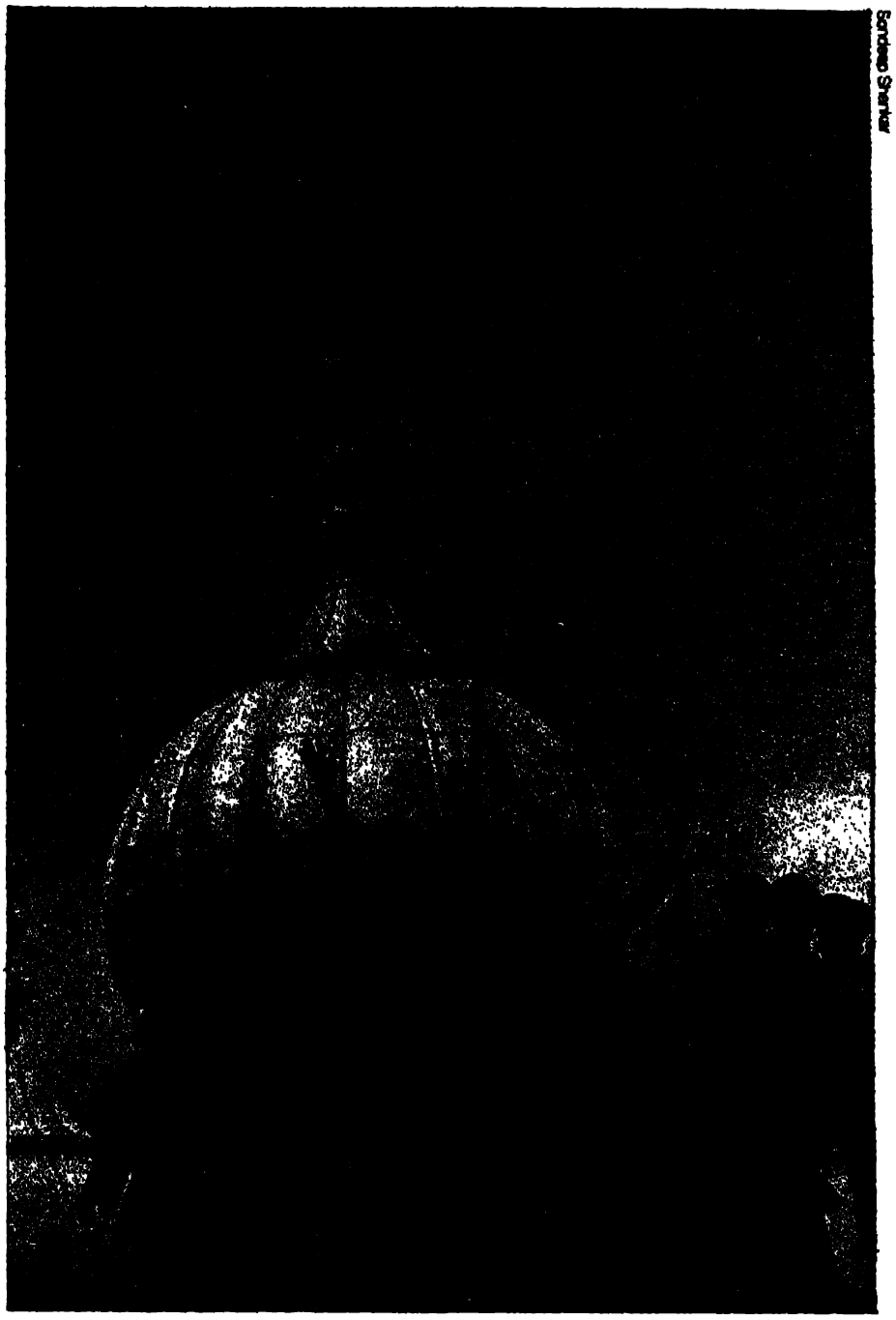
K.P.S. Gill

Rashbehari Das

dhartha Shankar Ray, wanted immediate action to flush out the militants from the Golden Temple complex. These were the circumstances which forced the government to launch Operation Black Thunder.

To discuss the situation and decide the strategy of flushing out the terrorists, a meeting was held at the Union home minister Buta Singh's room in the Parliament House. The meeting was attended, among others, by the Governor of Punjab and the minister of state for home affairs, P. Chidambaram. After discussing various options open to the government, it was decided to hand over the operations to the National Security Guards. Operation Black Thunder was a turning point, and therefore, it would be useful to know how this operation was planned and conducted. There are lessons to be learnt, specially when compared with Operation Blue Star.

Buta Singh was in favour of first concentrating on the two Ramgharia Bungas to knock down the guns mounted there by the militants, instead of mounting a direct assault on the Golden Temple. It was a very sound advice. A contingent of the crack NSG commandos was airlifted to Amritsar, under the overall command of Brigadier Sushil Nanda. A direct radio link was established between the force commander, the TAC (Tactical) headquarter at Amritsar, and NSG Control Room in New Delhi, which had links with all senior officers of the NSG. Major General Naresh Kumar, Inspector General Operations and I kept in constant touch with the situation at the Golden Temple complex. The TAC headquarter at the complex was established at the hotel directly overlooking the Golden Temple. The CRPF was deployed around the outer parameter of the complex and the NSG concentrated its fire in neutralising the militants' guns mounted on top of the Bungas, from where they were dominating a major portion of the complex....

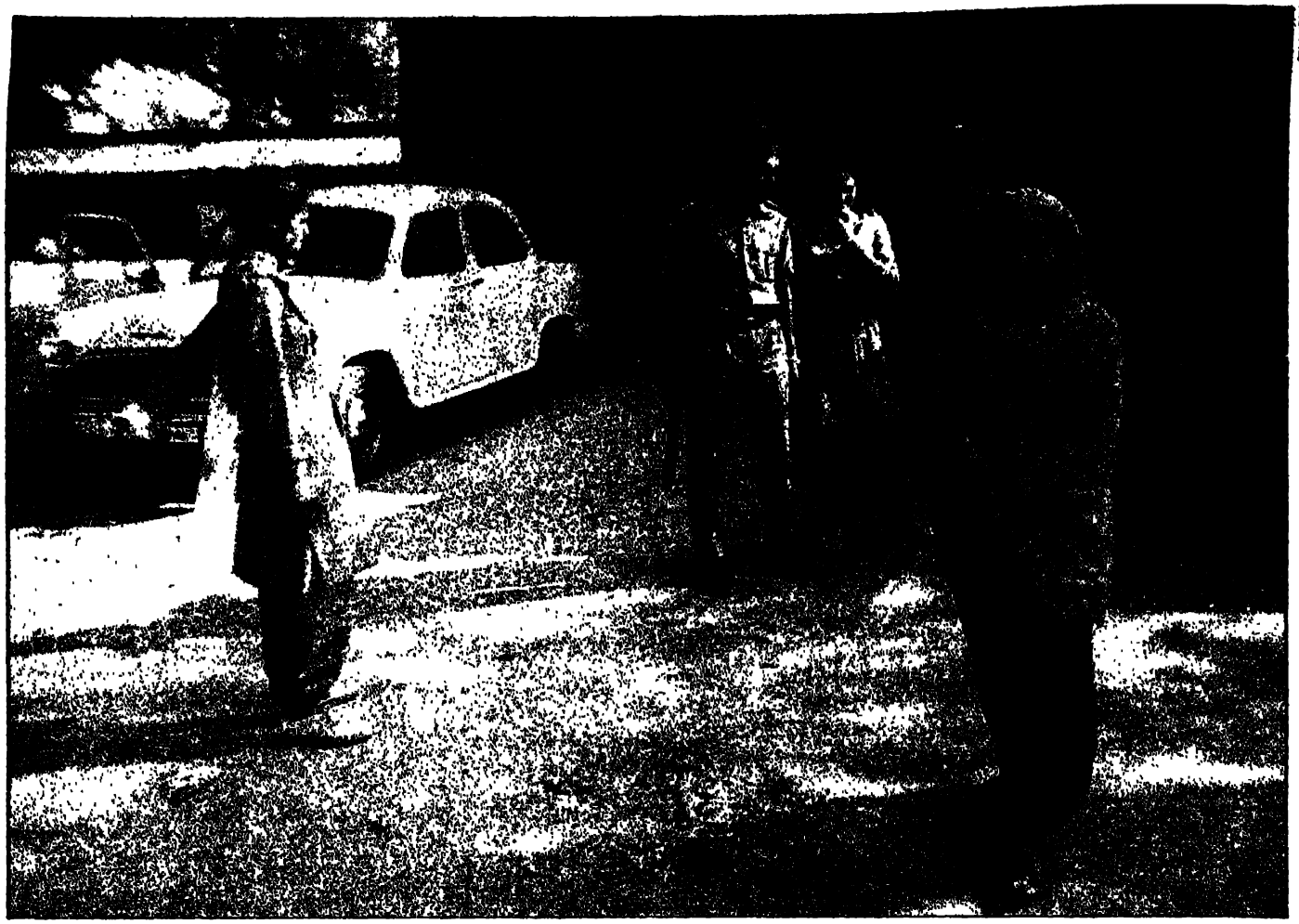


Sandeep Shankar

Militants at the Golden Temple

The NSG officers were operating under the direct command of their own officers. K.P.S. Gill protested, as according to him, he was the overall commander of the forces deployed there and should have the final authority to decide how an operation should be conducted

The Punjab Governor expressed his dissatisfaction with the phased strategy of the NSG operational plan. At a meeting at the PM's house which was attended, among others, by the Governor of Punjab, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, minister of state P. Chidambaram, Julio Ribeiro, DIB, M.K. Narayan, and DGP K.P.S. Gill, the majority of those present were in favour of a short quick action as they feared a more serious problem build-



The police keeping peace in Punjab

ing up outside the Temple complex if the operation was unduly delayed. Any delay could allow time to the secessionists to mobilise the Sikh masses, and thus could take the shape of massive agitations and demonstrations against any action against the militants inside the Golden Temple. Some of us argued in favour of a phased operation, so that the mistakes of the Operation Blue Star, even if the two situations were not exactly the same, could be avoided. There were still a number of devotees trapped inside the complex, and we were in favour of giving sufficient time to them to come out, so that they do not get caught in the cross-fire. Moreover, a direct swift assault could result in actual damage to the Temple, which we wanted to avoid at all costs. The meeting went on till the early hours of the next morning even though the Prime Minister was to leave a few hours later.... I was directed to personally go to Amritsar for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation

I left for Amritsar the next morning. Indefinite curfew had been imposed only around the Temple complex, but this time unlike in 1984, we had not asked for a curfew in the whole state, not even in the entire city of Amritsar. I moved around in the city in plain clothes and what struck me most was the lack of tension in the city. A crowd in front of a *halwai* was busy eating hot *jalebis*....

The strategy was to pin down the militants in their hiding places inside the complex by accurate long-distance sniper fire, and then step-by-step advance towards the Temple by first occupying the 'Sarai' and then the other strategic places. The Light Machine Gun (LMG) firing on the Bungas to neutralise the militants' guns was simultaneously continued round the clock. As LMGs were not having the desired effect, we had to approach the Army HQ to fly their discarded heavy machine guns from their ordinance depot at Jabalpore. The Army HQ was most cooperative and gave the NSG whatever help it asked for. The Air Force was also most helpful. . The whole Operation Black Thunder was conceived and planned entirely in the NSG, though the help of the CRPF was taken in the initial phase to guard the parameter outside the complex. The outside force was also replaced later by the NSG Special Ranger Groups.

The Punjab Police was asked to take charge of briefing the media in Amritsar, but were not involved in either the planning or the implementation of the Operation. Their help was also sought to make the announcements on the loudspeakers for the devotees to come out of the Temple complex during the announced hours, and to give them the assurance that they would not be fired at. Round-the-clock announcements on the loudspeakers were also made to the holed-up militants that their position was hopeless and that they must surrender in their own interest.

The militants were under tremendous pressure. They realised that they were in a hopeless situation. They did not know from which side the NSG commandos would advance. The occupation of one building after another in lightning movements, com-

The Golden Temple during Operation Black Thunder

pletely demoralised them, and broke their will to fight and to continue holding the devotees The devotees started coming out in batches during the announced hours. The siege continued till their will to resist completely broke down.

Even though the the NSG's operational plan was working with clockwork efficiency the Punjab Police was getting impatient. DGP was pressuring all the time for the the NSG to speed up its Operation to flush out all the militants. This pressure was having its effect on the the NSG officers. They were getting restive. I had to personally visit the the TAC headquarter, overlooking Harminder Sahib, at midnight to calm them down. The officers bubbling with confidence wanted a green signal from me to immediately finish the job. I did not want to take any undue risk of a messy assault which could result in avoidable casualties on either side. The officers were told to ignore the pressure from the Punjab Police. The NSG officers were operating under the direct command of their own officers. K.P.S. Gill protested, as according to him, he was the overall commander of the forces deployed there and should have the final authority to decide how an operation should be conducted. He was again told that since the task had been entrusted to the NSG, he should leave the job to them. He was not satisfied and the matter had to go the Prime Minister for a decision. The PM drew a command chart in his own handwriting. The Force Commander of the NSG was to continue functioning directly under the Director General, NSG, who, in turn, was to function under the home minister's control and direction.

Our patience paid off and most of the militants surrendered during the announced ceasefire hours. Among those who surrendered was the much wanted Panta who was involved in the terrorist shootouts in Greater Kailash and Gulmohar Park in New Delhi in 1987 and in many other terrorist acts. He could not be immediately recognised. In a desperate act he swallowed a cyanide capsule and died within seconds in front of the NSG video camera. The NSG video film which had covered the entire surrender by the militants with their arms raised above their head was released to Doordarshan after it was shown to Gopi Arora, the then secretary, information and broadcasting (I and B), and the media adviser in the ministry of I and B, Suman Dubey.

Some of the hardcore militants while coming out to surrender made a sudden dash to harminder Sahib and refused to come out. This created a very ugly situation. Taking a calculated risk, it was decided not to attack Harminder Sahib but to continue with the siege. The decision not to undertake any operation to forcibly evict the holed-up militants from Harminder Sahib did not find favour with some The Punjab Police Chief was also critical as he feared that they could damage it and put the blame on the security forces. We again held an internal meeting of the senior NSG officers and it was unanimously decided to stick to our earlier decision to continue with the siege, and not to fire at the militants even if they came out to take

I rushed to the PM's house and as I entered the Conference Room, even before I could greet the PM, he asked me to go to George's room and issue orders to the NSG officers in Amritsar that they should continue their physical control of the Temple complex and not allow K.P.S. Gill or any of his officers inside the complex till further orders

water from the Sarovar. We did not want to take any risk of being accused of causing any damage to the sanctum sanctorum. We decided to stick to our strategy in spite of the reports which had also reached Delhi that the holed-up militants had explosives and planned to blow up Harminder Sahib and put the blame on the NSG. We took the risk and asked for sevn more days The cabinet secretary, B.G Deshmukh, agreed to support us in the Core Committee's meeting, but only for a weak. After three days when the Core Committee's meeting in the Cabinet Secretariat was going on, I learnt about the surrender of all the militants. I informed Mrs Sarla Grewal, secretary to the Prime Minister, and B.G. Deshmukh, cabinet secretary, on telephone that our patience had paid off and all the militants had surrendered and come out of Harminder Sahib without our having to fire a single shot. Operation Black Thunder is to date the most successful anti-terrorism operation anywhere in the world. *The Economist*, London, said so in so many words in its issue of May 1988. The mood in the NSG headquarters was positively upbeat. The tensions of the last few days had taken its toll and I was looking forward to catching up on my sleep. But that was not to be, as our troubles were not yet over. V. George, PS to the PM, rang me up at night to summon me to the PM's house. He also let me know that the PM was in an angry mood

I was a little surprised because the Prime Minister should have been very pleased with the outcome of the Operation Black Thunder. I rushed to the PM's house and as I entered the Conference Room, even before I could greet the PM, he asked me to go to George's room and issue orders to the NSG officers in Amritsar that they should continue their physical control of the Temple complex and not allow K P S. Gill or any of his officers inside the complex till further orders I tried to say something, but he cut me short and told me to first do what I was told and then do the talking. I went to Geroge's room and through the NSG Control Room issued instructions to the NSG officers at Amritsar not to hand over the control of the Temple complex to the Punjab Police till they got further clearance from me.

Rajiv Gandhi

After issuing these orders I returned to the Conference Room. P. Chidambaram was already there After I sat down, the PM asked me under whose orders K.P.S. Gill had been allowed to enter Harminder Sahib. I explained that as the Operation was over, the NSG had to hand over the control to the Punjab Police for further action as required under the law. The Prime Minister, however, was not satisfied with my explanation. Why couldn't I keep Chidambaram informed before taking any decision, he asked. I apologised for not doing so, and went on to explain that there were a number of legal formalities that had to be completed, and it could only be dome by the Punjab Police, once the Operation was over. I should mention here that after the first one or two meetings, Buta Singh had stopped attending them and it was Chidambaram, who was coordinating various matters relating to Operation Black Thunder. With his razor sharp mind he could take quick decisions; he was a great help throughout the Operation.

Apparently, what had annoyed the Prime Minister was the escorting of some SGPC representatives inside Harminder Sahib. These gentlemen had created some confusion by their statements about the desecration of the sanctum sanctorum by the militants The Prime Minister was right; the aftermath of Operation Black Thunder was as important as the operation itself and had to be handled very carefully. He directed that the home minister, Buta Singh, the minister of state, P. Chidambaram, Gopi Arora, secretary I B., D.I.B , M K Narayanan and myself should immediately fly to Amritsar and coordinate the follow-up action . ..

The media had already built up Gill as the hero of Operation Black Thunder He never contradicted the media reports I was aware that my appearing at this stage on Doordarshan would create an avoidable controversy The need for building up the morale of the Punjab Police was more important than seeking credit that was due to the NSG. I discussed the matter with Chidambaram and he agreed with me. Gill was left to continue to bask in the glory of the Operation Black Thurder. Suman Dubey was disappointed and said so The NSG officers were also disappointed and told me that I was making a big mistake as public memory was short and that of the politicians even shorter. They feared that the NSG officers who had conducted a perfect anti-terrorist operation in the most difficult of circumstances would be forgotten when the time came for rewards. I assured them that I would never allow that to happen and forbade any of the officers to go to the Press. They were unhappy with my order, but they strictly complied with it

However to my utter shock, and dismay, I was to discover later that they were right and I was wrong But they were right only partially; it was not the political leaders or civil servants who forgot them, it was their own army officers ■

HUMOUR

SPOOFING THE WRITERS

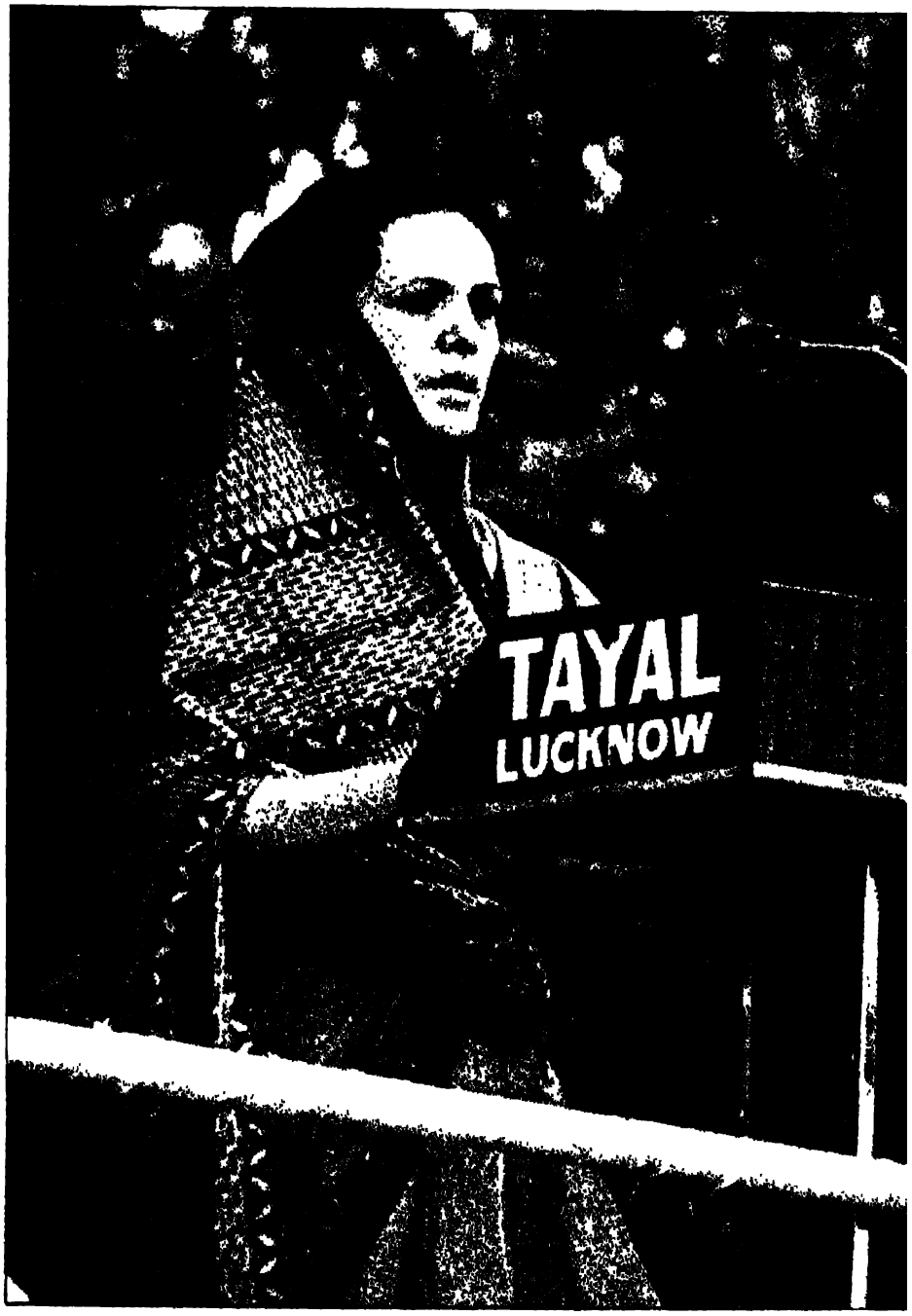
How would the big names of Indian writing treat a political announcement?

Ever got the feeling that you know what a columnist is going to say before you even turn to his column? Sick of editorials that are so predictable that they add nothing to what we already know and think?

Well, so are we. *The Telegraph* set out to analyse how Indian newspapers, magazines, columnists and writers would react if Sonia Gandhi were to finally announce that she was joining politics.

Here, entirely in jest and without any malice, are 11 take-offs of the columns, reports, editorials and stories that would result as a consequence of such an announcement.

Sonia Gandhi



Pritish Nandy

"Amethi! Exile me if you must. But Jesus was a sailor, when he walked upon the water, and he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower."

So, the most powerful woman in the land has taken the plunge. What does it say about our maggot-ridden, corrupt, carrion-infested political system that such a frightful thing can happen? The time has come to tell the Chandra Swamis, the J B Patnaiks, and the Samir Jains, that there are men of integrity, who will stand up for the hungry, down-trodden, lice-infested poor man in the streets, in the fields. The hungry man.

Sonia Gandhi thinks that she can take the people of India for granted because we are poor. But she does not know that there is one class of people who will always fight her.

Animal lovers.

Yesterday, when the shocking news came through on the Internet, my soul shot through the roof. Shocking! Immediately, I thought of Neruda, of Lorca, of Dylan and of my other contemporaries. As I said, in those

Pritish Nandy

Naxalite days, "The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind." I wrote a poem about it. Passionately!

Here for the benefit of readers is the entire poem:

Her face
In the window
Raindrops keep falling
Disgust!

Khushwant Singh

Anjali Kumar is a buxom, 45-year-old lass from Kanpur with a cheerful smile and a well-rounded bottom. Some mutual friends had given her my address, and she dropped in yesterday for some tea, carrying a book of her poetry.

"You have forgotten me," she said. I had to confess that this was true, but she did not mind. "We met 15 years ago when you had come on that free trip to Luxemburg. I worked for the Indian Embassy and when you rang and asked for two bottles of whiskey, I was the girl the ambassador sent to deliver it."

I had to admit that she was right and to make up for forgetting this round-bottomed wench, offered her some extra sugar in the tea. She asked me what I thought of Sonia Gandhi's decision to join politics. Reader, K.S. Khurana of Jalandhar has also asked me this. I told the buxom Anjali that the Gandhis were small, mean, petty people who had never bought a man a drink in their lives. Indira Gandhi had never read a book. Neither had Sanjay, but he was my friend. As for Sonia Gandhi, I have never met her. But I have some experience of Gandhi women. And that will be reserved for the next volume of my memoirs.

Khushwant Singh

Meanwhile, reader J.S. Juneja from Bhatinda has sent me this joke about Banta and Santa...

India Today

The irony was inescapable. Last fortnight, Sonia Gandhi, 46, the *sari*-clad, Italian-born widow of the former Prime Minister of India, announced that she was entering politics.

"I am entering politics," she told *India Today* in an exclusive press conference held at the Lutyens' designed house she occupies in the colonial city of New Delhi.

Congress circles regard the Gandhi widow's announcement as the litmus test for Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, 76. The elderly, *dhoti*-clad, balding Rao was, however, not willing to comment. "I am not willing to comment," said he.

According to V. George, 42, private secretary to the new political entrant, security considerations could well be involved. "If you do not leave at once," he told *India Today's* senior assistant associate editor, "I will have security throw you out."

Kuldip Nayar

The fat is truly in the fire. The recent announcement of joining politics by Sonia Gandhi shows that she thinks that the whole country is her father's property.

Kuldip Nayar

When I was press secretary to late Lal Bahadur Shastri, former PM of this country, he told me that even during Jawaharlal Nehru's time, there was a conspiracy by this family to turn the country into a *jagir*. Of course, unlike his grandson, late Rajiv Gandhi, Panditji was a mature person, so he never shouted from rooftops but one could read between the lines.

I was shocked to learn during my tenure in London as the high commissioner to the St James' Court, that even Queen Elizabeth, the esteemed Queen of England, whom I had the pleasure of meeting on many

Swapan Dasgupta

Dom Moraes

occasions, does not think that she owns the whole country

Who the Nehrus think they are?

Swapan Dasgupta

Each year, those of us who long for an England where men wore tweed jackets and women wore sensible shoes, are disgusted by the sight of the *nouveau riche* Indians who descend on London each summer.

They flock to New Zealand House, eat vegetarian food with the high commissioner, and spend their time shopping. This breed ignores the British brand names that those of us fortunate enough to have been brought up in Calcutta, have learnt to respect St Michael, Littlewoods and British Home Stores. Instead, they recite a litany of designer names: Gucci, Pucci, Armani, Versace and Missoni. To that list, add another name: Maino.

I must confess that even though I am a neighbour of Ramola Bachchan's in a most agreeable part of Hampstead, I have never actually run into the former Miss Maino, or Mrs Gandhi as she now styles herself in a rather blatant attempt to appropriate the Hindu tradition.

It is entirely possible, judging by her Italian origins, that she lives in Peckham when she is in London. Perhaps I shall ask my friend Ramola what the truth is.

Dom Moraes

The news that Sonia Gandhi is to join politics puts me in mind of the only occasion on which I ever met her grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru. (Dear sub: I'm not sure this is right. Could you possibly check? Regards, Dom.) I was with my father and he said to me, "Look who it is, you silly old fool."

Of course, in this day and age, silly old fool might well be taken as an insult, but that was how my father and I habitually addressed each other. In fact, I fear that fathers and sons have rather lost the closeness that Frank and I used to have in those days.

Anyhow, as I was saying, I had no recollection of ever having met Nehru till many years later when I was having a drink at the French pub in Soho and I got a tap on my shoulder.

"Look who's here!" said a voice that I would recognise anywhere. It was, of course, W.H. Auden, who had dropped in with Stephen Spender before going off to meet another friend of our's, called Christopher Isherwood.

I don't know why, but it struck me as an appropriate time to ask Stephen, "Have you ever met Nehru?" "No," said Stephen. And so we went off to Isherwood's. Looking back, I doubt if Auden and Spender had met Sonia Gandhi either.

Anees Jung

Anees Jung

I am walking through a deserted street in Morocco. The wind blows sand in my face as I stumble through the hot sunlight trying to find the UN office to collect my *per diem*. I see a woman, proud and erect with the dignity of her sex, as she holds a child by the hand and walks towards me.

I want to go up to her and embrace her! I want to tell her how proud she makes me to be a woman. I know now that Moroccan women are no different from us.

Before I can catch her eye, she speaks. Her name is Mrs Ramchandani. She is not a Moroccan at all. Ah, the unity that our sex has that cuts across all nations! She works

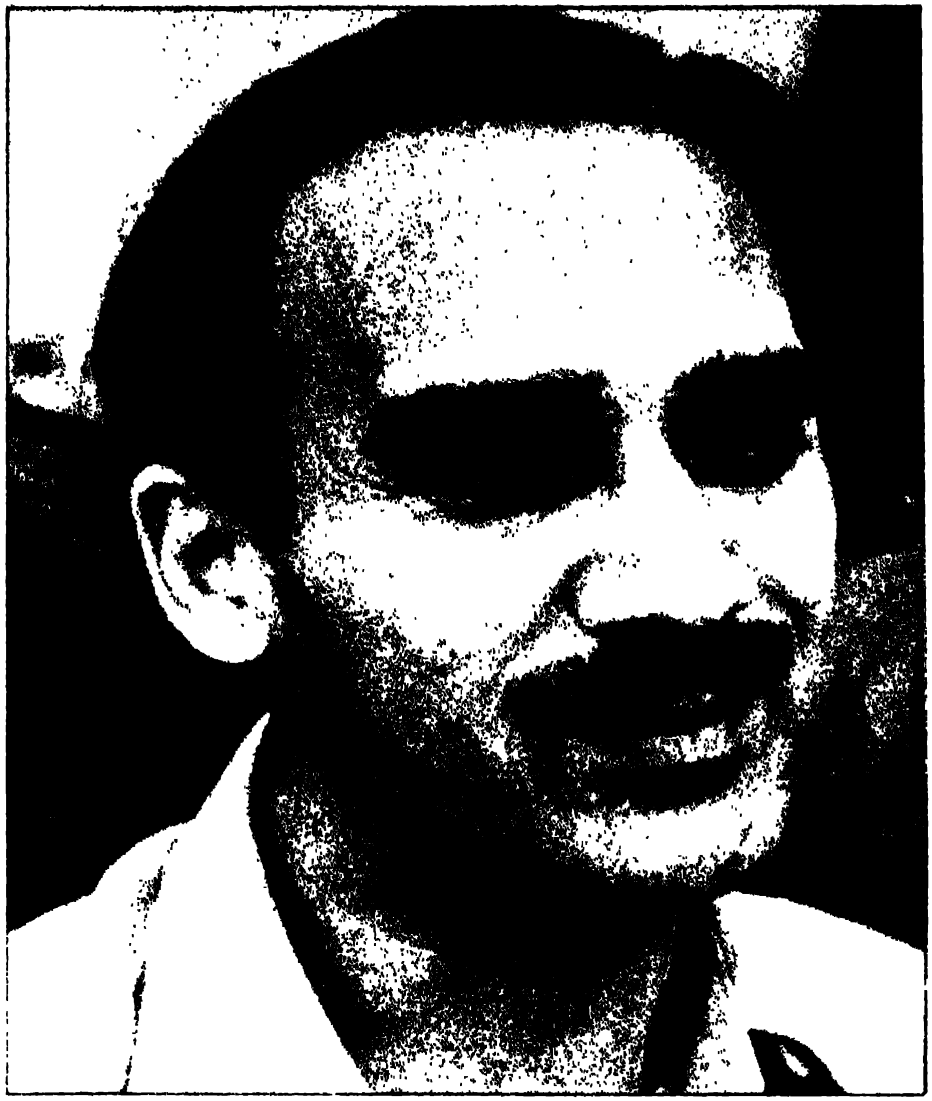
Mani Shankar Aiyar

for the embassy and gives me the news that Sonia Gandhi is joining politics

I am reminded of another royal family. Of the palaces and the gentler era that once held sway in the Hyderabad of my forefathers. Now, alas, that era has passed. The palaces are deserted. The rooms are empty And the crows are disconsolate

Mani Shankar Aiyar

The single-most important announcement of the Nineties has been greeted by the Indian media with the kind of cretinous braying that you would expect from fellows who couldn't pass the IAS exam and had no alternative but to try and seek a few crumbs from the Marwari press barons who play the tune to which our so-called editors so willingly dance (note to Prabhu: yes, you too, so get somebody to translate this column for you at the next *shakha*) while posing all the time as the guardians of a free press and pouring abuse on people like Rajiv Gandhi who at least had the sense to try and introduce Panchayati Raj so that the people of India had a say in governance and Ayotallah Shourie's hysterical rantings were restricted to the pages of *Sunday* where I gather assorted hysterical columnists are afforded a measure of shelter (but then, what do you expect of Mayo boys? I mean, just take a look at Jaswant Singh) but where, I am glad to note, that Soniaji's announcement that she would join politics to liberate us from the rule of septuagenarian pornographers who can't tell a backbencher from a minister, has at least got the cover page mention that an epoch-making event of this nature truly deserves even if the hyenas of the *Indian Express* are too busy learning English to notice.



Arun Shourie

Nisha da Cunha

And it was after the funeral that she knew that he had noticed her It was not something that he said, just the way that he looked And as the priest went ahead with the ceremonies, a voice inside of her said, "This is what you have always wanted. Don't make any mistakes now."

And so, even though her hands shook, and she felt a deep sadness within her because she knew that however much she loved him, he would never be truly her s, she took a tentative step forward.

And now she could feel him getting ready to speak. What was it that he would say? How would he phrase it? Had he sensed that she had always been in love with him from that first day when he had gate-crashed their college picnic and insisted on sharing their jam sandwiches?

He cleared his throat and she knew that life would never be the same again. "Have you seen the papers?" he called out "Sonia Gandhi's joining politics."

And it was then that she knew why she had felt so sad all day. Because he had never noticed her really He had only been obsessed with this Sonia person.

Times of India editorial

In so far as Mrs Gandhi's announcement that she is considering a political career may be regarded as an accurate statement of her intentions, it is entirely consistent with the behaviour patterns that she has displayed since the tragic assassination of her late husband.

Moreover, that Mrs Gandhi should have chosen to make this announcement at a press conference leads one to believe that it was her intention that this news should appear in the newspapers the following day.

However, her unwillingness to state that she wishes to have Prime Minister Narasimha Rao thrown into the Yamuna demonstrates herpolitical maturity for which she deserves the congratulations of the entire nation.

As far as the Indian state is concerned, the entry of fresh faces into politics is an entirely welcome development that few can complain about. Mrs Gandhi will be one such fresh face.

Nevertheless, it is too early to come to any conclusions about the impact her announcement will have on the future shape of the Indian polity. Only time will tell.

Arun Shourie

It was Gandhiji who told us that we must have sympathy for those who are less fortunate than us. It was a message that Swami Vivekanand repeated time and again (paragraph four, page 533 , *Vivekanand Re-interpreted* by Govind Acharya, All Hindu Publishers, Nagpur) when he wrote in those inspiring words: "Rise! Ye silent Hindu! Know that ye shall reject the Italian peril "

So, lest critics accuse me without understanding the context and logic of my argument, of harbouring a pro-RSS bent of mind let me quote one of the patron saints of the British Raj, Rudyard Kipling: "East is East and West is West, and the two shall never twain."

That Sonia Gandhi should choose to enter politics is not a matter for anger or for abuse. It is a matter for profound sorrow. After all this time, the puffed-up bullies and puny Hitlers of the Gandhi dynasty still believe that they can play havoc with the future of this country. Sonia Gandhi is not even an Indian. Her record is extremely dubious

In 1990, the Janata Dal government had said that in three weeks' time, my friend, Bhure Lal, would return from Switzerland bearing a slip of paper that was a receipt for Rs 64 crore from the Bofors company that had been signed by either Sonia or members of her family. Congressmen love to sneer and laugh. What happened to your names, they say? Do they not know that five years is not a long time in the context of the Hindu tradition? Does it not say in the *Rig Veda*. 'Om, *om shanti, shanti*, Time is endless and the end is timeless "

Perhaps it does not. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
IC-741	0800	1 2 3 6	IC-742	1030	1, 3
			IC-742	1250	4, 7
IC-743	0920	daily	IC-744	1150	daily
S2-026/027	0850	1 2, 4 5	S2-028/005	2005	1 2, 4 5 7
PF-301	0830	1, 2 3 4, 5, 6	PF-302	1200	2, 4 6
			PF-302	1500	1, 3, 5
IC-721	1250	1, 3 4, 5 7	IC 722	1525	1, 3 4 5 7
D2 181	1330	daily	D2 181	1600	daily
IC-771	0600	daily	IC-772	1140	daily
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
D5-402	0600	3 5 7	D5-401	1230	2 4 6
IC-544	1115	2, 7	IC 543	1035	2 7
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2120	2 4 6
VF-106	1030	2 4	VF 105	0950	2 4
VF-106	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
IC-676	0730	daily	IC-675	0820	daily
9W-202	0715	1 3 4 5, 6 7	9W-201	0910	1 3 4 5 6 7
D2-102	0920	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC-273	1945	daily	AI-306	1730	5
9W-212	2000	daily	9W 211	1925	daily
D2-104	2005	daily	D2 103	1935	daily
AI-309	1930	6	IC-274	1850	daily
M9-305	0600	1 2 3 4 5 6	M9 306	1140	1 2, 3 4 5 6
M9 307	1700	daily	M9-308	2230	daily
IC-263	0630	daily	S2-025	0810	1 2 3 4 5 6
S2-026	0850	1, 2, 3 4, 5	M9 303	0825	daily
M9-304	0905	daily	AI 562	0925	1
IC 812	1515	1, 3, 5	4S-806	1150	1 2 3 4 5 6
IC-402	1715	daily	IC-401	1135	daily
4S-805	1720	1 2 3 4 5 6	S2 005	1655	1 2 3 4 5 7
			IC 811	1715	1 3 5
S2-006	1955	1 2 3, 4 5 7	M9 301	1950	daily
M9-302	2030	daily	IC-264	2025	daily
IC-855	1830	4 7	IC-856	1195	4 7
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5 605	1935	daily
PF 737	0730	3 5	IC 702	1630	1 3 5
4S-816	1205	2, 4 6	4S 815	1635	1 2 3
4S-812	1205	1, 3 5	4S-811	1635	2 4 6
IC-701	1240	1 3 5, 7	PF-738	1740	3 5
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
IC-257	1145	1, 4	IC-257	1540	1 4
S2-026/021	0850	1 2, 3, 4 5	S2-022/00	2005	1 2, 3 4 5

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
D5-601	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
IC-703	0810	1 3, 5	IC-704	1120	1, 3 5
9W-611	1020	daily	9W 612	1310	daily
M9 321	1230	daily	M9 322	1510	daily
PF-301	0830	1, 3 5	PF-302	1500	1 3 5
IC-702	0830	4 7	IC 230	1620	daily
IC-229	1310	daily	4S-811	1635	2 4 6
4S 816/811	1205	2 4 6	4S 812/815	1635	1, 3, 5
IC 777	1615	3 5 7	IC 778	2015	3 5, 7
IC 769	1615	2, 4 6	IC-770	1745	2 4, 6
VF-106	1030	2 4	VF-105	0950	2 4
VF 106	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
D5-601/603	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC-213	1540	2 6
S2-026/027	0850	1 2, 4 5	S2-028/005	2005	1 2 4 5 7
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC 257	1540	4 7
IC-812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 3 5
D5 402	0600	3 5 7	D5 401	1230	2 4 6
IC-542	1115	1 4 6	IC 541	1030	1 4 6
IC 544	1115	2 7	IC 543	1035	2 7
D2 172	1540	daily	D2 171	1155	daily
IC-765	1720	daily	IC 766	2005	daily
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	1745	2 4 6
D5 402	1330	2 4 6	D5 401	1825	2 4 6
IC-812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 3 5
IC-285	0640	1 3 5	IC 286	1100	1 4 6
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 3 5
D5 601	0600	daily	D5 605	1935	daily
D5-601/603	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 253	0745	2 4 6	IC 254	1025	2 4 6
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
S2-016	1555	1 3 5	S2-015	1015	1 3 5
D5 406	1330	2 4 6	D5 406	1835	2 4 6
IC-542	1115	1 4 6	IC-541	1030	1 4 6

INTERNATIONAL

RJ-185	1445	4	RJ-184	0705	4
KL-876	0420	7	KL-875	0235	7
KB-105	0850	2 6	KB 106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0655	2 5	TG-313	1240	1 3 6
IC-855	1100	4 7	IC 856	1730	4 7
TG-314	1355	1 3 6	IC-732	1505	2 5
AI-306	1910	5	AI 305	1825	6
RO-076	2150	5 7	RO 075	1200	5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC-225	0800	1	IC-226	1020	1
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2, 3 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3 6 7
IC-723	1250	1, 2 3, 5, 6	IC-724	1520	1, 2 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2 3 5, 6, 7	BG 093	1825	1, 2 3 5, 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	7
[illegible]					
RA-214	1215	2, 4 6	RA-213	1130	2 4 6
IC-747	1115	1 2 4, 6	IC-748	1435	1 2 4 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
BA-142	2115	3, 7	BA-143	1515	3 7
[illegible]					
SU-538	1755	4	SU-537	1555	4
[illegible]					
KB-106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2, 6
KB-106	1325	5			
[illegible]					
SQ 415	2345	2 5	SQ-416	2230	2 5
BI 108	0830	[illegible]	BI-107	2000	6
[illegible]					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI-306	1910	5	AI 309	1820	6
[illegible]					
IC 227	1530	4 7	IC-228	1455	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
3003	20-00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13 00	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tue Thurs Fri & Sun	[illegible]	2302
2305	18-45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
2307	23-30	**Jodhpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
2019	5 20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
3072	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** [illegible] Dep Tue Fri & Sat Arr Tue [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Monday	[illegible]	[illegible]
5049	23-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	[illegible]	[illegible]
5047	13-00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	[illegible]	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 30	3010
3007	9-30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
5659	17 25	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3317	6-10	**Black Diamond Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	6 35	3036
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	5 53	[illegible]
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time		Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 55	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8 45	3144
3111	20-15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	[illegible]	[illegible]
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	[illegible]	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kather Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBC Loop	[illegible]	[illegible]
3103	18 20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	[illegible]
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Bonhipur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	[illegible]	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	12 30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15-25	2859
2021	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	8033
8047	15 20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14-00	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12-10	2842
7002	8 10	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	12 40	7004
6411	22 30	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6412
8014	[illegible]	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8013
8017	6 00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 45	8018
8005	20 55	**Titlagarh Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21 40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 10	8016
8007	[illegible] 15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8401	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	6 30	8410
[illegible]	6 [illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
8019	19-30	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 [illegible]	8024
8017	16 4[illegible]	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	8018
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	16 10	-
	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Saturday only	10 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	
	13 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	[illegible] 15	[illegible]
	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible] 15	
[illegible]	[illegible] 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep Thurs & Fri Arr Tue & Fri	[illegible]-45	[illegible]
[illegible]	12 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	13 45	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

The Fatal Journey

The French revolution taught some unexpected lessons. A nobleman hiding from the mob in his chateau in Lorraine passed his time by putting copper rings around the legs of nesting swallows. He discovered that the same birds returned to the same nesting sites three years running and proved that birds navigate. Polynesian islanders had for centuries already been training frigate birds to carry messages from island to island. Ancient Romans had used swallows to carry home the colours of victorious chariot teams. And the homing sense of pigeons is proverbial.

About this time of year, millions of birds prove their navigational skills afresh by flying across the globe from summer breeding sites to wintering grounds. The apparently fragile Arctic tern is one of the champion migrants, covering 10,000 kilometres from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Hudsonian goodwits, waders with long, probing bills, travel non-stop from Canada to South America flying 4,500 kilometres in just three days. Other birds cross continents in stages, many travelling East-West from Siberia to Western Europe or Northeast to Southwest from Siberia to South Africa, or south over India.

As Hugh Whistler, author of a handbook less famous than Salim Ali's put it. "The avifauna of India or of any square mile of it is never stationary, but changes season by season in response to the great tide of birdlife which sweeps across it .. The movement starts in July and reaches its height in September; it crosses the Himalayas from both ends and gradually converges down the two sides of he Peninsula, spending its strength until it ends finally in Ceylon."

Migration is such a risky business that some times you wonder why the birds don't just stay put. They don't because of changing food supplies and extreme cold. In places as far north as Alaska, practically all species find it necessary to move out in winter.

The few birds which can survive the sub-zero conditions, with a couple of hours daylight, and very limited food are hardy creatures with splendid names like boreal chickadees and hoary redpolls. The theory is that thousands of years ago other species stayed to keep the chickadees company, but that climate changes like the Ice Age, forced them to migrate or perish.

Equally, species might not just have migrated to get away from the cold, but also advanced into new territories when things warmed up.

Ironically, migration for survival has now turned into migration for destruction. To have the strength to migrate, birds have to store energy as fat, sometimes adding half their body weight again. When they store fat, they also store the pesticides which coat their food. During migration, the chemicals are released en masse into the bird's body and can kill it.

'The avifauna of India or of any square mile of it is never stationary, but changes season by season in response to the great tide of birdlife which sweeps across it'

There are other hazards caused by technology too. The Western race of the Siberian crane, the most beautiful of India's wintering birds with its radiant, soft, white plumage, jet-black wing tips and scarlet head, is extinct in the wild. It has been lured to the ground with decoys, and crippled by rope and stone contraptions thrown round its neck, it has been shot and trapped and eaten until it is no more.

Water and wetland birds like cranes, ducks, geese and waders are the most conspicuous winter visitors. Those which survive the journey now find India less attractive than it once was despite the Wildlife Protection Act which prohibits the killing of all wild birds except vermin. Rivers and lakes have shrunk with more efficient agriculture. Pollution is greater than ever before

Then hunting is still a problem, although ornithologists like Rajat Bhargav from Aligarh Muslim University say that the Wildlife Act has drastically reduced the numbers of birds killed. But not all hunters have stopped poaching and there is practically no published research on the effect of the Act on tribes and communities like chirimars, baheliyas and mir shikaris who for centuries have relied on migrant waterfowl for food and income.

These communities know more about birds than most ornithologists, and their talents could well be used for conservation on the old 'poacher-turned gamekeeper' principle. The government has, after all, in theory robbed them of their traditional livelihood and so it's natural for them to turn to the government for an alternative.

As long as there is none, it's only likely that many birds who heroically survive the journey to India, bringing with them so much colour and beauty, will not be making the return journey in spring. *(Sanctuary Features)*

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

From remote controlled aeromodels to massive organising to flights of fancy is the range Ariens will cover, as the full moon helps them to pack a punch and ram it home Matters of the heart also find a sweet echo this fortnight as well as the next. So, there's hope for lovers and poets.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Mercury-Taurus union means a journey, ceremony and publicity The legacies of the last fortnight, are with you now Also, home, property and decoration, will not be denied Your efforts will certainly bear fruit Make the most of it. This is the time to make changes and socialise on a massive scale.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

You will do exceedingly well in the workfront as the moon sextiles and trines your ruling planet, Mercury. Journeys and collaborations are fated Matters related to gifts, taxes, legacies, endowments, joint-finances make you happy. Expect money and honey Accept a proposal.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

All Cancerian women come into their own. After that, there is no stopping them from lighting the world. The key is in the group activity, the camaraderie, the socialising, the ability to get along and be a team person Deals, transactions, negotiations and publicity are foretold.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

This is the right time to work extra hard at what you want Work pressures will be tremendous. The lure of distant places will paradoxi cally exist with renovation/decoration/ buying/selling and the cosy comforts of the home In other words, a tug-of-war in your hearts

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Virgoans will crush their opponents and have a crush, too Love, laughter, expenses, deals, collaborations, meets, interviews, outings and meets await you A journey may do you a lot of good It may also be necessary The spoken and the written word will have an additional impact

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Not mired in dark turmoil but rather well-adjusted are today's teenagers, and Librans, too seem to be just that They will find zest and purpose in life Expect the heart to quiver, the mind to bend, the imagination to hit the sky In short, expect alchemy and magic to enrich your life.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Your delight will be in sports, sweethearts, good money, happy fraternising, luck of the draw, and a promotion which is winging its way towards you Power and responsibility will be thrust upon you So be ready to take it A journey at short notice is also stated for Scorpions.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Hope, bustle and religion will be the trio in your life as the sun changes signs A fast-forward in business, trips, art, learning, teaching, religious rites, trading, courtship are the pointers Expect a promotion if in service, a loan if in business, or a new office if in a profession.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Research, finances, teaching and untying the Gordian knot, these are the salient features for Capricornians Journeys, too, are a marked feature of the fortnight for you. Time's winged chariot has your sweetheart brought right up to your doorstep. There will also be hectic activity soon.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

You will ensure marriage, an engagement, a collaboration or a job-switch. Pets should make you happy. Many Aquarians will be hiring/firing employees if they are the boss, or an executive Legal issues and posers are probable, but given understanding and reasoning these could definitely be sorted out

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Expect a new high in your work, tremendous joy through children and creative pursuits Hobbies will have an extra dimension, say music, writing, teaching and acting. For Pisceans interested in romance and marriage, a fine chance to make it You will be working on various levels simultaneously.

BIRTHDAYS

January 14: The planets lead you on to fulfil your [illegible] in life. Take time off for relaxation and pleasure. You will thrive on power.

January 15: Progress in matters related to the heart are [illegible] highlighted. Be it romance, marriage or even business, [illegible] you will make a headway.

January 16: The planets lead you to make news. Name and [illegible] messages, letters and calls will take up a [illegible] time.

January 17: Business partnerships will lead to fresh [illegible] and profits. You will be deeply committed to your work.

January 18: This is a phase when collaborations and correspondence will be of the utmost importance. Health safeguards are vital for you. Your creativity will also peak this birthday.

January 19: There are a number of choices, messages and demands which will keep you on your toes. Job and profession wise you will reach great heights.

January 20: There will be a few problems on the family front. Friends and family members will run into all sorts of confusion. Have patience.

Exquisite craftsmanship in International Standard 22 carat gold and diamond jewellery. Dealer in precious and astrological stones.

P. C. CHANDRA
JEWELLERS

GOLD

A jewel of jewels

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

A guide to what the chattering classes are talking about

This week: DD3

Began life as: An idea in information and broadcasting secretary Bhaskar Ghose's head. He was director-general of Doordarshan for part of the Rajiv Gandhi era and wanted to leave his mark on the network before he retired in early 1996.

The early days: Ghose talked a lot about it: promised people that this will be the channel for everybody who never wanted to watch TV. It would be intellectual; it would be newsy; it would be daring; it would be compulsive.

So, what happened?: Nothing.

And why is that?: Mainly because people who don't want to watch television still don't want to watch it. Besides, Ghose's conception of up-market may not have been everybody else's. Moreover, Dileep Padgaonkar endangered the whole project.

Did this have to do with Samir Jain?: No, no, this was the post-*Times of India* Padgaonkar. He was to host a live breakfast show every weekday, and invited many journalists close to the PMO for the dummy runs. They were appalled that Doordarshan was giving people money to criticise the Prime Minister and complained to Narasimha Rao.

And Rao said, so what?: No, he didn't. He closed the damn thing down one day before it was due to go on the air.

Oh dear!: You bet. Red faces all around at Mandi House; Ghose in fit of depression; Padgaonkar's career progression in ruins, etc. And that was the last that anybody heard of DD3 for a full year.

Who revived it?: Bhaskar Ghose, who else? He persuaded his minister to take it to Cabinet and Rao agreed on the condition that there was no live programming and no controversy.

This suited Ghose, who had decided that the real place for theatre was not the stage but the television screen. So, DD3 was recast as an intellectual rather than up-market channel. And no, Dileep Padgaonkar did not get his show back.

Is it on the air now?: The channel, you mean? Well yes, it is our duty to inform you that it is telecast every day even though you've probably never heard of it and certainly never watched it.

Why is that?: Its big advantage was going to be that it was terrestrially telecast. But, thanks to the delay, it only went on the air after the cable revolution. So now it doesn't matter whether it's terrestrial or satellite. All that matters is whether the cable operator supplies it. And most don't.

Can't you ask for it?: You probably can, but few people bother.

Oh really!: Afraid so. The unanimous view of all TV critics is that it consists of unwatchable amateurish programming that isn't worth the bother.

That doesn't sound like Ghose: No, it doesn't. But then, he can't do everything. He has to depend on other people to handle the programming.

What will happen now?: Ghose will retire. There will be a new DG. There is a new minister. An election is coming up. Doordarshan will have no room for anything other than propaganda.

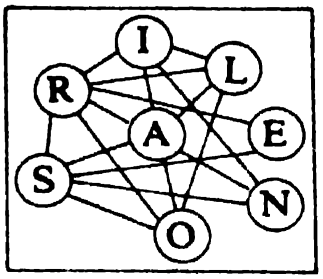
Isn't that terrible?: Propaganda is only terrible if you have to watch it. And nobody watches DD3. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL · HAL KAUFMAN

SCHOOL DAZE! Mrs Octopus thinks she has as many as 21 fish in her class, but isn't sure. How many do you say?

PAIR GAME! Absentminded Uncle Al has one pair of glasses for outdoors, one pair for indoors, and one pair for doing what? Answer quickly, if you can.

For finding the other two



WORD TRACER DIAGRAM

BEGINNING with any essential letter, see if you can connect letters along lines in the diagram above to form random words

Definitions.

1. One example.
2. In such a way.
3. Period of time.
4. Garden flower.
5. Big fibbers.
6. Popeye's occupation.

Then try to find at least 10 more five-letter words, similarly.

1—a 2 on 3 —era 4 - rose 5— liars 6 —sailor

for Five-letter words Small, lairs arose liser, snare, snarle, rarse, laser solar lorem serm, rama ors

19 ROUNDUP! Object of this exercise is to place the numbers 1-9 in blank circles of the diagram below so that each row of three numbers in a straight line through centre will total 15

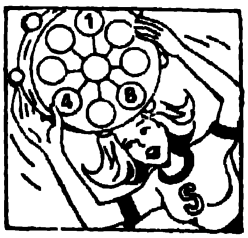
Three numbers — 1,4 and 8 — are already in place

here are some starter hints

Hint 1: Number at centre cannot be too high or too low

Hint 2: Outer circle numbers appear in a rather orderly succession take it from there

Hint 3: At centre, then clockwise from top 6,7,8,9,1,2 will do it



HOCUS-FOCUS

CAN YOU TRUST YOUR EYES? There are at least six differences in drawing details between top and bottom panels How quickly can you find them? Check answers with those below

DIFFERENCES: 1 Arm is moved. 2. Handle is shorter. 3. Picture is different. 4. Shirt is different. 5. Mailbox is missing. 6. Outlet is missing

FUNSPOT

HANG ON! It's fun on the run for these toboggan sledders. Add colors by number: 1—Red. 2—Lt. blue. 3—Yellow. 4—Lt. brown. 5—Flesh tones. 6—Lt. green. 7—Dk. brown. 8—Purple.

SPELLBINDER

SCORE 10 points for using all the letters in the word below to form two complete words

HESITANT

- - - - - - - -

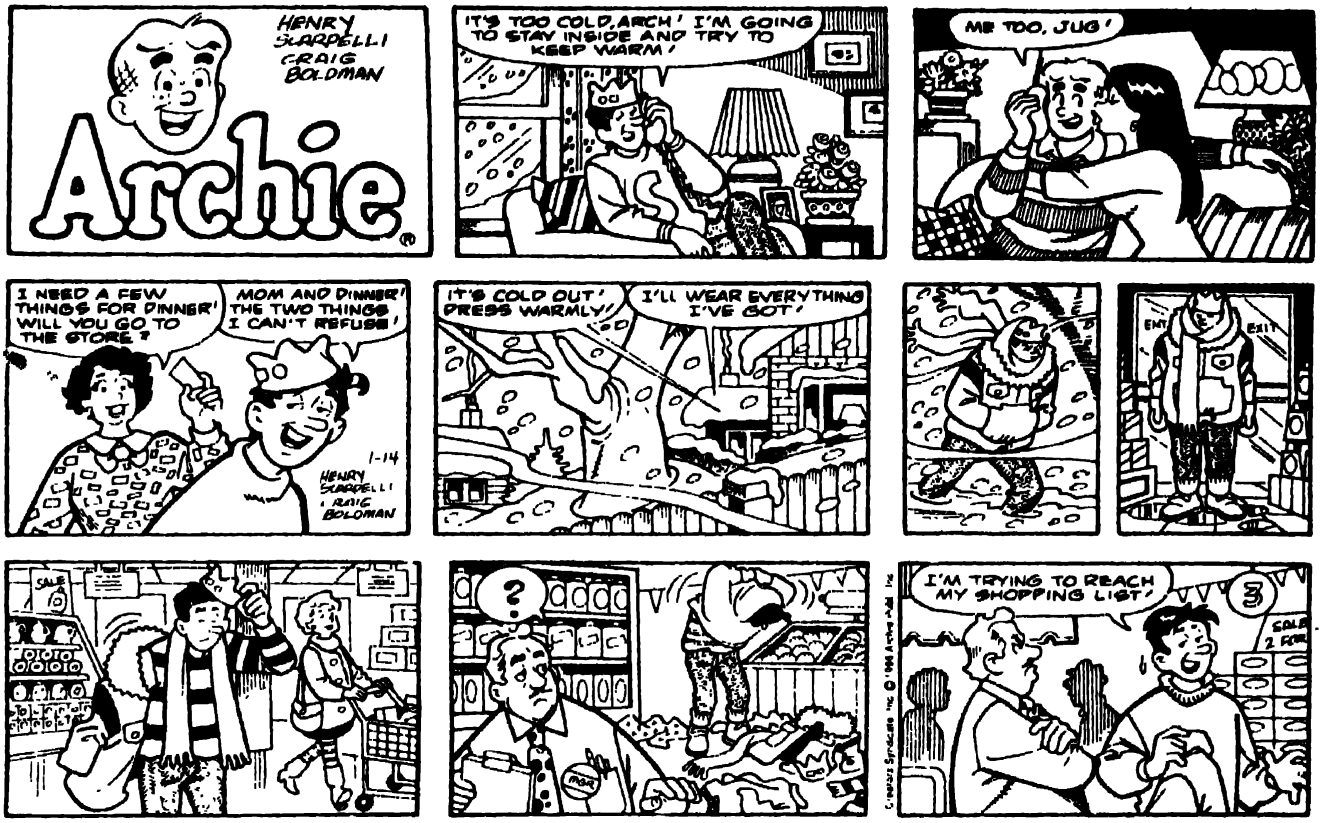
THEN score 2 points each for all words of four letters or more found among the letters

Try to score at least 50 points.

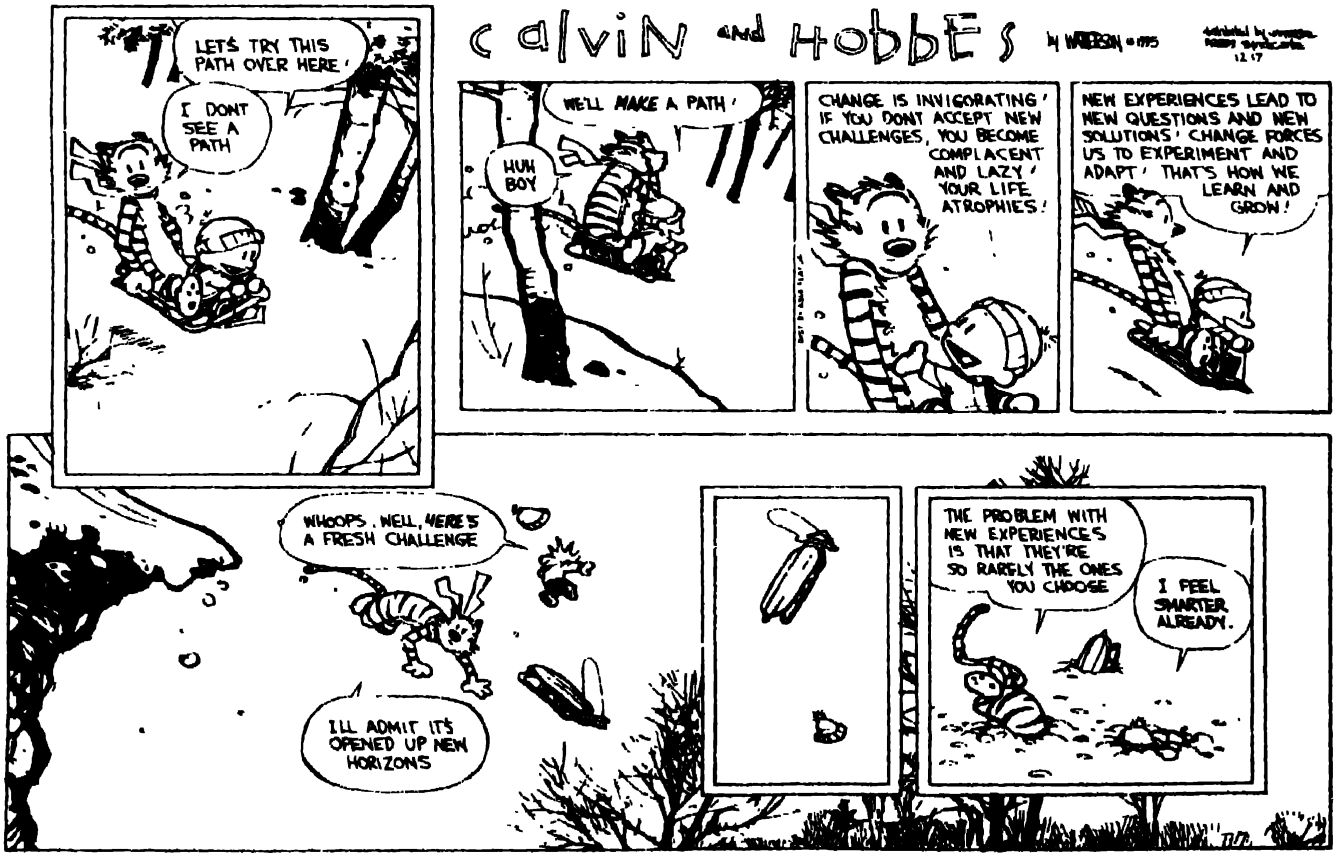
Possible twosome. Thin, seal.

COMICS

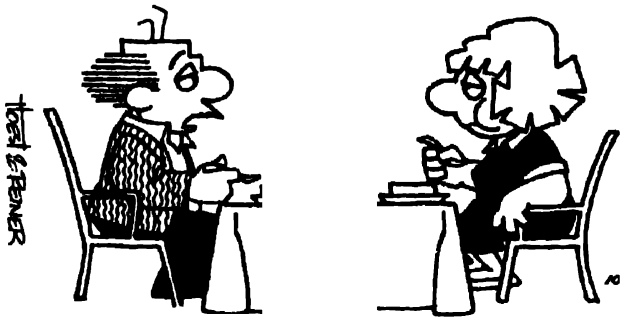
ARCHIE



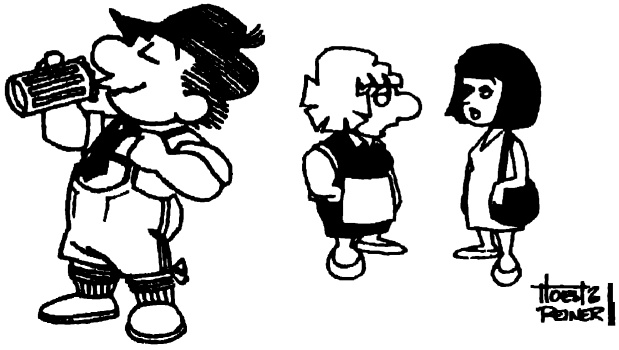
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



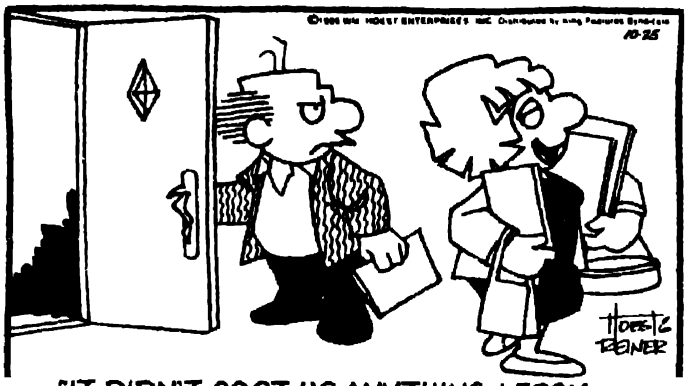
THE LOCKHORNS



"YOU SURE KNOW YOUR ONIONS, LORETTA ... WHICH KIND DID YOU PUT IN THIS CARROT CAKE?"



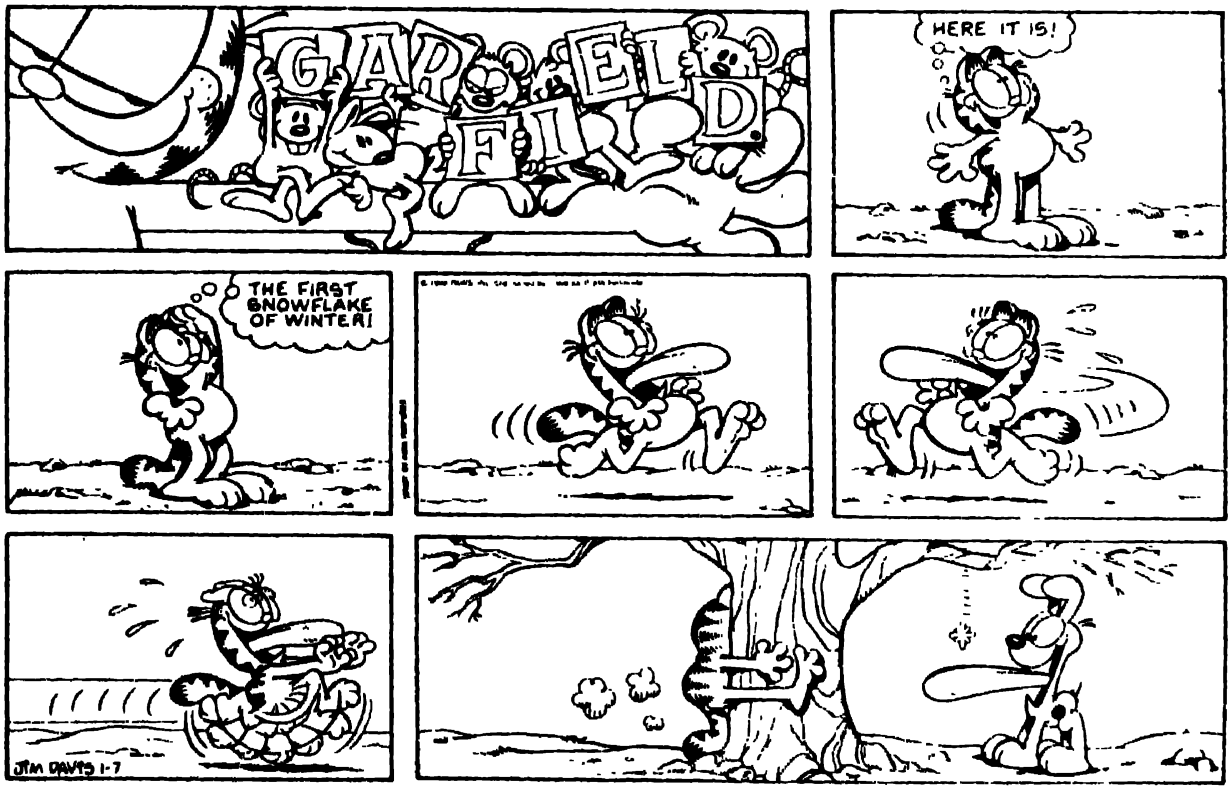
"LEROY'S HAVING HIS OWN PRIVATE OKTOBERFEST."



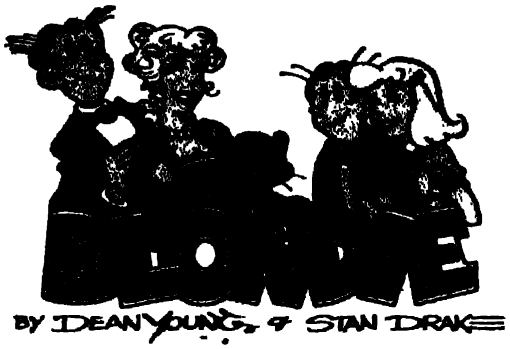
"IT DIDN'T COST US ANYTHING, LEROY ... I TOOK THE MONEY OUT OF OUR SAVINGS."

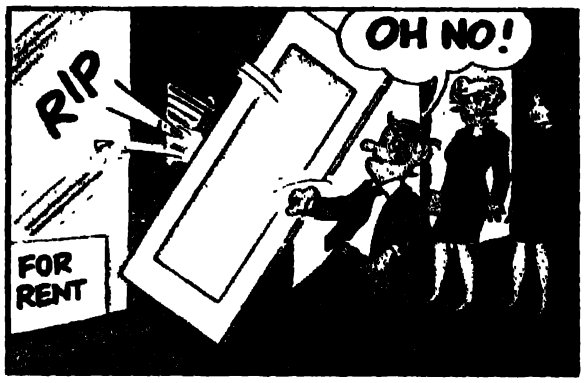
"I'M GOING TO CALL YOUR MOTHER WITH OUR NEW VOICE DIALING ... DIAL 'BIG MOUTH.'"

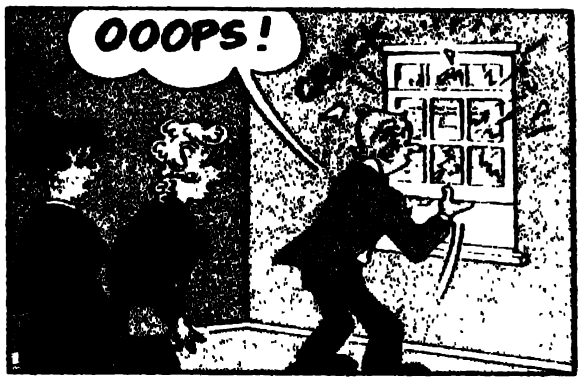
GARFIELD

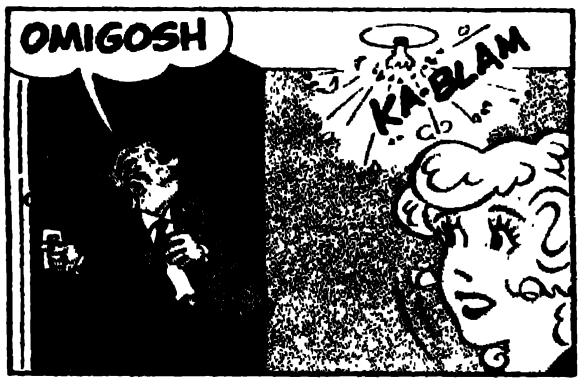


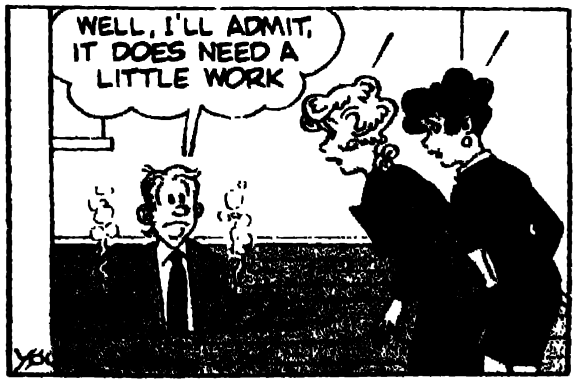
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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ROMANCING THE STONE

Delhi's ladies can now wear diamonds in their hair and crystals on their nails, says ***Samita Bhatia***

Photographs by Rajesh Kumar

Just as retro glamour — the kind epitomised by such Hollywood icons as Marilyn Monroe and Marlene Dietrich — has made a huge comeback in the West, our ladies in Delhi are also succumbing to the lure of diamonds, crystals and the ever-popular rhinestones.

With one important difference. They are not looking to wear them on either their fingers or choli blouses. Instead, they will be sporting these stones on their hair and nails, with some help from such beauticians as Blossom Kochar and that high priestess of high-maintainance beauty, Shahnaz Hussain.

Yes, the nail decorations and hair extensions that the West went so wild about a decade or so ago, are now making inroads into the Indian beauty scene. And Shahnaz Hussain, now celebrating the 25th anniversary of her company, is launching them in a big way in India.

Here to help Hussain popularise these items was Murray Malski, a leading hair stylist from Hong Kong, who — among other things — is adept at punching diamonds and ruby-red crystals on to the hair of a favoured client

If diamonds and pearls in your hair do not hold much appeal, then you can always go in for the less garish options. How about some non-chemical hair streaking, for instance, which would give you an entirely different look?

If you have short hair and don't particularly want to wait for months — or even forever — for it to grow to a respectable length, then all you have to do is book into Hussain's salon. There a hair stylist will solder (yes, solder!) hair strands to your own, and three hours later, your six centimeters will have increased to around 26 centimeteres — or more.

If we're talking about hair, then nails can't be very far behind. And sure enough, you can get sparkling rhinestones at your fingertips: but for a minor fortune, of course. Artificial nails (which you may require if your own are bitten to the quick) come for Rs 200 each, while the embellishments themselves will cost you Rs 250 per nail.

The total cost of this exercise could be as high as Rs 4,500. And then, you will be told that you have to remove this star-spangled nail varnish after a fortnight if you want to ensure the health of your nails.

Other hair treatments include streaking and highlighting and these are equally expensive. As far as hair extensions are concerned, each strand that adds to your hair length in brown and black comes for Rs 250. The burgundy and blonde strands, however, go for a premium, being priced at Rs 450 each.

While four or five strands are often enough to give the right 'effect', Hussain refuses to recommend the optimum number. According to her, that depends entirely on the client in question.

Says Nilofar Currimbhoy, Hussain's daughter and the newly-appointed president of the Shahnaz Herbal Group of Companies, "Hair extensions are also useful for cancer patients who have lost hair after undergoing chemotherapy. Since their hair seems to grow back very slowly, this helps them tide over a difficult period."

What can be a real killer though is lengthening an entire head of hair. Depending on the thickness of a client's hair, the number of strands required can range anywhere from 25 to 50. So, you could well end up paying anywhere from Rs 6,250 to Rs 12,500 for a new set of hair.

Not that these prices are deterring any of Delhi's society ladies. Designer Bina Ramani, for instance, was in attendance at Hussain's salon, as was the former model/actress Nafisa Ali, who was having her nails 'done'. "It looks terrifying," she admitted, after the event, "but I think the children will love it."

Some ambassadors' wives have also, apparently, succumbed to the lure of the magic aids in Shahnaz's salon, and had their nails and hair decorated. No doubt, that look goes

down exquisitely on the diplomatic circuit!

But neither Shahnaz nor Nilofar is ready to admit that this is essentially the stuff of high (or low, depending on your point of view) fashion. Says Currimbhoy, "These are basically geared for nail and hair care. Of course, the jewels, both for hair and nails, are attractive so people simply love them. But that's not the main point."

Other beauticians say that getting such nail embellishments done is the best way to get fungal infection on your nails. Not so, says Nilofar. "The first application at our parlours," she says, explaining the process, "is that of the nail hardener. The liquid used under the embellishments has a powerful neem base along with nine other hardeners that actually help strengthen and build nails. This improves nail health, the neem base helps fight off nail fungus, and the nail grows healthier and faster. The embellishment also acts as a cover for broken or damaged nails till the new ones grow."

Contrary to its claims, Shahnaz Herbal cannot be credited with bringing embellishment techniques to this country. Blossom Kochar's Pivot Point has been offering these services to its clients for the last four years. But, says Kochar, the concept never really caught on except with college kids and brides.

Instead, she says, things worked the other way round, with the *bindi*—which she exported to the States—taking the Americans by storm.

But crystals and rhinestones are not

all that Pivot Point has to offer. "One popular method of looking after nails among our clients," says Kochar, "is the French manicure which leaves the nail covered with a colourless varnish and the tips an opaque white. It makes for an understated, elegant look without being fussy."

Another method used is the silver foil technique which leaves a silver print on the nail. Nail jewels, however, have not become very popular, though you can get stars, stones, pearls and other gems glued on to your nail here. The latest addition to the gizmos at work in Pivot Point is the air brush: a gun that sprays air and paints of different colours on to the nail.

Kochar makes a point of emphasising that her services are not overpriced. "We have kept our prices reasonable," she says, "so that many more people can actually have access to these beauty aids. If they are too steeply priced, then only a select few can avail of them."

Hence, at Pivot Point, nail decorations can be acquired for around Rs 150-500 and the latest method of hair lengthening—hair combs—costs around Rs 150-200 each.

"This is the latest method doing the rounds in the US," explains Kochar, "and the obvious advantage of this method of hair lengthening is that the client does not need to keep this comb on forever. It can be taken on and off as she likes."

Kochar also has other methods of hair lengthening on offer: stitching, the glue gun technique and meshing. But the latter method has been known to damage hair as the extension strands are actually soldered on to the person's existing hair.

But while Kochar's Pivot Point met with relatively little success in marketing these innovative beauty aids, the entry of Shahnaz Hussain in this sector may well change things completely. For one thing, Hussain is the queen of hard sell, and manages to push her products in nearly every market. For another, she is widely regarded as the last word in beauty care in India, and that may help popularise the aids that she is promoting.

But Shahnaz Herbal is not relying on these products alone; the company also has another scheme in the works. Says Currimbhoy, "We have tied up with several travel agencies to get huge groups of Japanese and European tourists who come to India for the Kerala massage."

This, according to Currimbhoy, is the latest craze in the West, and Shahnaz Herbal's foreign franchisees are keen to open branches offering this service to its clients.

But that, as they say, is another story ■

HIS RIGHT HAND

Pankaj Kharbanda is not your typical star secretary, and you could have Sunjay Dutt's word for it. ***Shameem Akthar*** *profiles the great backroom boy*

Flashbulbs streaked like strobe lights on Sunjay Dutt's face as he made his first public appearance after his release from jail. And there was one person beside the star who ducked the blinding cameras. Pankaj Kharbanda is used to dodging media attention.

He is surprised when asked for an interview. "Why me? Everybody wants Sunjay." Except stars, who have wanted to hire Kharbanda as their agent so he could package those magic deals that continue to make Sunjay Dutt one of the hottest propositions.

Dutt Junior's Man Friday, who has been working with him since 1988, has stuck by him during the harsh days of the star's incarceration.

This has won him the admiration of an industry more used to characters that resemble the proverbial rats that jump off a sinking ship. For Kharbhanda, who tries to play things down, the question goes beyond loyalty. For him, it is a question of professional ethics.

It is also a question of friendship. A seven-year friendship that has seen ups and downs professionally and personally.

"In Bombay, people who do my type of work are called secretaries. But we are more than that. We are a star's agent, his advisor, his confidante. We know their personal lives intimately. The two of us cannot get along professionally if there is no personal rapport."

The latest craze in filmdom, Urmila Matondkar, is among the stars who have been desperately trying to rope in Kharbanda. Handling two stars, one who has been a superstar and another zooming towards

Pankaj Kharbanda: Sunjay Dutt's Man Friday

superstardom, would be like tackling two wives, smiles Kharbhanda. But he has been dealing with Matondkar's film offers — only as a friend without monetary consideration — and everybody knows where the superhit *Rangeela* has taken her.

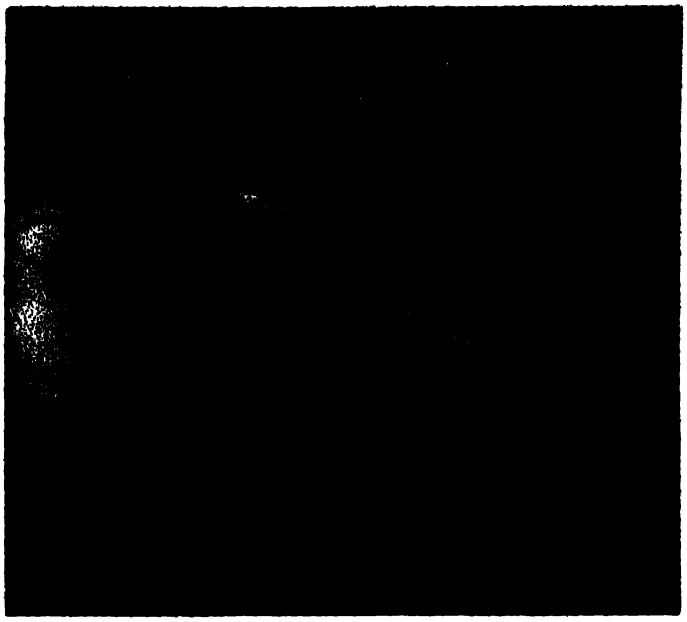
Ethics is a favourite word in Kharbanda's vocabulary. So are words like friendship, loyalty. This dreamy-eyed 39-year-old man, who strayed from a journalistic career into the big, bad world of films, had stayed on only because of his rapport with the star who was moving into big league before fate and foolhardiness pushed him into a legal cesspool.

Kharbanda started as an agent with star Anupam Kher and left when he felt he was not wanted. Even that break-up was linked with his friendship with Sunjay.

He recalls, "It all started with Sunjay asking me to become his agent. He asked me one day, '*Yaar*, why are you not working with me?' And I replied, 'Because you are not asking me to.' He said, 'So I am asking you now.' And my answer was, 'Then I am working for you.'

"It was as simple as that. I was also working simultaneously for Anupam and I realised that Anupam did not relish the thought of sharing an agent. I saw his point of view. Like I said, being an agent for two stars is like having two wives. I could not handle it. Anupam was making it clear that he did not like it either. So I just wrote a letter to Anupam one day, explaining that I no longer wanted to work with him."

Industry Cassandras would have predicted a career slump for Kharbhanda. For, at that point Sunjay was just a fledgling star and could not afford to pay him what Anupam could.



Kharbanda grins, 'We were lucky that there were so many women journalists covering his trial. I think Sunju inspires the mother in all of them with that vulnerable expression. Except for a few negative reports most were supportive. That kept his morale up'

But fate has proved the Cassandras wrong. If anything, imprisonment seems to have added to the Dutt Jr's appeal. His expression of wounded vulnerability, that has fans drooling for more, is enhanced and the public hysteria evoked by his release continues to make him a much-wanted name in a film's title credits.

And he would be the first to credit Kharbanda for having the foresight for striking lucrative deals. For Ram Gopal Varma's *Nayak* (opposite Urmila Matondkar) Kharbanda had decided that the star's salary would be the territory sales of Bombay. He equates this to walking a financial tightrope. "Three years ago, when Sunjay signed the film, Bombay was not the hottest territory. In fact, no territory was hot. Today, Bombay is the safest bet for any distributor. A film which is a hit here can earn Rs 2 crore in just four weeks," explains Kharbanda smugly.

He is equally smug about Sunjay's deal on Jyotin Goel's film, *Safari*. For that, he had asked for a percentage of the film's sales as the star's payment. Even this is tricky, he explains. If the film catches audience fancy the star rakes in the lucre. He gets nothing if it bombs.

The star sheen has not rubbed off on Kharbanda. Though unassuming himself, he is defensive about other tantrum-throwing secretaries in the trade. The tantrums, he reasons, are a secretary's way of saying no on a star's behalf. He does not agree with the general complaint that a star's success goes to a secretary's head. In fact, it is the secretary's task to deflect on himself the bad vibes that a star's tantrums would invite.

The secretary also creates the public face of the star. In Kharbanda's case it had meant reading the 100-odd letters that Sunjay would receive when his film clicked at the box-office. Crank letters, emotion-drenched letters and sometimes touching letters like the one by a girl who lost a Sunju-lookalike boyfriend in a motor accident or that little American girl who shyly wondered if he would be her date on her first porm dance.

Then there are the critical letters and the supportive letters while in prison that reminded the star that he had not faded out of public memory.

To ensure this for the last 15 months also meant that Kharbanda kept a press, that was greedy for any news on Sunjay Dutt, satisfied

He grins, "We were lucky that there were so many women journalists covering his trial. I think Sunju inspires the mother in all of them with that vulnerable expression. Except for a few negative reports most were supportive That kept his morale up. We ensured that he kept abreast of everything that was happening in the outside world."

During the last 15 months Kharbanda has also had no paymaster. But that did not stop him from working overtime for Sunjay, shunting between Delhi and Bombay.

Later, when he has the time he might dust his dreams, now relegated to the backburner Maybe he will direct that film that he had always wanted to Maybe Sunjay will be its hero. Right now, he is not asking; he is engrossed in ensuring that his boss' dreams are realised ■

RAVI SHANKAR, *the cartoonist is known to everyone — his work for* India Today *had a particularly cutting edge during the Rajiv era — but few people know that the man is an equally talented writer. He has written several articles for* Sunday, *a sister publication of* The Telegraph, *covering the aftermath of the death of M.G. Ramachandran. Now, Shankar is making his debut as a fiction writer, with a book of short stories,* The Scream of the Dragonflies.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

To own an island home and a seaplane, where I can spend the days with my true love and a drawbridge to the mainland which is full of nice bars, discotheques and seafood.

What is your greatest fear?

Flying, the seaplane.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

An ancestral gene I haven't yet met formally.

What do you dislike most in others?

Everything, specially the anti-retentiveness of mediocrity which renders them incapable of any spontaneous generosity.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

I have the patience of an imp, therefore impatience.

What is your most precious possession?

Home.

What objects do you always carry?

Credit cards.

What makes you most depressed?

My credit card bills.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My height.

What is your favourite word?

Goodbye.

What is your favourite journey?

To Banethi, where I wrote my book, *The Scream of the Dragonflies*. Drive to Nahan, and then take the narrow winding road through the mist spreading among the pines.

What is your favourite dream?

That I am riding my pet pterodactyl with dragon-breath, and swoop down from the sky on Delhi's cocktail parties and turn everyone there who are smirking and washing down chicken tikkas with huge gulps of lowgrade Scotch, into evening roast.

What is your nightmare?

Being invited to one of those parties, when my pterodactyl is sulking (these prehistoric monsters are very temperamental).

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

A Polynesian princess with hair like a monsoon cloud, eyes like a doe on a starry night, lips as red as summer wine, and a heart like an orchard in spring.

What is your source of sustenance?

She (and if I horse around too much, makes the rider really haggard).

On what occasions do you lie?

In bed.

What has been your happiest moment?

The clock is hunting for it.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Lots of things: *Casablanca*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Marianne Faithfull, Kishori Amonkar and Kishore Kumar, when I am very drunk, and butter chicken at New Delhi dinners.

How do you relax?

By working out at the gym.

What do you envy most in others?

Their insensitivity to their own mediocrity, and the self-assuredness of their pompous ignorance.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a comet in a very starry sky, or the swift flight of a bird seen in a mirror from the corner of the eye.

How would you like to die?

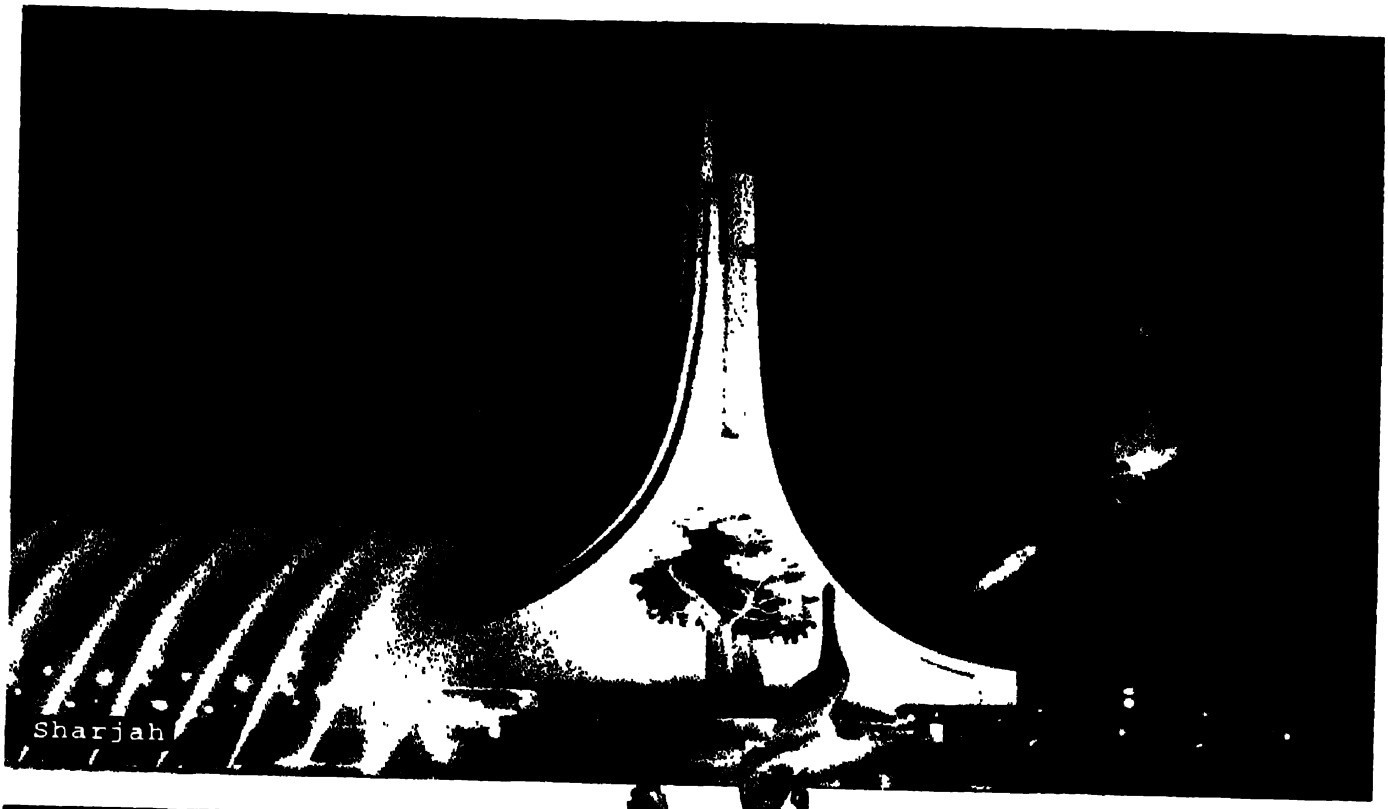
On a warm winter afternoon, flirting with my beloved.

How would you like to die?

On a warm winter afternoon, flirting with my beloved

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

An ancestral gene I haven't yet met formally



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28 JANUARY 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Cold Comfort

■ Is the Magazine trying to promote itself as a *desi* version of the *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* ('Fall For This', December 3)?

In India, how many people can afford to splurge Rs 3,000 on a shirt or Rs 7,000 on a jacket? It is a pity that some people, in their bid to be ultra-fashionable, do not realise that they are being taken for a ride by designers who may charge a staggering Rs 50,000 for a saree or an evening gown.

With the liberalisation of the economy, two industries which have received the maximum boost are fashion and beauty. A Western-looking India obviously feels, to be on the international beauty and fashion map they have to look and feel different and emulate Western values of aesthetics.

Manoranjan Das,
Jamshedpur

■ The designer outfits look gorgeous on the models who have the requisite height, figure and grace to carry them off. I wonder how they will fare on an average Indian woman.

Kiron Shankar Sengupta,
Jamshedpur

Rajesh Kumar

J.J. Valaya's Fall-Winter '95 creations

■ With rising costs where the average middle class family has to really strive hard to make both ends meet what magic do the names of Ritu Beri or Ravi Bajaj have? On a hungry stomach, they cannot dream of Armani and Versace.

B.N. Bose,
Calcutta

■ High fashion is the preserve of the super rich. Why waste a cover story of this nature in the Magazine which, I am sure, is read more by middle-class readers?

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ In India where hundreds of women and children go through the winter without a thread to cover them, such opulent collections are a terrible joke.

Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia (W.B.)

■ True, women have become more conscious of fashion and beauty now, but it does not mean that they can churn out Rs 20,000 at will for an exotic outfit.

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ If the patrons of fashion were really to wear those winter creations, wouldn't they catch pneumonia?

Sourav Ghosh Chowdhury,
Calcutta

To Santa, With Love

■ Dear Santa,

I would like to have a pair of navy blue jeans and a shirt in rainbow colours (First Person, December 24). I would also like a present for my brother.

I am sorry you have to give me two gifts. But that's all I want and I love you Santa.

Mohini Das,
Calcutta

Without Malice

■ It is difficult to erase the animosity that exists between Pakistan and India ('Sarson Da Saga', November 26). Khushwant Singh, because of his stature as a journalist and writer, may get away with jokes like Pakistanis being 30 years behind us (India) in development and so on.

I wonder how many Pakistanis would take a statement like that in good humour from any other Indian.

Somnath Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ No one could be a better choice than Khushwant Singh for the post of the Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan.

Dipankar Kolay,
Jhikra (Howrah)

INSIDE

Amitabh Bachchan

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WHO ARE the politicians, industrialists, sportsmen, filmstars and media people to watch out for in 1996?

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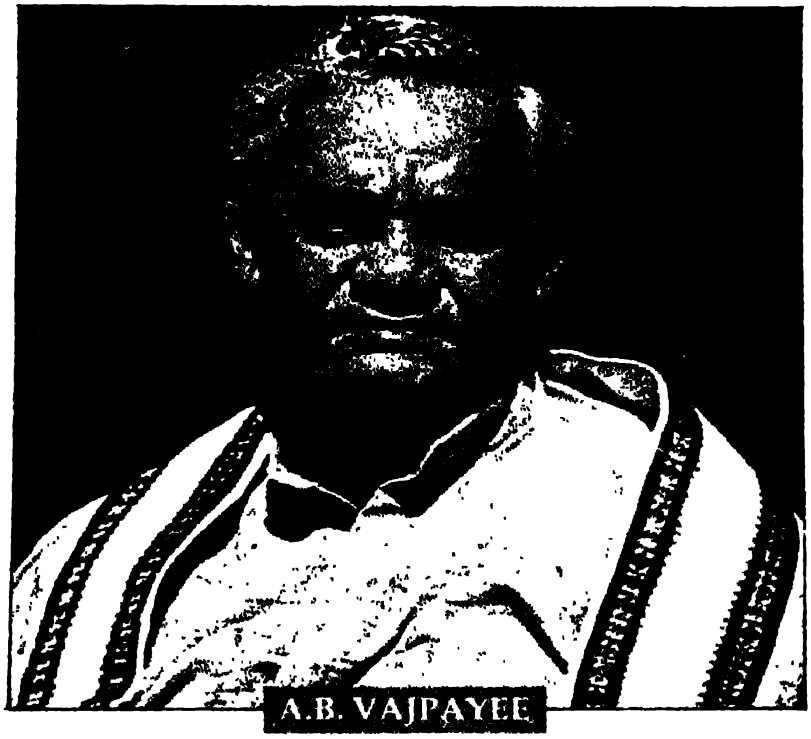
COVER STORY

THE FACES OF '96

People to watch out for in the coming year: ***Seema Goswami*** *takes a look*


A.B. VAJPAYEE

Around the year-end, the media is awash with lists: of those who made it in the year that was; those who didn't; those who attained notoriety; those who achieved fame; those who hit the big time; those who lagged behind. But while looking back with nostalgia may have a lot to recommend it, it is far greater fun to look forward and predict how the coming year will pan out. Far more risky, too, if the number of astrologers with egg all over their faces are anything to go by

Nonetheless, **The Telegraph** *decided to stick its neck out and list those — in such diverse fields as politics and movies — to watch out for in 1996. They may succeed in what they set out to do, or they may fail But that isn't really the point These are the people who will — one way or the other — make 1996 an interesting year to live through*

POLITICS

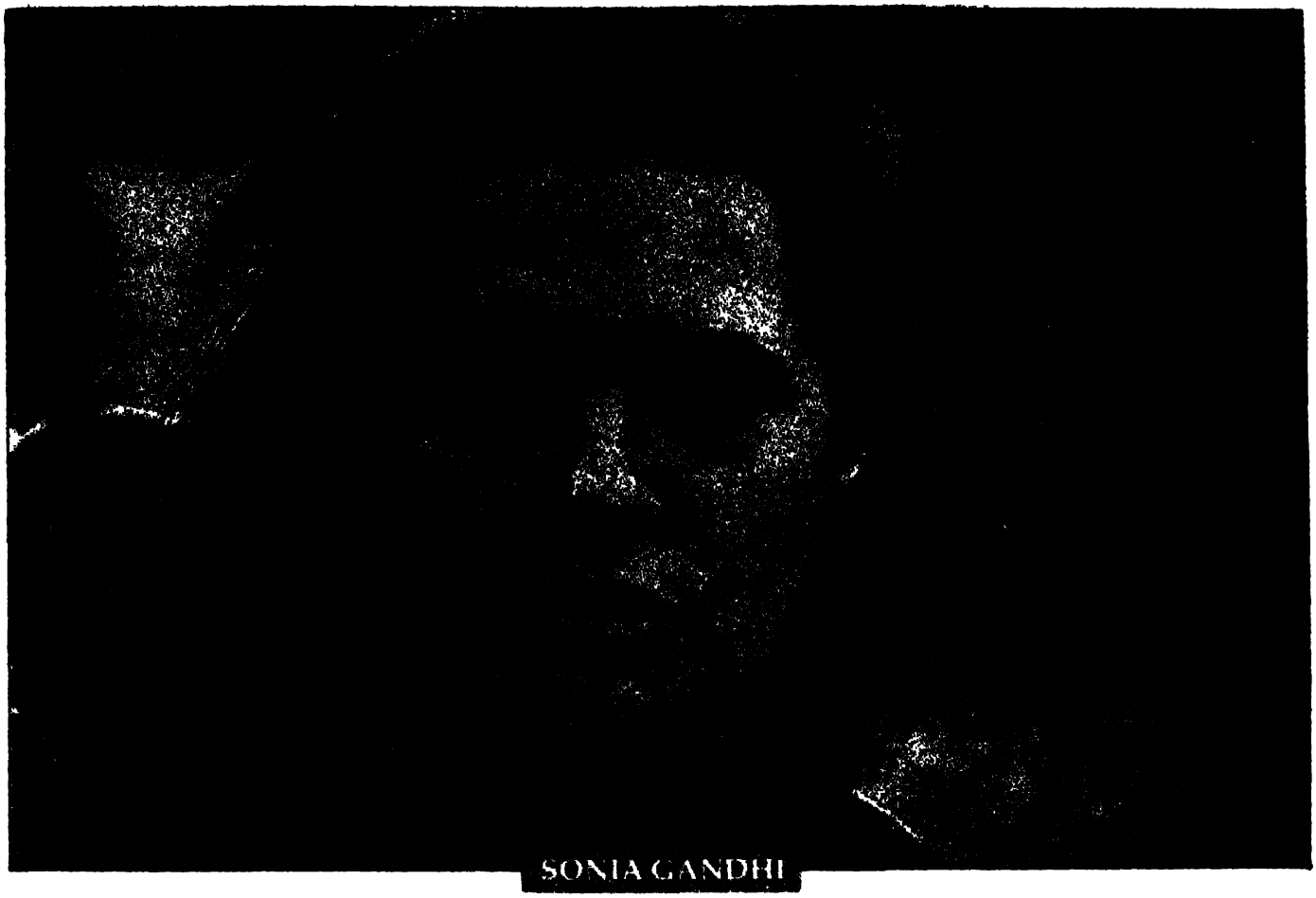
Atal Behari Vajpayee

There was a time when most people regarded A B Vajpayee as a washed-up politician of the Janata government era, a toothless lion who was condemned to spend the rest of his life in a twilight zone L.K Advani had taken over the reins of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with the blessings of Nagpur, and was espousing the cause of Hindutva from his Toyota-*rath*, as he traipsed the length and breadth of the country leaving communal riots and carnage in his wake.

Murli Manohar Joshi succeeded Advani as the BJP president, and went on his own version of a *rath yatra*, though this time the catch-word was *Ekta* rather than Hindutva.

All the while Vajpayee watched from the sidelines, bemused at the aggressive posturings of the Hindutva brigade, and bewildered by their fulminations against 'pseudo-secularism' But the discipline that had been instilled in him at the various *shakhas* that he has attended as a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) cadet, ensured that Atal*ji* kept his reservations to himself In public, he was always the party man, standing by the angry statements of such hot-heads as Uma Bharti (though even he drew the line at the venomous Sadhvi Rithambara).

But the days when Vajpayee was considered an irrelevant (if senior) figure in the BJP are long over. Now, as the party gears up for the general



SONIA GANDHI

elections this year, Atal Behari is being projected as the BJP's candidate for prime ministership.

So, what brought about this change? Strangely enough, Vajpayee has Narasimha Rao to thank for this.

In the Rajiv Gandhi era, the Congress had followed a policy of what soon came to be called aggressive secularism, perhaps best symbolised by its treatment of the Shah Bano case. This 'appeasement of the minorities' resulted in a Hindu backlash, which the BJP, under the stewardship of Advani, took full advantage of.

But Narasimha Rao was different. Realising that the BJP was gaining from the widespread feeling that Hindus were being discriminated against, Rao decided to change track. In the place of aggressive secularism he adopted the policy of benign neglect of all communal issues. In its most extreme form, it resulted in the destruction of the Babri Masjid. But he did succeed in reducing the BJP's appeal to the middle-of-the-road Hindu.

Hence, the new-found importance of A.B. Vajpayee. He is the man entrusted with wooing the less-than-rabid Hindu back to the BJP fold. The kind of person who is infuriated by Muslims bursting crackers when Pakistan wins a cricket match, but was ashamed and disturbed when the Babri Masjid came down is more likely to incline towards the mild-mannered Vajpayee than the wild-eyed demagoguery of Advani.

The BJP may or may not form the government at the centre after the 1996 general elections. But that isn't really the point. The fact that it will fight the polls under Vajpayee rather than Advani is a far better indication of the subtle ways in which Indian politics has changed since the last such election.

Sonia Gandhi

Speculation about the Gandhi widow's political plans — or lack of them — has been raging ever since her husband's tragic assassination in May 1991. But in 1996, things are likely to come to a head.

There aren't too many options left for Sonia. One: she can stand for election from the late Rajiv's constituency, Amethi, asking faithful family retainer Captain Satish Sharma to step aside. Two: she can steer clear of party politics herself, and let Rahul Gandhi (fresh from Harvard) contest from Amethi. Three: both she and Rahul can stay away from the hustings, waiting for Priyanka to attain majority so that she can fight for the Amethi seat a couple of years from now in a by-election.

But once the date for the general elections is decided upon, Sonia will have to come clean with what she intends to do. If she does decide to fight from Amethi, it is extemely unlikely that the BJP and other Opposition parties will persist with the kid-glove treatment. All those snide cracks about Rome Raj and Italian loafers will be trotted out all over again, and Bofors may well be unearthed to embarrass Sonia. And more importantly, it is far from clear that the issue of finding and punishing Rajiv Gandhi's killers will strike a chord with the Amethi voters, four years after the assassination

If Rahul is the candidate from Amethi, and Sonia merely a shadowy presence behind him, then stories about the revival of the Gandhi dynasty will abound. Either way, Sonia will be seen as fair game, rather than the sacrosanct figure that she has been until now.

T.N. SESHAN

If the entire Gandhi family decides to stay away from the hustings, it won't help matters either. The political pundits will merely say that Sonia is biding her time. That she doesn't want to risk having her children make their political debuts at a time when the Congress' prospects are at an all-time low. And that when Rao is a faint memory from the past, Sonia will re-emerge from the shadows, flanked by Rahul and Priyanka, to reclaim her position on the Indian political scene

T.N. Seshan

Seshan's fortunes appear to be at an all-time low right now, what with the Supreme Court upbraiding him for considering himself "the one and only man to uphold democracy", but knowing Seshan it won't be long before he bounces back — right into the limelight.

Certainly, as chief election commissioner, Seshan will come into his own in the year of the general elections There will be the usual tirades about corrupt politicians, venal police forces and the pliable media Seshan will try and impose his 'election guidelines' on political parties, television channels and newspapers.

And since this is the first general election in which his pet project — the voters' ID cards -- will be tested, Seshan will be even more aggressive than usual. (Where this leaves those who have received cards with photographs of strangers affixed on them is not clear; but then, that is another story)

But what happens after the elections? Having had his moment of glory as the single-most important man in India, where will Seshan go from there?

Some say that politics is the next logical step And Seshan has gone on the record to say that if a political party gave him a position of responsibility i.e Prime Minister or President, then he would entertain the idea. But since it is extremely unlikely that either the Congress or the BJP will make him any such offer, Seshan will probably have to rest content with mounting political crusades of the kind that he has shown such relish for in the past.

MULAYAM SINGH YADAV

Mulayam Singh Yadav

Say this for Mulayam Singh Yadav: you can never write him off. This former wrestler has often been down, but he has never stayed down for the count.

Last year, Mulayam had the mortification of seeing his government fall when Kanshi Ram's BSP joined hands with the BJP. Political pundits who wrote him off miscalculated. Mayawati lasted only a few months before Kanshi Ram grew disenchanted and the BJP withdrew support.

But Mulayam has used his time in the Opposition valuably. He is now at the head of a new model of the National Front, a grouping that takes in Karnataka's H.D. Deve Gowda, Orissa's Biju Patnaik and has the tacit support of Sharad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan from the cow belt. Laloo Yadav will not link up with Mulayam and V.P. Singh hates him, but Chandra Shekhar is coming around to joining up.

All this makes Mulayam the wild card at the next election. He has the Muslim vote all sown up and could

end up at the head of a collection of 60-70 MPs in the next Lok Sabha. Should that happen, he will hold the balance of power.

BUSINESS/ INDUSTRY

Dhirubhai Ambani

It's a little like that famous poster for *Jaws II*: "Just when you thought that it was safe to go back into the water..."

Just when we all thought that Reliance had finally become too big for any of its rivals to topple Dhirubhai Ambani from his throne, the company was beset by one of the biggest scandals in even Reliance's tumultuous history.

In essence, what Reliance's enemies alleged was that at some stage — perhaps to generate the cash required to prop up the share price when the market was down — Dhirubhai and Son sprinted enormous quantities of duplicate share certificates, sold them to gullible investors and used the cash to keep the share flying high.

RAVI PRAKASH KHEMKA

DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

This allegation was never directly levelled by the financial press largely because the Ambanis were on a suing spree and defamation cases were flying about like — well, all right — duplicate share certificates. But that was certainly the agenda. Reliance's traditional enemies became active once again and on the Bombay stock market, a Marwari cartel of brokers opposed Reliance's largely Gujarati supporters.

The Ambanis ended the year protesting their innocence. And certainly, their enemies dealt largely in innuendo without producing the kind of evidence required to substantiate such serious charges. But when the finance ministry ordered a joint enquiry by SEBI and the department of company affairs, it became clear that this was a make or break situation for Dhirubhai.

This year we will get the results of that enquiry. If, as most people expect, it exonerates the Ambanis of everything but negligence, then they are certain to wreck a terrible revenge on their enemies. If, on the other hand, it upholds the charges, then expect more fireworks.

Ravi Prakash Khemka

They went from being the group that nobody had heard of to becoming the business house that nobody loves. The Khemkas of the Madras-based NEPC group remained in the headlines for much of 1995 and began 1996 with a predatory attack on K.K. Modi's Modiluft airline.

Though other airline operators rallied behind Modi and senior industrialists frowned on the Khemka strategy, the canny Marwaris from Madras (via Punjab) were unfazed by the hostility. They had spent 45 crore on publicity for the NEPC group in 1995, but with the Modiluft takeover they had got the kind of media exposure that a 100 crore would not have bought.

Little is known about the Khemkas except that they made their fortune manufacturing windmills, expanded into agro-products and chemicals, and are now set to become aviation operators following the acquisition of Damania Airways, re-christened NEPC Skyline from January 1.

A tightly-controlled, largely family-owned group, NEPC is run by Ravi Prakash Khemka, who claims to have arrived in Madras in the early Sixties with just Rs 600 in his pocket. Ravi Prakash serves as the public face of the group but behind the scenes, it is his son, Raj Kumar, who calls the shots. The Khemkas attribute the numerous rumours about the origin of their money to jealous rivals — is it Jayalalitha's or Sashikala's? Does Chandra Swami have a stake? — and insist that their wealth is their own.

Amitabh Bachchan

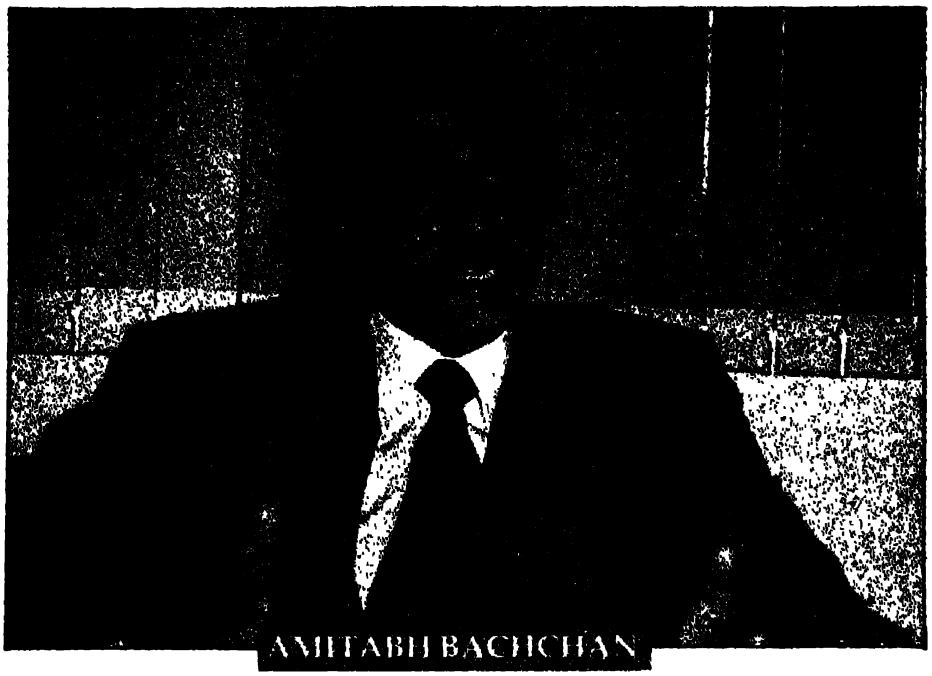
In 1989, it looked as though things could not get worse for Amitabh Bachchan. But in fact they did. V.P. Singh targetted the star in 1990 and it was against all the odds that Bachchan was able to fight the might of the government of India and prove his innocence to the country at large.

For five years now, things have gone swimmingly well for Bachchan. In 1990, he earned a new generation of fans with *Jumma Chumma* and despite

an enforced absence from our screens after *Khuda Gawah*, his popularity is such that corporate entities queued up to invest in his Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited (ABCL) last year.

ABCL had a host of imitators in the course of the year and the trend towards the corporatisation of the entertainment industry is now firmly established. But 1996 will be the year when ABCL will have to deliver. Already many jealous competitors are praying that it will fail — witness the orchestrated campaign against the corporation's star search.

Moreover, in 1996, Bachchan will back on our screens in Indra Kumar's forthcoming film. His album, produced by Bally Sagoo, will also be in the stores. If they do well, then ABCL's fortunes are assured, and the entertainment industry will never be the same again. If they do badly, however, then it may be back to the old ways in Bollywood.



AMITABH BACHCHAN

KUMARAMANGALAM BIRLA

Kumaramangalam Birla

At 27, Kumaramangalam seems absurdly young to be in charge of the Rs 6,500 crore-worth Aditya Birla Group, a position he was forced to assume because of the untimely death of his father, Aditya.

But there can be no denying that few people have been better trained for the job. While still a teenager, studying commerce in a Bombay college, Kumaramangalam spent many hours at his father's office, observing how he ran his business.

Then, when he began his chartered accountancy course, the 21-year-old Birla was sent to his grandfather's Century Textiles to learn about the family's daily monitoring system, *partha*

After that came a stint at the Business School of London, where he earned a post-graduate degree in business administration.

With his education taken care of, Kumaramangalam was now free to take his place in his father, Aditya's, empire. But before he was given his own companies to manage, the heir apparent was asked to take a short course that all graduate engineer trainees are put through.

It wasn't long before Kumaramangalam had assumed independent charge of such companies as Vikram Cement, Vikram Ispar and Indian Rayon. But despite being one of the youngest business tycoons in India — and perhaps, in the world — Aditya Birla's son exuded the same modesty that had made his father so popular.

Kumaramangalam has always shied away from publicity and the press, so the media spotlight that fell on him after the death of his father must have made him very uncomfortable indeed. But now that he is the chairman of the Aditya Birla Group he will have to take the occasional media intrusion in his stride.

For now, though, Kumaramangalam is content to keep a low profile, even as he takes the group into such relatively unchartered territories as power and telecom. The coming year or two will show whether he is successful in shaping his empire in his image, just as his father did so many years ago.

Continued on Page 26

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This week: Narasimha Rao's novel

Began life as: Rao's way of coping with time on his hands. He had resigned as Andhra Pradesh chief minister (1973) and been appointed Congress general secretary (1975). But there wasn't much to do, and his friends suggested that he try his hand at fiction.

And did he?: Yes, he began work on his novel, *The Other Half*, banging away on his lap-top in earnest.

The background: Since Rao had been a politician for all of his adult life, he set the novel in a mileau he knew and understood. The book begins with the Civil Disobedience movement, takes India to its independence and through five Prime Ministers

Is it autobiographical?: Yes, say those who have read it and want to ascribe the remarks about Indira Gandhi to Rao No, says Rao himself and his literary agent, Lynn Franklin. This is a work of the author's imagination, any resemblance to persons dead or alive is purely coincidental.

Is the book complete?: No way. Rao finished one-third of the manuscript in 1990 and gave it to Franklin for her opinion. She was to get back to him about the ways in which he could improve it. But then, political events overtook Rao and he put the book on the back-burner. But he still wants to make substantial changes in the first draft.

So, how did it come to be extracted?: Rao would love to know. He had given copies of the manuscript to several friends and was shocked to see that one of them had leaked it to *Outlook*.

The prime suspect: Nikhil Chakravartty. The journalist is an old friend of Narasimha Rao's and had retained the manuscript when it was loaned to him Rumour has it that he passed his copy on to *Outlook*

And did he?: Nobody knows except for editor Vinod Mehta. And he's not telling.

But what's all the fuss about?: As far as we can see, it's about the 'dirty' bits that were duly picked out and highlighted by the magazine

Sample quote: 'Sex was like itch to Jeevan, the urge to fornicate wasn't very different from the urge to urinate His need was quite simple, his detractors said -- to wit, any female vaginal orifice'

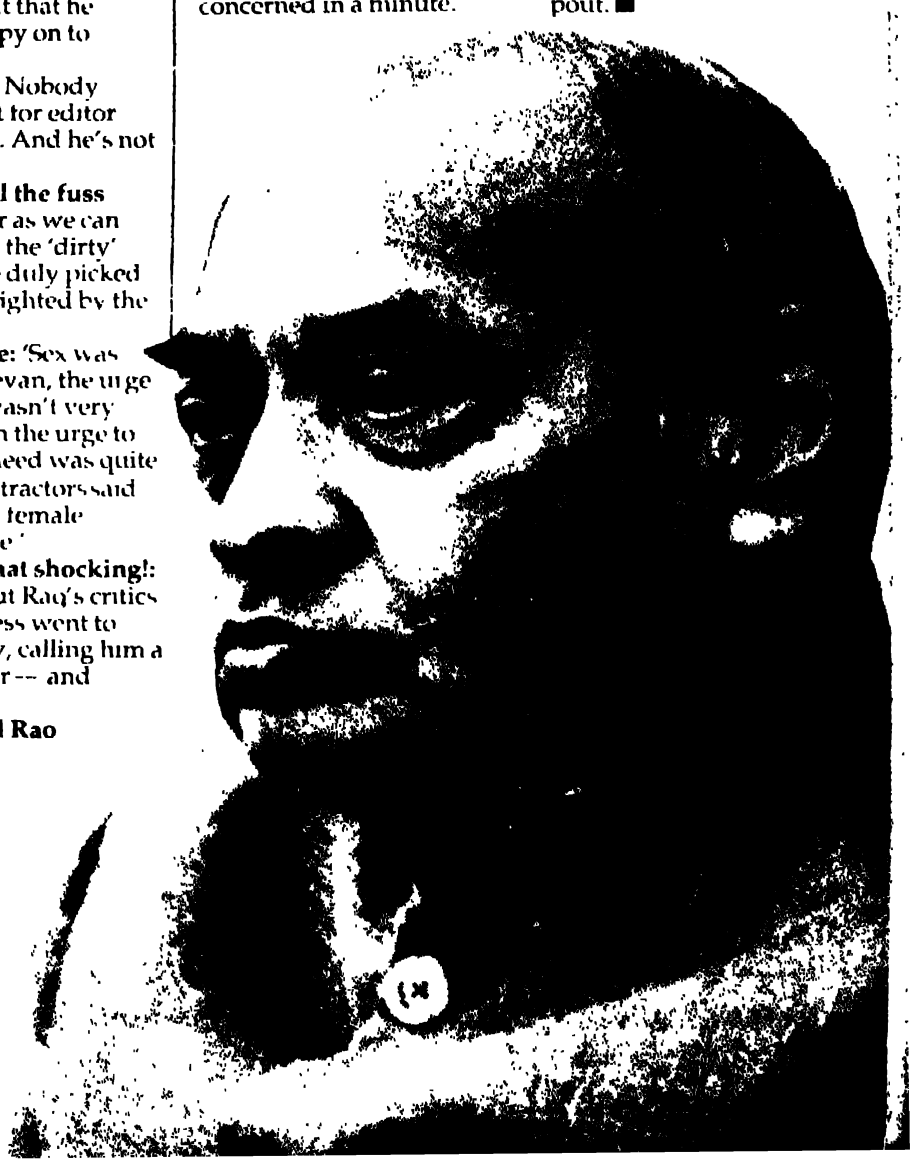
Gosh, isn't that shocking!: Not really But Rao's critics in the Congress went to town anyway, calling him a pornographer -- and worse.

And how did Rao respond?: He didn't

What, no threats to sue?: Not from Rao. But Lynn Franklin, his literary agent, is not inclined to take so philosophic an attitude In an interview with *Sunday*, she said, "I consider the printing of unauthorised extracts to be an act of theft. In America I would have sued the publications concerned in a minute."

And in India?: Narasimha Rao is keeping very quiet, hoping that the story will fade away After all, he managed to ride out the suitcase controversy; this is small stuff compared to that

Silver lining: At least now the people of India know that there's more to their Prime Minister than his pout. ■



FOCUS

RADIO GA-GA

In the era of television, the radio has made a quiet comeback via the FM channel, writes ***Rajlakshmi Bhattacharyya***

Youngsters listening to the FM channel

When I was young, I'd listen to the radio
Waiting for my favourite song.
When they played I'd sing along, it made me cry. ..
Every sha la la la: every sling-a-ling-a-ling so fine .. "

When Karen Carpenter sang this nostalgic ode to the radio, she seemed to be echoing what so many other people felt. That the radio was a goner, doomed to collecting dust and cobwebs on a neglected shelf, eulogised only in songs that took people down memory lane.

But the requiems sung in its honour notwithstanding, the radio refuses to die, resurfacing in its new avatar — the FM channel. Gone was the somewhat stodgy framework that had characterised it earlier And in its place was style and pizzaz, and a happy mix of music, chat shows and lively infotainment.

So, it wasn't long before the radio, which had until then been the *pan-wala's* favourite form of entertainment, elbowed its way into yuppie living rooms as well. The reception was crystal clear, with a 10 harmonics stereophonic sound quality, there was none of the snap-crackle-fizz-and-pop of the short and medium band waves. And hey, it wasn't such a bad substitute to television, after all

"What sets the radio apart is its recent novelty value," says Gautam Bhimani, one of the deejays on Radio Network's *Good Morning Calcutta* And it is this novelty value that is bringing it more and more converts

Of course, the abysmal quality of programmes telecast these days helps Sryanto Paul, a student, for instance, has given up on television because he can't stand the soppy stuff being shown. So has Angona, who relies on FM radio to while away her leisure. Says Neeraj Banerjee (12), the youngest deejay on FM, "TV is too selective, focussing only on those viewers who win prizes while there are millions of people who are waiting in the wings, dying to be heard. Television just spoils your eyes and fries your brains."

Then, there is the small point of price as well. A radio set costs a fraction of what a television does. "And then, radio owners don't have the hassle of paying cable operators," says Barry O'Brien, who presents Radio Network's *Wills Made for Each Other* programme every Wednesday. "They don't have to keep two or three newspapers every day to keep track of what's on. And the radio is well

●●●

With the mobile phone becoming more and more popular, FM is getting mobile, too. These days, you can see people clutching portable radio sets as well as cellular phones, and some trendies even listen to the radio while they are on the road

within the common man's reach."

And now, says Dipankar Ghosh, CEO of Radio Network, "It is compulsary for radio manufacturers to have FM as a channel on the set. So, at least 48 per cent of the population have access to FM."

Small wonder then that the top players have entered the fray, whether it is HMV, Philips, The Times or corporate giants like Hindustan Lever and Coca Cola, all of whom see it as a viable business proposition and marketing option.

Musically speaking, FM's range extends from jazz to pop, classical and contemporary stuff All of which is interspersed with snippets of information of talk shows.

Derek and Rila O'Brien, who present *Good Evening Calcutta* on Saturday, for instance, have done some good stories They had Khushwant Singh apologising to Calcuttans on their show for his remarks about Tagore And, then, they had the principal of La Martinere School telling listeners that they were planning to open a new school on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass

FM freaks who have been listening in ever since the channel went on the air, recall with special affection *Tully Time*, Mark Tully's show What they remember specially is the time the veteran broadcaster did a story on Jyoti Basu, dubbing him a barristocrat.

Among the all-time favourites on the FM channel, however, are the dial-in request programmes. But while you can ask for anything from Cliff Richard's *Bachelor boy*, to heavy metal, it is often difficult to get through to FM, with the lines being perpetually busy with people sending in their requests.

Dipankar Ghosh

Derek O' Brien

There is also a quiz programme, in which listeners can dial in their answers.

Then, of course, there is the usual staple of weather reports, traffic information, and career guides that are of some use to young listeners.

Given the wide variety of programmes, it is not surprising that FM has fans from every walk of life Executives, lawyers, doctors, housewives, children and teenagers all have their favourite show on the channel "Women in particular," says Sudeshna Roy, who used to present programmes on Radio Network, "form a core target group".

Srilekha Chatterjee is one such woman According to her, FM is the perfect backdrop to her early morning chores. If Kellogs has made an appearance on her breakfast table as a staple, well then, so has FM.

In the evenings, the target audience is the college-going crowd, which turns to the channel as a source of relaxation. Not that the older lot cannot enjoy this as well. Soumi Roy, a business executive in a financial daily, for instance, confesses that she tunes in to participate in "the fun" And even the *muri-munching* crowd that throng the Victoria Memorial carry a radio set along with them

But Derek O'Brien sees no point in segregating the audience in this manner After all, he says, all of them — whether it is an eight-year-old schoolboy or people in old age homes — want to listen to music. "So," he says, "if there is one request for Wickfield, the other is for Nat King Cole"

With the mobile phone becoming more and more popular, FM is getting mobile, too These days, you can see people clutching portable radio sets as well as cellular phones, and some trendies even listen to the radio while they're on the road.

And such has been the triumph of radio over television, that the Star TV network is the latest to make an entry into the FM scene This infusion of the big bucks into this sector will make the competition even tougher, but Dipankar Ghosh doesn't seem to be worried.

"I am all for the freedom of radio," he says. "In fact, I believe that the Prasar Bharati Bill should be enacted as quickly as possible to ensure a more liberal kind of radio"

Clearly, when H G Wells wrote about the future of broadcasting in *The Shape of Things to Come* "The unfortunate people who must now subdue themselves to 'listening in' will soon find a better pastime for their leisure," he couldn't have been more wrong

People these days are, in the words of the famous Queen song going "radio ga-ga" It's nice to know that someone still loves you ■

Barry O'Brien

Gautam Bhimani

PROFILE

GOA-ING FOR GOLD

Remo Fernandes talks about his life, music and his new album, Namaste India, *to* ***Shameem Akthar***

Even the silence at Siolim village in Goa has its own music And when the sounds here decide to move with the elements there is a song. Spend some time here and you can appreciate why this star in isolation, Remo Fernandes, decides to live in Goa even when the temptress Bombay tantalises with seductive promises of easy lucre and instant fame

But the goddess of pelf creates her own provisos and so India's pop idol has decided to make his own offering. No, he does not intend to jump into the rat race of competitive music from which he has shied away for so long. But he may appease the deity by doing more song scores for the voracious film music industry Herald a bit of fresh originality in that glittering world where plagiarism subsumes all sounds.

After the reverberating success of *Humma, humma* in the film *Bombay* where he had lent his voice, he now intends to do scores for the forthcoming film *Khamoshi* A similar deal for another film is also brewing

Also, in abeyance to this unlikely (for him) goddess he will, in future, be straying slightly from his self-appointed path of a messiah-for-the-youth with lines like *Pack that smack* to that catchy *Fear of Aids*, which have blasted messages into a pop-drunk generation. He will also have less of the citizen-reproving-nation tone in his socio-political theme album *Politicians Don't Know to Rock n' Roll* where he had given vent to his anger with this cover message "We, the people of India, have brains Muscle Soul And our land is as rich as they come Keeping a country like ours, starving and illiterate for half a century, must be a very difficult task indeed. This album is about those who carry out this task"

There will be less of such dressing-downs in his *Namaste India* video album which, he hopes, will be a dance-oriented, good-time album. "But," laughs India's first original pop star, "me being me, I cannot keep off social themes. And will include a song on the celebration of the Indian Woman who has moved from the kitchen to the computer." Tentative titles include *Clothing the Soul*, *Indian Trance Dance*, *Huya Ho* and *Shinga Linga*

A power breakdown has silenced Remo's elaborate synthesiser for the day So, he has decided to sleep off the rigours of last night's live performance. This intrusive interview is granted rather reluctantly by the singer who, unlike his contemporaries in the glos-

Remo Fernandes: The original pop star from India

Amit Datta

sy pop world, does not believe that he has to market himself to sell his songs.

The Portuguese-style Fernando Mansion squats with old-world elegance at the end of the only road that slithers through Siolim village. Behind, a few thatched huts away, a muddy river sings a leaf-fringed song that preludes the compulsive Goan siesta. The only interruption is the rude bass of a generator closeby Remo's little sons Noah and Jonah, their nascent pigtails (a la Daddy) streaming behind, flit at the gauze curtains like elusive butterflies

The wrought-iron gate remains unlatched while the large wooden doors of the house remain open to passers-by. Obviously, the bell does not ring, with power having decided to take the afternoon off, too For paranoid visitors from Bombay, where matchbox flats are shuttered with wariness against filching thieves, this wide, unsuspicious openness of the Fernando Mansion is utopian. A large polka-dotted hound bounds in with matching innocence, begging to be fondled No watch dog, this.

Wooden and glass antique pieces decorate every available space in a house which exhibits a generosity of space unfound today Remo's fondness for this mansion that his grandfather built had made him leave his Panjim residence a decade ago His partiality for this is understandable

High, wooden-rafted roof may well allow another floor, while the tall windows that stand nearly four-men high let the dappled sunlight, trapped by trees and vines, stream shyly in The natural coolness in the thick-walled rooms, which seem to flow into one another, adds to the langour typical of a Goan afternoon Who would want to leave all this natural splendour for the cut-throat, polluted tumult of Bombay? Not Remo, certainly

Then Remo 'kicks his own butt' (his words) and bestirs himself to work on his music. He scrambles through the trap-door into his studio that cuts him off from this splendour Cocooned in this world he composes, writes his lines and music, plays his own instruments and mixes and matches, improving even on that unique 'raga rock' that he created by strumming his guitar to sound like a traditional Indian instrument. The primitive equipment of his yester-years have been replaced with hi-tech gadgets. He has recently acquired a Hi-8 camera which he will be using to do his own video shoots

In the East-copying-the-West world

TOP OF THE POPS

How they stack up in the Indian music scene

The entry of MTV, followed closely by Channel V, has changed the face of Indian popdom. No longer do we have long-faced artists with hard-luck stories about how hard it is to make it. These days, stars are being made overnight and superstars every other night.

India's pop doll Alisha Chinai stopped being Madonna, or *Sexy, Sexy* and became a hit merely by being *Made in India*. Sales figures indicate a record of sorts with 1.5 million copies sold. Shekhar Kapur's wife, Suchitra Krishnamurthy, is not doing too badly either with her *Dole, Dole* being lisped

Apache Indian: Going great guns

ed by babies and grandmothers alike.

The satellite era is finally taking pop stars from the rowdy stages of yesteryears to the decorous living room of respectable homes where family members score points over knowledge of names like Jasmine Bharucha, Gary Lawyer, Rock Machine, Sharon Prabhakar, Baba Sehgal, Piyush Soni and Anaida.

While Rock Machine went international by changing its name to Indus Creed, it also stood an impressive 35 on MTV's Top 100 videos of 1992 with *Top of the Rock*. Its *Pretty Child* won it applause all around even as its slick visual remained vividly etched in the public mind.

Rapper Baba Sehgal stormed

Sharon Prabhakar: In the spotlight

Anil Grover

Alisha Chinai: Lover girl

into the Indian screen with his seductive Pooja Bedi-supported *Thanda Thanda Pani* and the *Main Bhi Madonna* video. This success has only been overtaken by his latest *Indian Romeo*.

Singer Gary Lawyer is being promoted as a promising artiste who has set his sights abroad. Sharon Prabhakar, who has been as much a fixture on the Indian pop scene as Usha Uthup, is also eyeing that very horizon

Others belonging to this platoon of pop stars are groups 13 AD, Agni, Halley's Disciples, child prodigy Penny Vaz who has already paid tribute to her mentor with *My Daddy is Best*, Mubina and Nandu Bhende. Beautiful Anaida is already doing a whirlwind of live performances for entertainment companies after her *Nazuk, Nazuk*

Baba Sehgal: Prince of rap

was noticed.

Newcomer Piyush Soni, who lacks her lethal looks, may not have won as much applause. But his *Chokra* has won him his own brand of fans who are braying for more.

In this quicksand of success there is more to Indian pop than just talent. Marketability is the buzzword. While some stars may be swallowed up without a trace, most are willing to give it their all. And as the Indian music industry goes pop, there is certainly an exciting fizz to it

of Indian Pop music, Remo is the only one who does not need the props of song-writers, composers and instrumentalists. He is the proverbial Jack-of-all-musical-trades and every piece of music that he releases is entirely his — from conception to realisation. Never mind if a few puerile critics dismiss his lyrics as too simplistic or childlike.

Childlike he would like to continue, untrammeled by the self-eroding demands of the entertainment industry. Though he is over 40, the young world of pop art has rendered his tall frame with a timeless youth and he looks like that kid who only yesterday was strumming his guitar on the streets of Paris to earn a living.

The time-warp that he has chosen for himself is tailor-made for him His gold ear-rings, his dude's clothes glittering with sequins, the pony tail. A jazzed-up outward projection of a man who is simple, serious in his musical ruminations, is protective about his private life, shielding his French wife Michelle from the camera and is the intense family man who recorded the cry of his first-born into the song *Noah's Lullaby*.

He is child-like in his admiration for Mother Teresa, which inspired an album, his belief that Rajiv Gandhi's visit might have helped spruce up Goa (that led to his song, *Hello, Rajiv Gandhi* which earned him tight-lipped displeasure from Goans), and that Narasimha Rao could do with some helping hand in *Don't Kick up that Rao*.

If the message in his songs were simple, they were meant to be so, says Remo in a flash of rare self-defence "The message (as I said in my Star TV interview) of these songs were not meant for that intellectual who does not need such messages anyway. It is meant for those kids who listen to pop music. In fact, in that Star TV interview the question was in regard to my *Graham Bell* song which some criticised as being too simple But I had deliberately made it like a limerick, like a nursery rhyme."

He believes that at that point in his musical career his decision to have a message was relevant. He was the guy who had been through it all and made the right choice (He is also the guy behind Lehar Pepsi's *Yeh hi hai right choice baby*). He was the guy who did not believe in multiple partners, but settled down for marriage with his live-in girl friend. He was the archetype hippie who lived on music, drugs and atheism but chose the responsibility of fatherhood

The man who had tasted the success of his album *Bombay City* as Indian pop's first success story but decided to quell the greed for more flash success. He is the guy who hit the bulls-eye of *filmi* pop with *Jalwa* (Gul Anand's film) and *Trikal* (by Shyam Benegal) but decided that the glamorous shackles of Bollywood were not for him. The guy who had the laurels from Bombay but decided to settle down in a non-descript village in Goa that does not even figure as a dot in that state's tourist map.

His is not the cliched rag-to-riches story He was born in the lap of Gaon luxury to a businessman who spoilt him thoroughly till a sister was born eight years later. Remo's slight stammer notwithstanding, at age five he had already strutted on stage at the local club. His close friendship with his parents had given the freedom to

A thinker in dude's clothes

choose early in life, even if he did make the mistake of having chosen architecture.

A two-year-European tour decided him, however "I lived off my music during that period. I only wrote to my Dad when my guitar was stolen. I needed some money to get another one. And why not, my father was only always too happy to spoil me. Even so, I do not know exactly what it was, but I had decided to live independently And live off my music. Since that period, I have always lived off my music "

Even if it meant singing at cafes in Goa and winning sniggers from the snob Joneses. He mimics their snearing tone with endearing childishness, 'Those suited types used to 'Tch,Tch' and say, 'Look at that Fernandes boy with his pony tail and singing in hotels.'" But that did not dilute his enthusiasm. Nor did the rejections from recording companies who then did not believe in original Indian pop. The poor little rich boy Remo then recorded his *Goan Crazy* when the mad monsoons lashed the state, went on a personal distribution spree on his mobike to win over buyers and listeners.

Since then he has repeated his success with *Old Goan Gold*, a collection of traditional Goan Portuguese songs, *Back to Roots* which is a fusion of Indian folk and Western pop, *SOS India* triggered off by the language riots in Goa and *She is Woman* on the exploitation of the female species.

Taking digs at journalists who flirt between frivolous beats to occasionally take time off to criticise music without serious specialisation, and pot-shots at purists who denigrate pop music to this century's trash bin, he notes wryly, "The problem in the Indian music scene is that there are no serious music critics. And the problem with music lovers is that they believe that classical music is all. Classical music has its own ethereal beauty. Pop music has its own charm. It is wrong on the part of purists to say that pop music is spoiling the taste of youth today. It does not. Let them not forget that even before Indian pop came of age, the youth of those times were not listening to classical music. They were listening to *Eena, Meena, Deeka* type of sound."

This does not mean that he swears by Indian pop today. "When I listen to some of my contemporaries who are not doing anything but copy the successful western scores, I get all heated up and then I decide to do an album, just to show them what original music is all about. But I only wish," he grins, "that I get this urge more often. Then, maybe I will write music more often."

Among regrets such as these, is also the vague regret that the five years that he spent doing his architecture at Bombay J.J. School could have been spent more productively with his life's love. "Maybe I could have spent those five years learning sound engineering." But this *soupcon* of regret belongs to the past.

Among the Indo-western music performers, he would place his money on Apache Indian "His scores in the first album released here made me sit up. I said, 'Man, that is original sound.'"

But the rest of Indian pop stars, whom he would not name, don't measure up. There is enough mediocrity around to inspire him to do better. And his album, to be released this summer, will show if he will strike gold again. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says. a letter needing urgent attention, a call or invitation may please be expected Changes in your working schedule are certain, thanks to Mars your planetary ruler being in full strength. Relationships turn out fulfilling. You will fuse pleasure and profit in the right measure.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Your stars of glory and creativity shine, thanks to Venus, your main planet being well placed with good luck planet, Jupiter. You will work your guts out, have excellent results and find time for children, hobbies and sports Just see to it that you do not overdo a good thing Time for trips and ties

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Celebrations, victory dance and partying are very much in order Those in arts, crafts, research, computers and space programmes set the world on fire by their brilliance and power Redesigning of furniture and house is a possibility Get set to travel and or receive important visitors

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Shoot. Hit. And smack-centre. You will fling the gauntlet of opposition right in the teeth of your rivals and enemies, and emerge a winner Passion will seize you and everything that could happen might just actually take place. Only your health might stand in the way of Cancerians. So take care

Leo
July 21 — August 21

With sun, the source of power, in a good position with Pluto, symbol of ferocity, you will be ready to do battle with the cosmos, or kiss it into submission You will wield words to scathing effect A job switch is quite probable (unless it has taken place the last three months or so). This is also the time to socialise

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Mercury, your planetary ruler, regains direct motion from January 30, giving you a cutting edge in terms of friendship, social service, job, loans, funds and investments Try not to lose or misplace things of value But lost things may now be found Keep relationships on an even keel with colleagues

Libra
September 23 — October 22

You will feel radiant and actually light up the lives of those you come in contact with, because Mars-Pluto are on your side. Alliances and partnerships, either personal or professional, are foretold. For romance, hobbies, research, childbirth, education, and journeys, the right time has come.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

No love without trust will be your credo, as Neptune zooms its way into your heart. Home, office, renovation, decoration, buying selling, are ordained for you Friendships and new ventures, a swinging time in the social whirligig, happiness through kids and artistic pursuits are predicted for Scorpios

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Hardwork and excellent results are foretold, says Ganesha In the bargain, a spot of fun and the breaking and mending of hearts, a game you play so well A major move of workplace or home, or a home away from home is quite probable.You have now entered a money making year

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

You will be a great hunter, be it a great love you are pursuing, a job, money, a publicity campaign, a collaboration, research and study, or even an excavation, as Saturn, your chief significator is in fine formation with Jupiter, the money planet It should be happy hunting for you.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Bestirred by your charm, the world is all yours, including mundane affairs such as money, loans, funds, investments, property and financial transactions This week, the accent is very clearly on communications and contacts, human relationships, long-term plans, journey and collaborations

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Wedding bells, alliances, collaborations, heavy expenses and a round of introspection form the quartet for Pisceans It would be best to budget your time and resources as the going will be hectic all the way The home, too, will be a focal point for Pisceans In short, so much to do this week

BIRTHDAYS

January 28: This full moon promises maturity, a stronger you, a certain respect for values, and that is admirable. The second half of the year will be happy.

January 29: Moon trine Neptune means communication, perceptive powers, childbirth, quest for higher education and long-distance connections

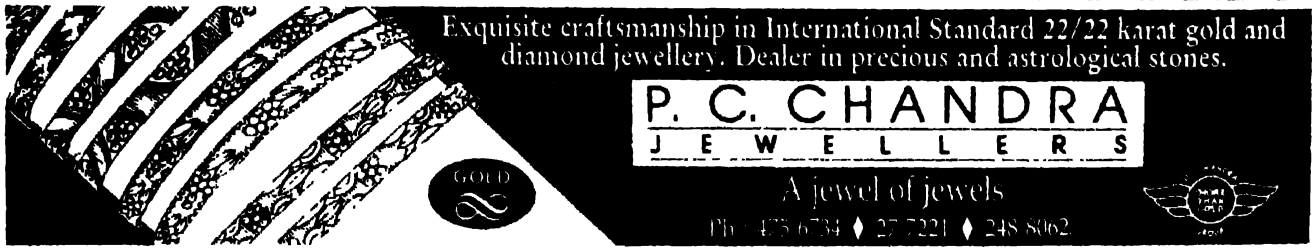
January 30: Moon trine Mars means an excellent time for those in publicity, sales, accounts, computers and films. You can set your own pace in achieving it.

January 31: Moon sextile Neptune means you will really start cracking from a most happy socket. You certainly deserve the good fortune that will come your way.

February 1: Moon Neptune opposition means you must avoid confusion and overreaction at home and in your workplace, if you want to sail through life.

February 2: Venus conjunction Saturn means slightly difficult conjunction for you. Job and domestic front will witness pleasant changes. Take care of the health of elders. Trips on the cards.

February 3: Moon trine Pluto is the power house. It naturally means a better position and a possible promotion for you. Ganesha says, romance and finance will make you happy.



TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
			[illegible]	1030	1
			[illegible]	1250	4
IC 743	0920	daily	IC 744	1140	daily
M9 327	1230	[illegible]	M9 327	1610	[illegible]
M9-324	1220	[illegible]	M9 324	1[illegible]5	2 6
AHMEDABAD					
S2-026/027	0850	1 2 3 4 5	S2-026/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5
AIZAWL					
PF-301	0830	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1200	2 4 6
			PF 302	1500	1 [illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1250	1 3 4 5 7	IC [illegible]	1525	1 3 4 [illegible]
D2 181	1250	1 2 3 4 5 6	D2 181	1630	1 [illegible]
D2-181	1200	6	D2 181	1430	6
BANGALORE					
IC-771	0600	daily	IC [illegible]	1140	daily
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-402	0700	3 [illegible] 7	D5 401	1[illegible]	2 4 6
IC-544	1115	2 [illegible]	IC 543	1[illegible]5	[illegible]
IC-769	1615	2 3 4 6	IC 770	[illegible]30	4 6
VI-106	1740	1	VI 106	[illegible]30	4
BOMBAY					
IC-676	0740	daily	IC [illegible]	0830	daily
9W 202	0715	1 3 4 5 6 7	9W 201	[illegible]	1 2 3 [illegible]
D2 162	0920	[illegible]	D2 163	[illegible]	daily
IC 273	1545	daily	AI [illegible]	17[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 212	1940	[illegible]	9W 211	[illegible]	daily
D2-104	1905	daily	D2 103	[illegible]	daily
AI-309	1930	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
M9-305	0600	1 [illegible] 4 5 6	M9 306	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
M9-307	1700	1 [illegible]	M9 308	2[illegible]	daily
BRUNEI					
IC 263	0610	daily	[illegible]	0610	1 2 3 4 5
S2-026	0850	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	0[illegible]	daily
M9-304	0900	daily	AI [illegible]	60[illegible]	1
IC-812	151[illegible]	1	[illegible]	1130	1 [illegible] 4 5
IC-402	1[illegible]	daily	IC 401	1135	daily
4S 805	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	13[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC 811	171[illegible]	1 [illegible]
S2-006	1[illegible]5	1 2 [illegible]	M9 301	1[illegible]	daily
M9-303	2030	daily	IC 264	20[illegible]5	daily
IC 855	1830	4	IC 856	11[illegible]	4 [illegible]
CHANDIGARH					
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5 605	1115	daily
PF-737	0730	1 [illegible]	IC 70[illegible]	1630	1 3 5 7
4S 816	1205	2 4 6	4S 815	1675	1 [illegible] 3
4S 812	1205	1 3 5	4S 811	1635	2 4 6
IC-701	1240	1 [illegible] 5 7	PF 730	1[illegible]40	2 5
DIBRUGARH					
D5-601/602	0600	daily	D5 605	1105	daily
IC-257	1145	1 4	IC [illegible]	1540	1 4
DIMAPUR					
S2 026/021	0850	1 2 3 4 5	S2 026/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5
GUWAHATI					
D5-601	0600	daily	[illegible]	1[illegible]	daily
IC 701	0910	1 3 5	IC 704	1120	1 3 5
9W 611	1020	daily	9W 612	1310	daily
M9 [illegible]	1230	daily	M9 332	1510	daily
PF 301	0830	1 3 5	PF 302	1500	1 3 5
IC 762	0630	4 7	IC 230	1625	daily
IC 2[illegible]	1310	daily	[illegible]11	1[illegible]	[illegible] 4 6
4S 316 811	1 6	1 6	4S 315/815	1635	1 3 5
M9 [illegible]	1320	3 [illegible]	M9 327	1610	3 5 7
M9 [illegible]	1220	1 3	M9 [illegible]	1610	1 4
HYDERABAD					
IC 77[illegible]	1615	3 5 7	IC [illegible]	01[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 7[illegible]	1615	2 4 6	IC 77[illegible]	1745	2 4 6
VI 106	1740	1	VI 106	1760	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
D5 601/602	0600	daily	D5 605	1955	daily
IC 755	0915	3 [illegible]	IC [illegible]	1405	3 5
IC 713	1140	1 6	IC 71[illegible]	1[illegible]40	2 4
JAIPUR					
S2 026/027	0850	1 2 3 4 5	S2 026/005	2005	1 2 4 5
JORHAT					
IC 257	1115	[illegible]	IC 257	[illegible]40	1
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1515	1 [illegible]	IC 811	1[illegible]	1
MADRAS					
D5 401	0700	3 5 7	D5 400	[illegible]40	1 [illegible]
IC 517	1115	1 3 5	IC 543	[illegible]	1 4 [illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1[illegible]5	[illegible]
			[illegible]	200[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 755	1015	2 3 6	IC 75[illegible]	1[illegible]	2 4 [illegible]
PATNA					
D5 406	1530	2 4 6	D5 [illegible]	1635	2 4 6
IC 83[illegible]	1515	1 3	IC 81[illegible]	1[illegible]15	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 735	0540	[illegible]	IC 736	1100	1 4 [illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 812	1515	[illegible]	IC 811	1715	1 [illegible]
SHILLONG					
D5 601	0600	daily	D5 605	1[illegible]	daily
SILCHAR					
D5 601/505	0600	daily	D5 605	1945	daily
IC [illegible]	0915	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1405	3 [illegible]
IC 2[illegible]	0[illegible]45	2 4 6	IC 254	1025	2 4 6
M9 [illegible]	1220	1 4	M9 325	1630	1 4
M9 2[illegible]	1230	2 5	M9 [illegible]	1555	[illegible] 6
TEZPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]40	[illegible] 6	IC [illegible]	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
S2 010	1530	1 [illegible]	S2 011	0915	1 [illegible]
D5 406	1330	2 4 6	D5 401	1635	2 4 6
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 54[illegible]	11[illegible]	1 4 6	IC 541	1040	1 4 [illegible]

FLIGHTS

RJ-185	1445	4	RJ 184	0715	4
KL-876	0420	7	KL 875	0225	7
KB-105	0850	2, 6	KB 106	1020	[illegible]
			KB 108	1240	5
IC 731	0855	2 [illegible]	IG 314	1240	1 3 6
IC 855	1105	4 7	IC 856	1730	4 7
IG-314	1355	1 3 6	IC 732	1505	2 5
AI-308	1910	5	AI 309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	1150	[illegible]	RO 075	1200	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC 225	0800	1	IC-226	1020	1
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC 723	1250	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
RA 214	1215	2, 4, 6	RA 213	1130	2, 4, 6
IC-747	1115	1, 2, 4, 6	IC-748	1435	1, 2, 4, 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
BA 142	2115	3, 7	BA-143	1515	4
[illegible]					
SU-538	1755	4	SU-537	1555	4
[illegible]					
KB-106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2, 6
KB-106	1325	5			
[illegible]					
SQ 415	2315	2, 5	SQ-416	2210	2, 5
BI-108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
[illegible]					
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	6	AI-309	1820	6
[illegible]					
IC 227	1530	1, 6	IC 228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19.15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6.45	2312
3005	19.20	**Amritsar Mail**	7.55	3006
3003	20.00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	12.00	3004
2381	9.15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep. Wed. Thurs. & Sun Arr. Tues. Wed. & Sat	16.15	2382
2303	9.15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep. Mon. Tues. Fri. & Sat Arr. Mon. Thurs. Fri. & Sun	16.15	2304
2301	16.30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep. Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. & Sat Arr. Mon. Tues. Thur. Fri. & Sun	10.45	2302
2305	13.45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep. Thurs. & Sun. Arr. Wed. & Sat	12.50	2306
2307	22.[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4.45	2308
2019	6.[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday	21.10	2020
4573	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri-Wkly Dep. Tues. Fri. & Sat. Arr. Tues. Wed. & Sat	11.35	4574
4042	22.00	**Guwahati Express** Dep. Wednesday. Arr. Friday	1.35	4041
5049	23.00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep. & Arr. Thursday	11.35	5050
5047	13.00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Sun. Mon. Wed. & Fri.	4.50	5046
3009	20.30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7.00	3010
3007	9.20	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18.15	3008
3049	23.20	**Amritsar Express**	15.20	3050
3017	21.00	**Kathgodam Express**	11.55	3018
3021	16.05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5.00	3022
5655	17.35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6.30	5656
3317	6.10	**Black Diamond Express**	21.[illegible]	3318
3029	17.11	**Coalfield Express**	10.30	3030
3035	18.20	**Asansol Express**	8.45	3036
3031	21.05	**Danapur Express**	5.50	3032
3071	22.30	**Jamalpur Express**	5.10	3072
3015	9.55	**Santiniketan Express**	15.40	3016
1159	15.25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep. Mon. Tue. & Thurs. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Fri.	7.55	1160
1171	15.25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep. Wed., Sat. & Sun Arr. Sun. Wed. & Sat	7.55	1172
3327	14.30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4.50	3328
1181	15.25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep. Friday. Arr. Tuesday	7.55	1182

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	10.40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6.35	3142
3143	19.15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8.45	3144
3111	20.15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7.15	3112
5657	6.25	**Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express**	20.35	5658
3153	22.00	**Gour Express**	7.15	3154
5663	20.00	**Katihar Express**	4.15	5664
3151	11.20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15.50	3152
3133	20.55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBC Loop	12.30	3134
3103	18.20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10.25	3104
5085	12.40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Tues. Thurs. & Sat	4.25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20.30	**Madras Mail**	6.25	6004
8002	19.20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	6.20	8001
2860	12.30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15.25	2859
2021	6.55	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Saturday	21.00	2022
8034	20.40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5.15	8033
8030	11.20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16.25	8029
2841	14.05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	5.10	2842
7007	8.10	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep. Sun. Tues. & Fri. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Sat	19.40	7008
6311	22.[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** Dep. Sunday Arr. Tuesday	13.45	6312
8011	7.30	**Tata Steel Express**	16.20	8012
8013	6.00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21.25	8014
8005	20.55	**Titlagarh Express**	5.00	8006
8015	23.40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6.50	8016
8007	22.15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	8008
8409	19.00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8.30	8410
2821	6.15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	23.05	2822
8045	10.30	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	1.10	8046
8017	16.4[illegible]	**Purulia Express** Dep. Except Saturday Arr. Except Sunday	11.35	8018
[illegible]	15.40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah. Sunday only	16.10	-
	11.05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah. Saturday only	11.45	2412
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22.15	
	14.05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13.45	[illegible]
	14.05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	1.45	6515
6513	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	22.15	
6515	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep. Tues. & Fri. Arr. Tues. & Fri.	1.[illegible]	6516
6525	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	-
	14.05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	1.45	6526

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2209496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays) in addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

READING HIGH

How good are the in-flight magazines on our domestic carriers, asks ***Shameem Akthar***

If you're a frequent flier, you must be familiar with the soul-numbing boredom that descends on you after an hour or so in the air. You've had your re-heated plastic meal, you've read the film magazine you bought at the airport, you've rebuffed your neighbour's attempts to find out how much you're really worth. And now, you have absolutely nothing to do.

It is generally at this point that people tend to seize upon that glossy nestling in the little pouch on the back of the seat in front of you. Yes, it's time to look at the in-flight magazine.

But is there anything to look at? Seasoned travellers will testify that there isn't. Sure, there are the mandatory articles about the current trendy destinations in India (Goa, Benaras or even Kulu Manali), reports on various little-known tribes of this country, and even a story or two about the jewellery industry.

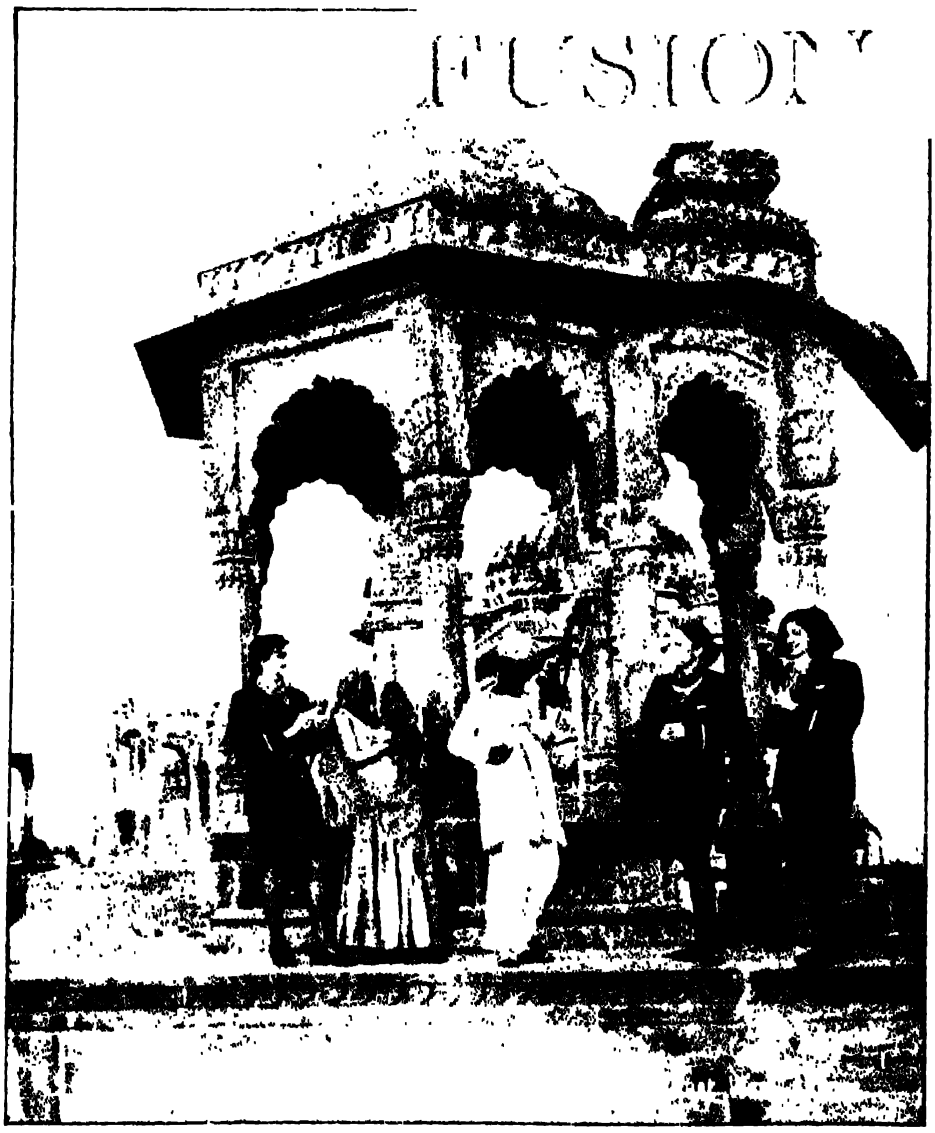
But the fact remains that if you've read one in-flight magazine, you've read them all. There are the same tired descriptions of resorts, the same over-written paeans of praise to the design tradition of India, and the obligatory, if a little tired, humour pieces.

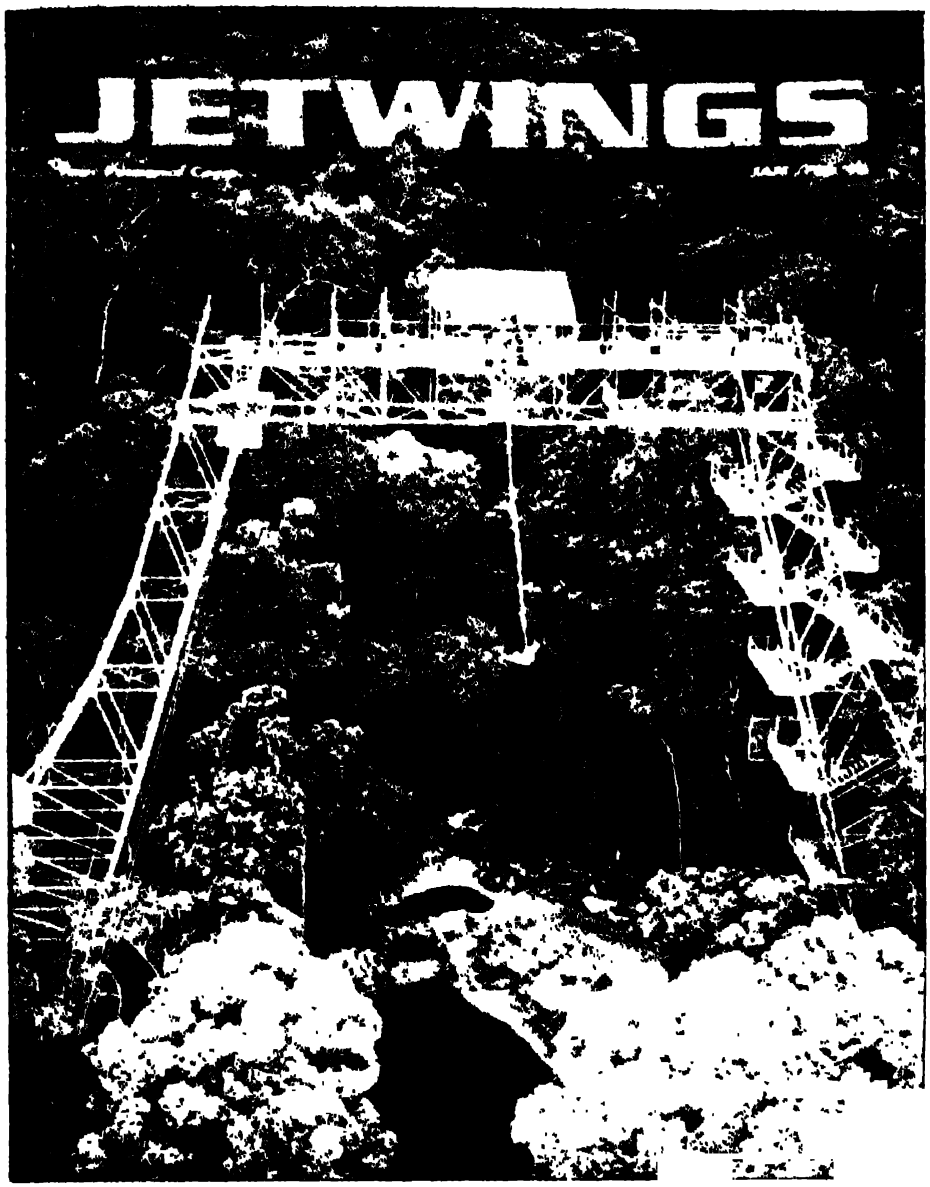
Challenge the airlines and they respond with the usual excuses about high production costs, the dearth of ideas and good writers and the indifference of advertisers. In the circumstances, they ask, can they really be expected to do better?

Of late, however, this apologetic attitude seems to have been dropped as the various domestic carriers in this country belatedly wake up to the realisation that the quality of their in-flight magazine goes a long way in determining how the public perceives their airlines.

These days, therefore, the editorial boards of the various in-flight magazines are adopting an entirely different line. Uma Deshpande, editor of *Fusion* (East West Airlines), for instance, insists that she is trying very hard to break away from the time-worn mould of the travel magazine.

Fusion, says Uma Deshpande, should be the kind of family magazine that people would want to take with them when they de-plane. Thus, _Fusion_ does not restrict itself to the kind typical 'tourism' pieces that most of its rivals devote their pages to





"If you look at the other in-flight magazines," she explains, "you will notice that most of them will have the same writers writing about the same subjects. Most of these authors seem to be re-hashing their stuff and distributing them all around. Even the pictures used with the pieces are similar. At *Fusion*, however, we are trying to create our own pool of writers who will be writing exclusively for us."

Deshpande is not just targeting the corporate traveller; she also wants to have articles that will appeal to his wife and children. *Fusion*, she says, should be the kind of family magazine that people want to take with them when they de-plane.

Thus, *Fusion* does not restrict itself to the kind typical 'tourism' pieces that most of its rivals devote their pages to. Instead, says Deshpande, she runs articles on such film heroes as Aamir Khan, model and beauty queen Aishwarya Rai, and the vocalist Bhimsen Joshi. There is even an astrology column, written by Jagjit Uppal, in case you feel like consulting the stars while you are airborne

But despite this attempt to be different, *Fusion* still hasn't attracted any advertising. The only two issues that have been printed haven't had a single ad in them. Instead, the ad slots have been used by the airline to repair its image after the murder of its chief, Thakiyuddin Wahid

Sample ad: They couldn't fault our efficiency. They couldn't fault our quality. So they tried to smear our reputation.

Then, there are various letters from the various Wahid brothers, explaining how they built up their airline (and by implication, denying that they are funded by Dawood Ibrahim).

But, now that the third issue is in the works, advertisers have been enquiring about the possibility of placing ads in the product And Deshpande may just be able to realise her dream of circulating the 30,000 copies of *Fusion* by being as different as possible from the others in the air.

Swagat, the Indian Airlines in-flight magazine, is also scheduled for a make-over According to V Narayanan, the airline's communications manager, the 70,000 copies of *Swagat* will now be published from India (until now they were printed in East Asia), and the reduction in production costs will help them improve the product.

On the cards is a move to change the editorial content of the magazine The editorial board, headed by Nalini Menon, will slot articles on such subjects as health, eco-consciousness and ethnic chic For the corporate traveller there will be profiles of business heavyweights and how-to pieces which will help them recruit efficient staff as well as maximise their potential

According to V. Narayanan, IA's communications manager, the 70,000 copies of *Swagat* will now be published from India (until now they were printed in East Asia), and the reduction in production costs will help them improve the product

On the same flight path is the bi-monthly *Jetwings* (Jet Airways) According to its editor Swatna Kaji, it has a 'timeless appeal', thanks to an editorial mix that includes everything from pearls to pagers

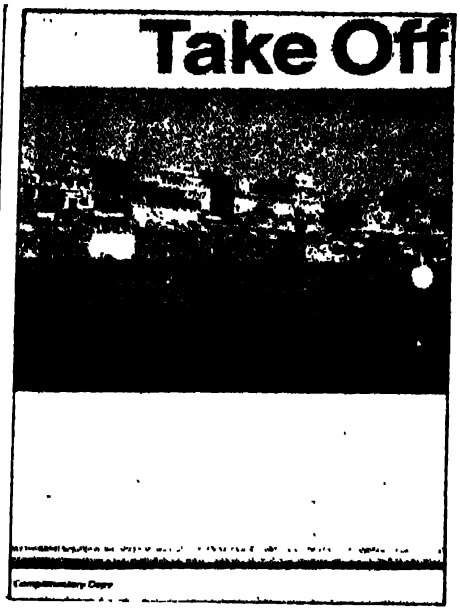
Certainly, they have a lot of ads And even if some of the articles read like thinly-veiled advertisements for various products, at least they do tell the traveller where he can eat well or pick up a gold chain for his wife

Amit Bhatia, who has a hand in both

Take Off (Modiluft) and *Touchin' Heights* (Damania-NEPC), has managed to attract more advertising than most other in-flight magazines, thanks to the wide range of articles that he carries. He, at least, treats the passenger as an intelligent entity rather than an ennui-saddled soul who has to be bombarded with visuals of colourful tribals from Rajasthan and Gujarat.

But even here the corporate traveller intrudes, with Amit Sarkar telling him how to make dreams out of Duracell and managment ace, Claus Moller, instructing him on the best ways to ensure quality. For the less entrepreneurial, there is a guide to counting calories and even tarot card readings by Ma Prem Usha.

Not that it was easy putting Modiluft's magazine together. Since the airline does not operate on feeder



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routes, says Bhatia, advertisers were unwilling to risk their money on it. The few ads that were forthcoming did not often come on time. "And since we cannot afford to lose them by not waiting," says Bhatia, "we often had to delay the magazine."

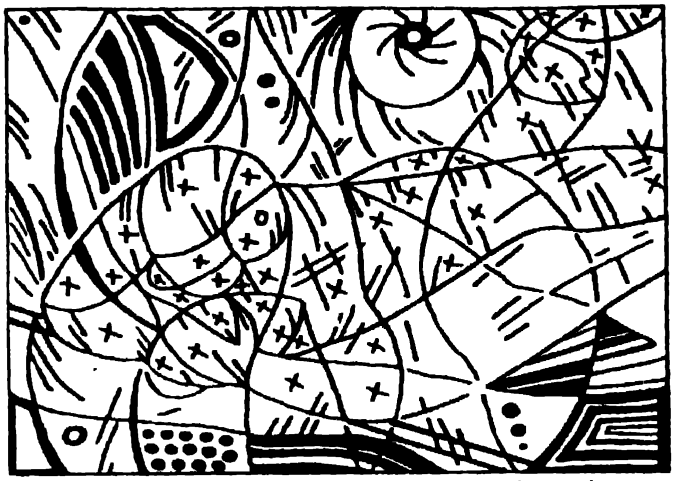
But the magazine also suffers from indifferent writing, and by featuring such fillers as pictures of Shobha De presenting a trophy or Shah Rukh Khan's rear at a film party.

Perhaps it's time the domestic airlines took a leaf out of the in-flight magazines of such international carriers as American Airlines (*American Way*) and British Airways (*High Life*), which rival most up-market feature magazines in their editorial quality. British Airway's second in-flight magazine, *Business Life*, is compared favourably with such serious periodicals as the *Economist*.

High Life (with 150-plus pages) has a circulation of 2,90,000 while the *American Way* boasts of a circulation of around 3,00,000. Then there is *Hot Air* by Virgin, which doesn't treat its readers as if they were morons but assumes that they may be interested in reading about the rise of fascism in Europe.

Increased rivalry in the air may force Indian in-flight magazines to improve their products in a like manner. But before that, their boards will have to decide on the right editorial mix. Until then, you'll just have to put up with the usual rubbish about adventure tourism, Ayurvedic cures and the latest beach resort in Thiruvananthapurum. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL ✍ HAL KAUFMAN

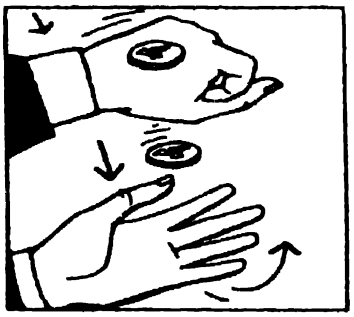


HELD OVER! Zero in on the big play above by shading areas marked with an X Use an ordinary pencil or dark crayon.

OPS and OOPS!

There's a hot dog but no cold dog. There's a down payment but no up payment. Tightwad, loosewad? sweet pea, sour pea? Hard copy, soft copy? Any to add?

GRAB BAG!

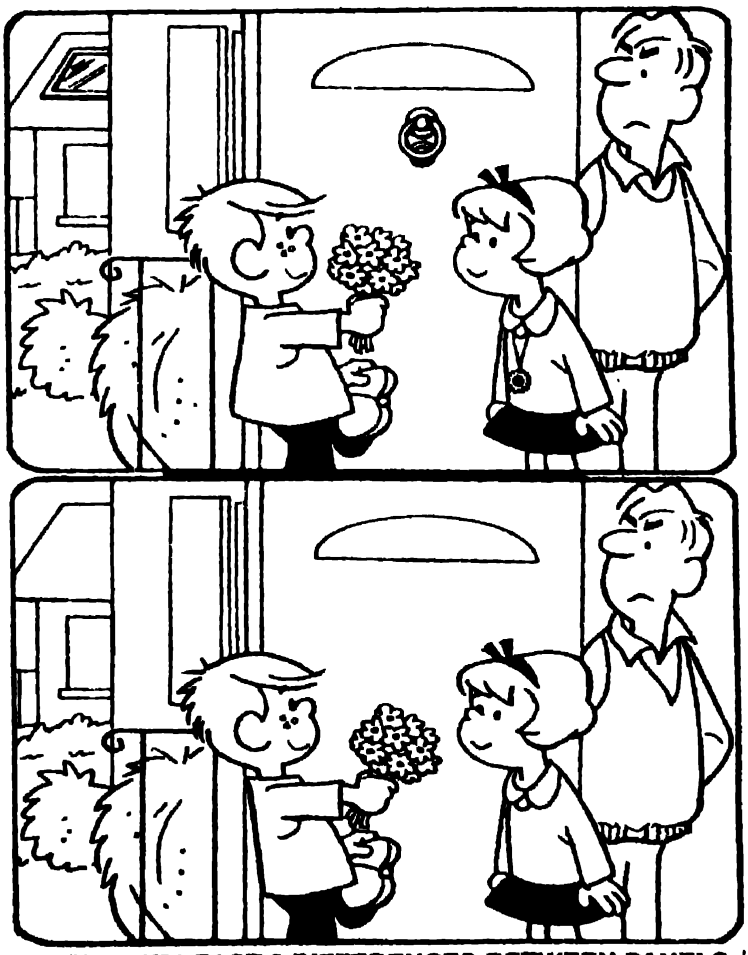


Let's see how quick you are with head and hand Extend one arm forward, with fist closed. Place a coint atop the back of your hand. Now, dropping your arm suddenly, attempt to bring your hand down and under to catch the falling coin in your palm.

Once you ve mastered this, try reversing the twist of your wrist. That is to say, turn it in the opposite direction.

Remember, the object is to grab coin before it falls

HOCUS-FOCUS



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Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Roof panel is missing. 2 Shirt is smaller. 3. Door knocker is missing. 4. Locket is missing 5. Flowers are moved. 6. Neckline is different

	99999
−	9999
	86997

SORRY WRONG NUMBERS!

ALAS, we have the right answer to the subtraction problem provided below, but we dot have the right subtractable amounts. Indeed, what's wong is that four of the numbers are upside down.

Simply invert three nines in the top row and one nine in the middle row (that is to say, make them sixes), and alakazam, the answer is correct.

How long will it take you to upend the nines?

Time limit is three minutes.

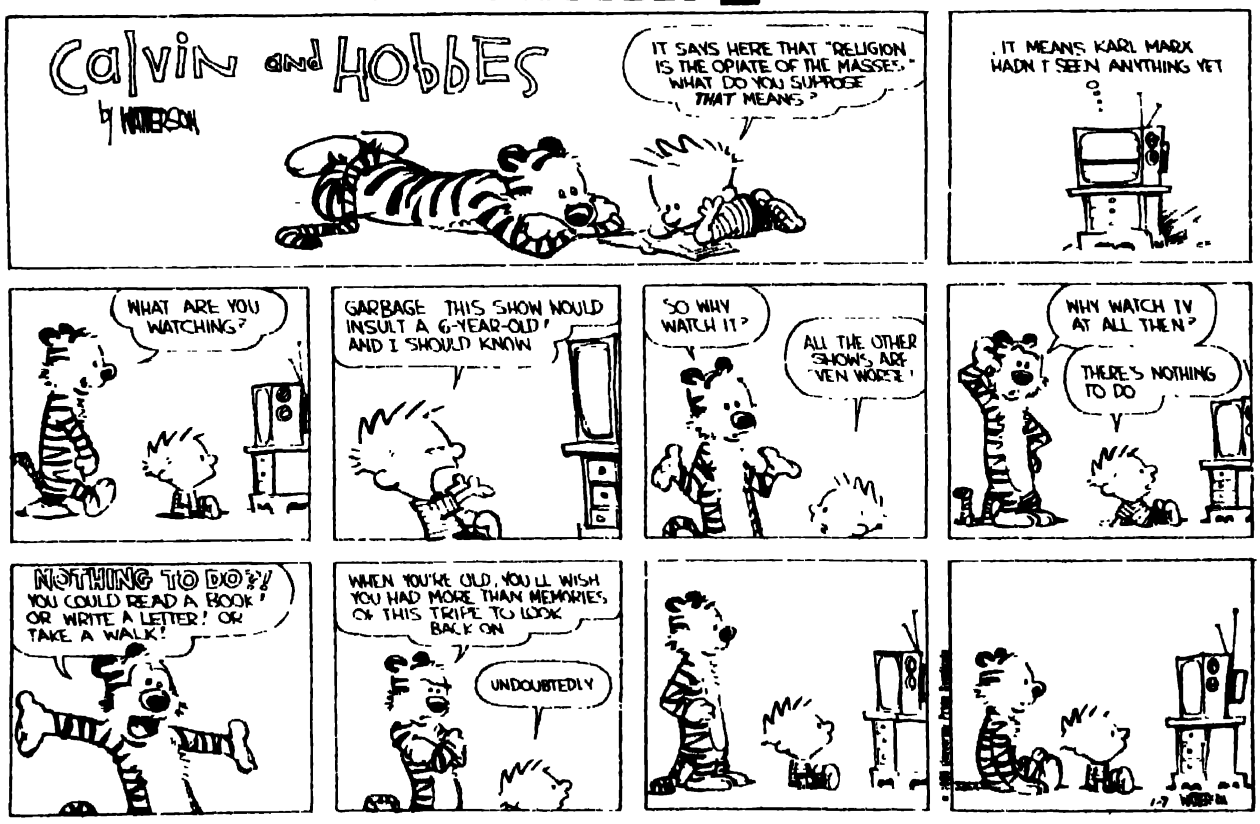
Answer: Top row: Nine, six, six, nine; six Middle row: Nine six nine

MINI TEST! Five consecutive numbers add to 100. Quickly, what numbers?

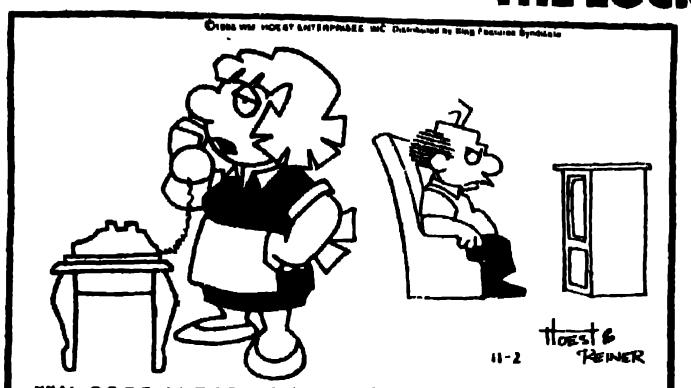
Answer 18 19 20 21 and 22

ARCHIE

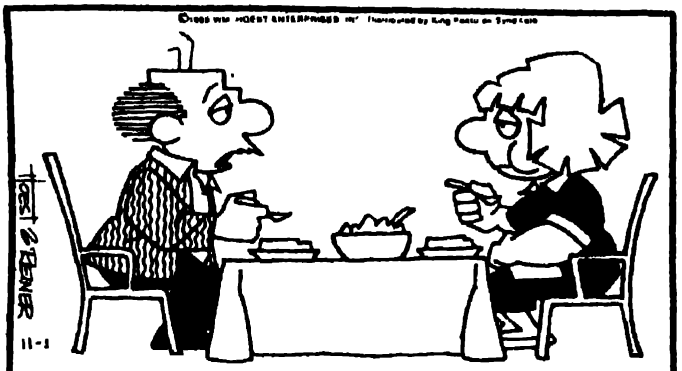
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



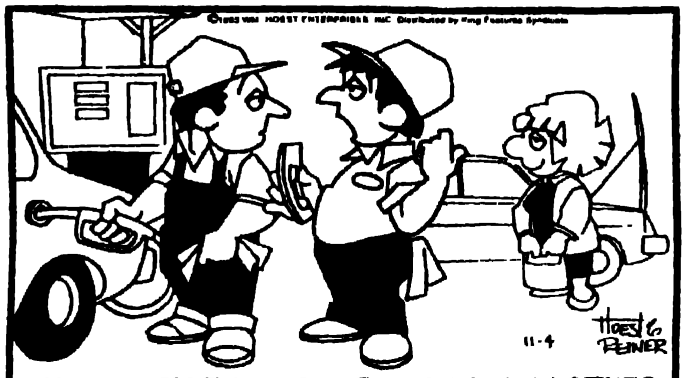
THE LOCKHORNS



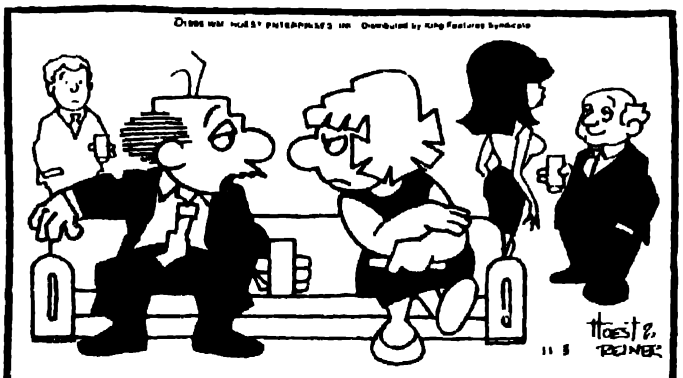
"I'M SORRY, LEROY DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK ON THE PHONE ... ACTUALLY, HE DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK."



"MY GUESS IS THAT THIS IS STYROFOAM WITH REAL STEAK FLAVORING."

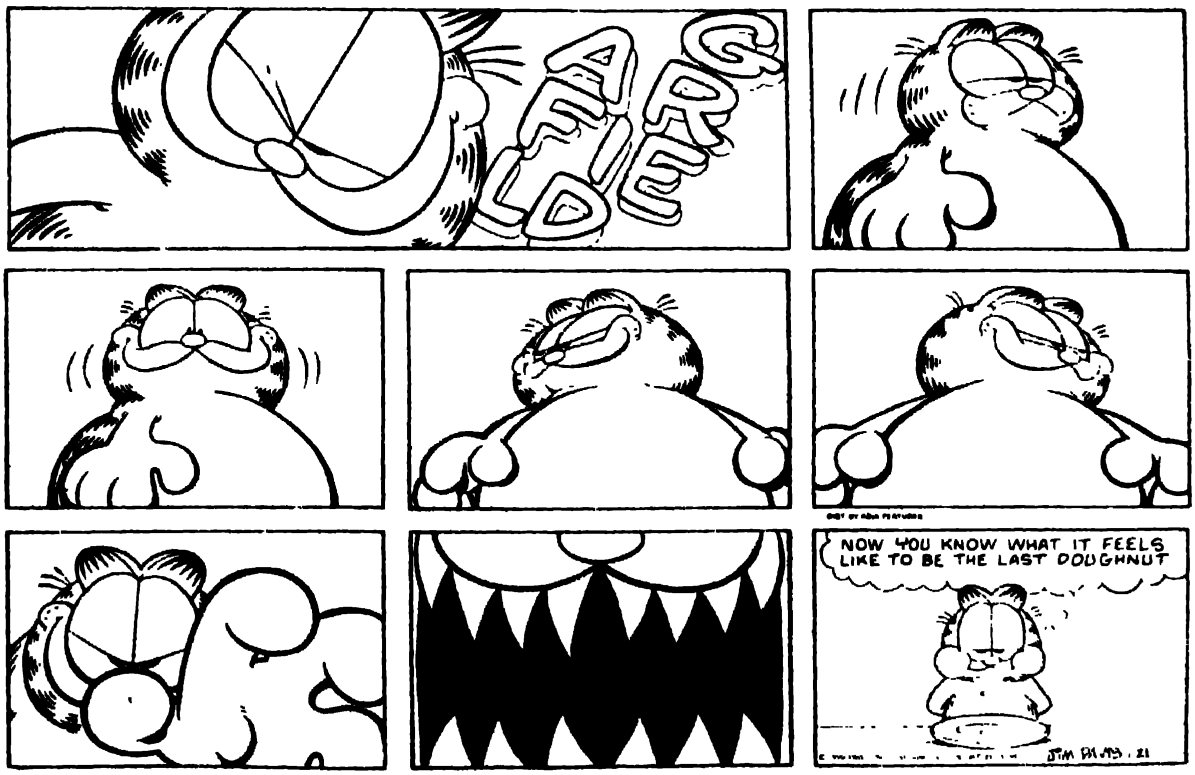


"SHE WANTS TO KNOW IF WE HAVE ANY OTHER STYLES IN BRAKE SHOES."

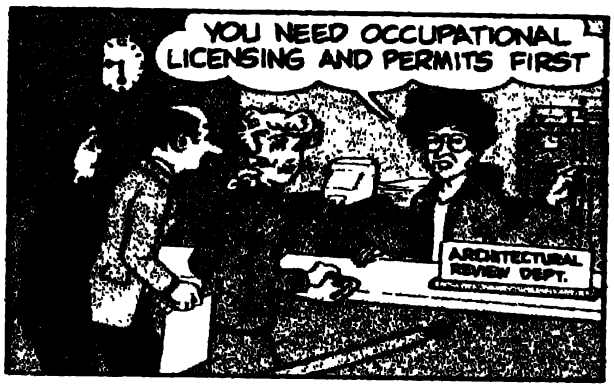


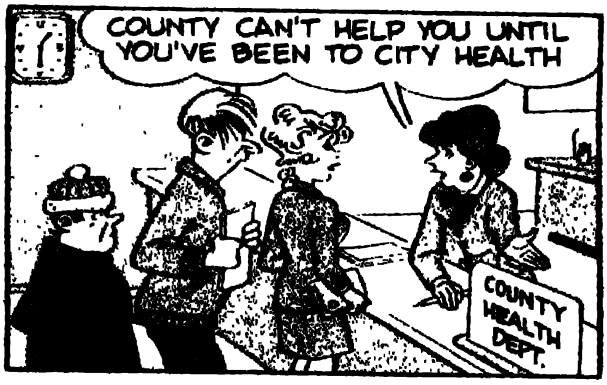
"LET'S GO HOME, LORETTA. YOUR PAINT IS BEGINNING TO PEEL."

GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP





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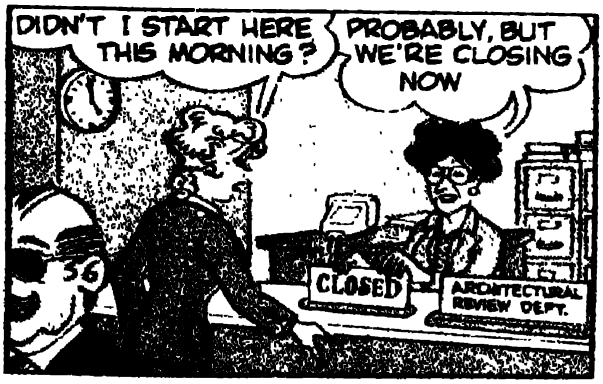


Continued from Page 8

TELEVISION

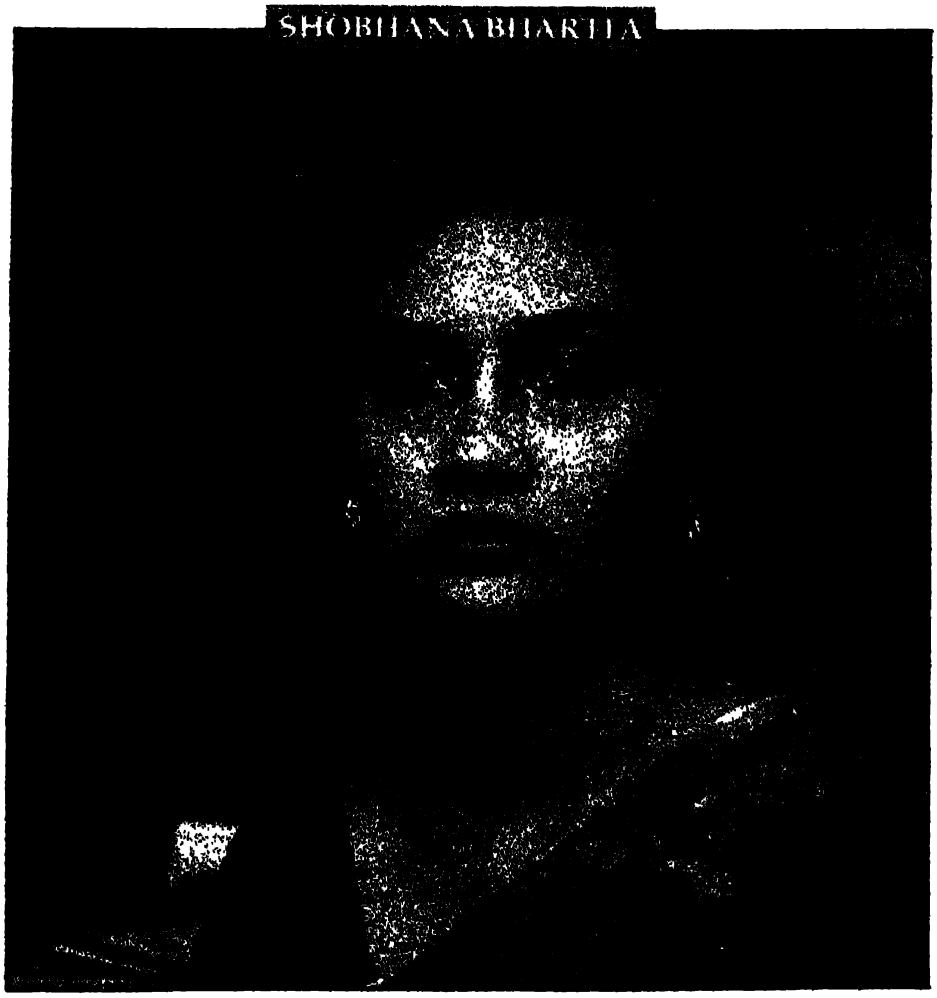
Prannoy Roy

It was the 1989 general election that set Prannoy Roy on the road to television stardom. In the election special programme on the national network — the first ever of its kind in India — Roy, along with Vinod Dua, who did the Hindi bits, gave the Indian people a low-down on the election results: the winners; the losers; voting patterns and how they had changed; the 'swing' from one party to another.

All this interspersed with interviews with both victorious and losing politicians over the satellite link while a panel of heavy-duty experts analysed the voting trends in the studio with Roy.

This kind of opportunity usually comes every five years or so to TV anchors, but Roy proved luckier than most. The two incarnations of the Janata government failed to stagger to even the half-way mark, and yet another general election was held in 1991. And once again, Prannoy Roy was on the tube, playing the nation's most telegenic psephologist ever, once again.

PRANNOY ROY



SHOBHANA BHARTIA

But even Roy's luck had to run out some time. And sure enough, the Narasimha Rao government showed no inclination to commit political harakiri the way the two Janata regimes had. Not that it mattered, for by then Roy had reinvented himself as the anchor of *The World This Week*, a current affairs programme on Doordarshan which revolved around Indian and foreign news clips with Roy doing the links.

This format, however, worked only as long as Indian viewers didn't have access to the BBC's World Service and CNN. But once the satellite revolution hit the country, week-old foreign news clips made little sense. But by then Roy was already on to his next gig

These days his New Delhi Television (NDTV) does news bulletins on Doordarshan's national network, and has a current affairs programme on DD3. And though it has been said of Prannoy's television persona that if he was any more laid-back he would keel right over, Roy still remains one of the most skilled anchors on Indian television. And with 1996 being an election year, it will be interesting to watch how he re-packages himself.

Shobhana Bhartia

She may be one of the most powerful women in Delhi today, but Shobhana Bhartia began life in Calcutta. Those days, of course, she was Shobhana Birla, daughter of industrialist K.K. Birla.

She was educated by the Loreto nuns—her father refused to send her to Modern High School for fear that she would be treated as a Birla rather than just another student—and married Shyam Bhartia, the son of another Marwari industrial house and moved to Delhi.

But the Birla daughter only came into her own once she took over the reins at *The Hindustan Times* in 1987 as executive director (her designation changed to editorial director two years ago). Those who were initially inclined to dismiss her as yet another socialite in chiffon and pearls had to reluctantly concede that there was a shrewd business head under that impeccably-coifed hair, as a consequence of which profits at the *HT* have grown ten-fold over the last ten years.

Running a newspaper, however, is not all that Bhartia does these days. *Hindustan Times* has entered into a partnership with the Pearson Group and with TVB of Hong Kong (which is the biggest channel in the Far East) to launch a television channel, which will offer entertainment programming loosely based on the Zee and Metro Channel pattern.

The HTV company has already been floated with Pradip Chanda (formerly of the Gramaphone Company of India) as chief executive and Karan Thapar as head of programming, and 1996 will see Shobhana Bhartia launch herself as a full-fledged media baroness.

Certainly, Bhartia has done more ground work before the launch than anybody else in the television business. For one thing, HTV already has a cable network in place to ensure that its programmes reach the viewers, and since Bhartia has cordial relations with the Hindujas, it is unlikely that there will be any attempt to sabotage her project.

How the channel will fare in the maelstorm of programming that is inundating the Indian viewer remains to be seen, but with the resources of the *Hindustan Times* behind her, it is hard to see how Bhartia can go wrong.

Ruby Bhatia

She arrived in India a raw, untrained, minor beauty queen (having, apparently, been crowned Miss Canada India), determined to make it in show business. But Bhatia had one advantage over other such foreign-returned aspirants: she spoke Hindi without the trace of an accent.

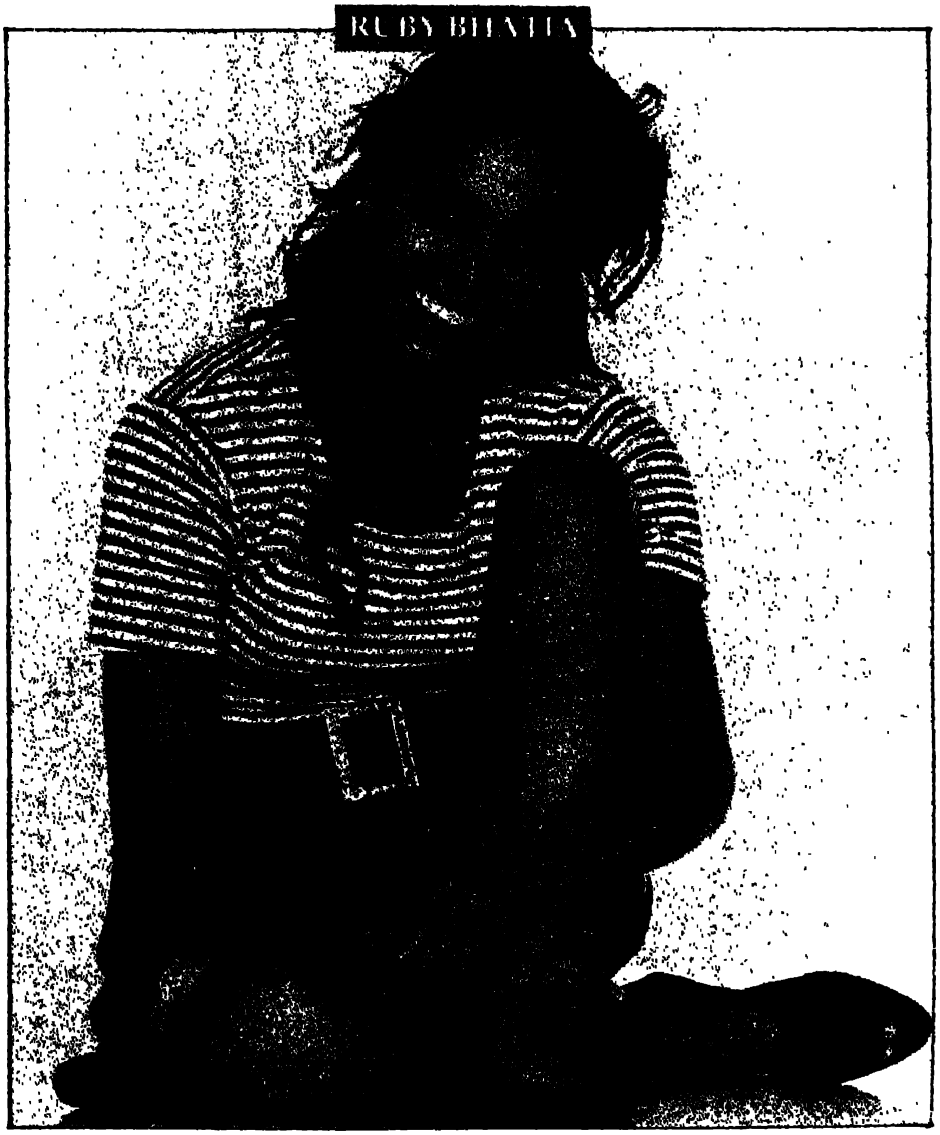
This was understandable. From the time Ruby was a little girl, her parents had been grooming her for stardom: not in Hollywood but in Bombay. Bhatia had even played a small role as a child star in a Hindi movie, and was evidently hoping to make it big in the movies.

But the Bombay film industry can be very cruel to outsiders, and in the end, Bhatia decided to stick with television, a medium that she knew and loved—and which loved her right back.

In the beginning, she came across as a gauche if high-spirited teenager, jumping into swimming pools with the likes of Gulshan Grover. But a few months into her run on Channel V, Bhatia was transformed into a chic, impeccably turned out woman in designer clothes (with a little help from make-up artist Cory Walia and fashion designer Rina Dhaka).

This transformation in Bhatia'a appearance coincided with the transformation of Channel V itself. Beginning life as an MTV clone, the channel slowly became an up-market version of *Chitrahaar*, showing Hindi film songs all day long in such programmes as *Videocon Maangta Hai*, *BPL Oye* and the *Mescos Great Indian Manovaigyanik Show*. And Bhatia, in turn, became the Indian face of the channel.

It was easy to understand why. With her cropped hair, gamine good looks, accented English and perfect Hindi, Ruby was the best person to bridge the cross-cultural divide with



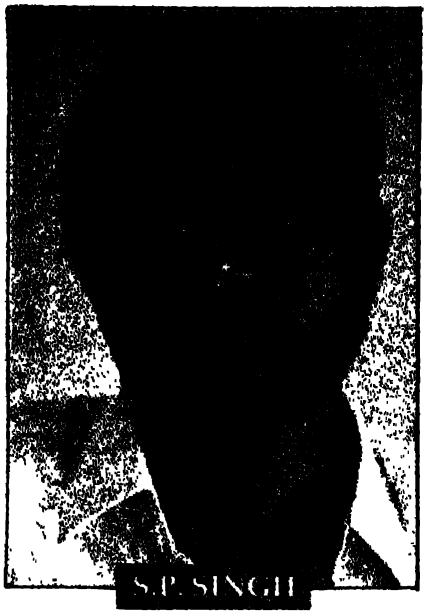
her long, long, legs.

But Bhatia is too ambitious to be content with churning our veejay patter week after week. She is well aware of how much the camera loves her (and plays up to it quite shamelessly) and will be looking for a new role in front of it in 1996.

S.P. Singh

In his case, Ananda Bazar Patrika's loss was television's gain. Singh, who first achieved fame as the youthful editor of *Raviwar*, and was more recently the Delhi bureau chief of *The Telegraph*, seems to have abandoned print for the more immediate appeal of TV.

And going by his success on the tube, this was a wise move. Singh had nothing left to prove in print journalism, and television is, after all, the medium of the moment.



S.P. SINGH

Not many print journalists, however, make this transition with the kind of grace that SP (as he is popularly known as) has displayed. Now anchoring *India Today*'s Hindi news programme *Aaj Tak* on Doordarshan's National Network, Singh shows a rare grasp of the electronic medium.

Not for him the sing-song introductions, the staccato commentary or even the rigid posture that most Indian anchors adopt to mask their discomfort in front of the camera. SP is relaxed, speaks in a conversational tone, moves easily in his chair, and is very well-dressed indeed, in natty suits and quietly tasteful ties.

He, however, denies the foul rumour that he has taken to gelling his graying hair while on television. No, he says, that wet look is achieved by ordinary, contaminated Delhi water.

Gelled or not. Singh is rapidly emerging as the star of Hindi language television, and in 1996 could well occupy the slot once exclusively reserved for Vinod Dua.

MALLIKA SARABHAI

Mallika Sarabhai

She is known variously as Vikram and Mrinalini Sarabhai's daughter, as one of the most accomplished dancers of India; an actress; a columnist and a publisher.

But most recently, we have been witness to a new *avatar* of Mallika Sarabhai's: talk show hostess. Her introduction to the format was, apparently, by accident. Karan Thapar was unable to do the *Chat Show* one particular week, and Mallika was asked to step into the breach.

Sarabhai obliged, and in style. Her maiden appearance on the talk show was admired by both critics and viewers alike and after that Mallika's appearances on the programme became more and more frequent.

But Sarabhai being Sarabhai couldn't be content with just standing in for Thapar. So now she will be hosting her own show on DD3, titled *Speakeasy with Mallika*.

The problem with that, of course, is that the viewership of DD3 — at the moment, at least — seems to consist of only a few hundred people. And Mallika's show may not get the kind of audience it deserves.

But then, Sarabhai has always believed in playing against the odds. And who knows, she may well come out trumps yet again.

Next week: Fashion, films and music

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This week: The Femina Miss India contest

Began life as: Femina's idea of choosing the flower of Indian womanhood to represent the country at beauty pageants abroad.
Did it work?: Not really. Nobody paid much attention, largely because the Indian contestants were eliminated in the first round itself.
But things began to change: When Rita Faria was crowned Miss World in 1966 at the pageant held in London's Lyceum Theatre, wearing a one-piece swimsuit.
Swimsuit?: No, at the Miss India contest, participants were not asked to parade in swimming costumes. But when the ladies went abroad, they had to go through with the swimsuit round. Not surprisingly, most of them fared disastrously.
Have things changed?: Yes. These days the contest begins with a parade of all the contestants in identical one-piece swimsuits. No, there isn't a bikini in sight, we're afraid.
How are the winners chosen?: Well, nobody knows exactly. The official line is that the judges have to take both the physical and the (ahem!) intellectual attributes of the candidate into account while deciding the score.
And do they?: It's difficult. After all, would you be able to judge how clever someone was by asking them who their favourite person was? Or even by getting them to tell you what they would do to make the world a better place to live in?
So what do the judges do?: Apparently, very little. Critics of the show insist that the semi-finalists and the winners are decided before-hand, anyway. So, the scores awarded by the judges are merely an eyewash.
True or false?: Depends on whom you're listening to. The organisers say that there is no question of any foul play. But Dimple Kapadia, who was a judge a few years ago, complained when she found that one of the contestants whom she—along with the other judges—had rated very highly had been eliminated.
Did it make any difference?: Yes. The contestant in question was recalled.

Low point: When Miss India Madhu Sapre blew her chances of winning the Miss Universe crown in Bangkok by giving what must be the stupidest answer ever (and some of the answers are very, very stupid, indeed). Asked what her priority would be if she became Prime Minister of India, Sapre said she would build a sports stadium.
High point: When the two top-scorers in the Miss India pageant, 1993, Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai, went on to become Miss Universe and Miss World respectively.
Career options: The most popular is, of course, films. Beauty queens turned actresses include, Zeenat Aman, Sangeeta Bijlani and Juhi Chawla.
The one who fell through the loop: Pamella Singh, since restyled as Pamella Bordes, who was a House of Commons researcher before she was rumbled by a *News of The World* reporter. Bordes offered him sex for £500. The gentleman made his excuses and left, but the story appeared in the next day's paper.

Aishwarya and Sushmita: Beauty plus brains

Have things changed: No way. After touring the world and getting lots and lots of presents, both Sushmita and Aishwarya are back in India. And what do they intend to do? Why join the movies, of course! ■

ASHISH VIDYARTHI, *the National Award winner for last year's best supporting actor in Govind Nihalani's* **Drohkaal**, *is the country's latest screen terror. This reel life villain, whose first film was* **Baazi**, *continues to win plaudits for his portrayal of Lankesh in Zee TV's* **Kurukshetra**. *His passion is death, since dying, he feels, has so many shades and possibilities of acting. The Kerala-born actor is all set to conquer new heights through* **Bhai**, *where he will kill with a catapult and apply coats of black lipstick for sinister effects!*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be never really perfectly happy and always to look forward to something.
What is your greatest fear?
Death of near ones.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My father, Govind Vidyarthi. He is my closest friend despite our age difference of 55 years.
What do you dislike most in others?
People who don't have the courage to stand up for what they feel.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My propensity to gain weight.
What is your most precious possession?
My feet on the ground.
What objects do you always carry?
Five hundred rupees and my car keys.
What makes you most depressed?
Inequity. Meritorious people who do not receive their dues.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?

> **What is your most precious possession?**
>
> **My feet on the ground**

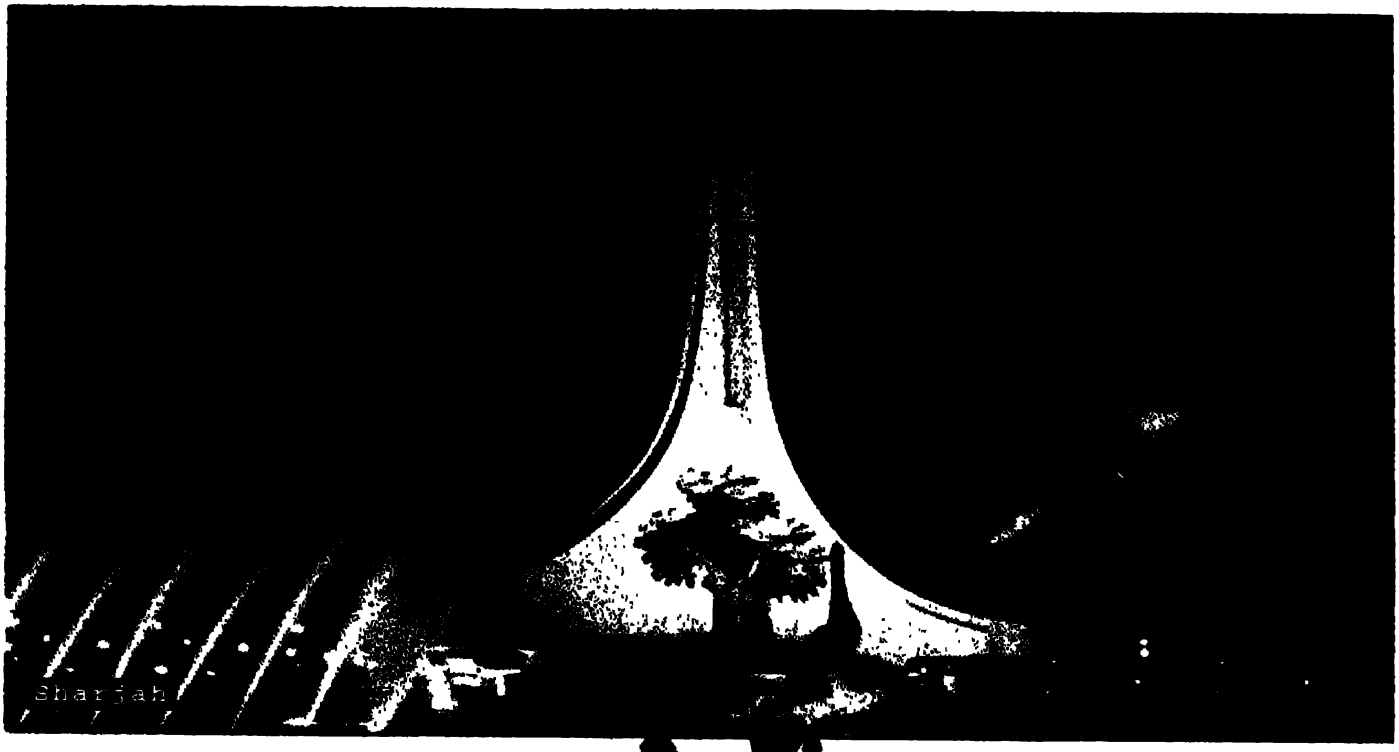
My budding paunch.
What is your favourite word?
Money.
What is your favourite journey?
To Kerala, my hometown, with my wife.
What is your favourite dream?
I don't dream.
What is your nightmare?
The day my *gurus*, Ramgopal Bajaj and Satyadev Dubey, stop criticising me as an actor.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?

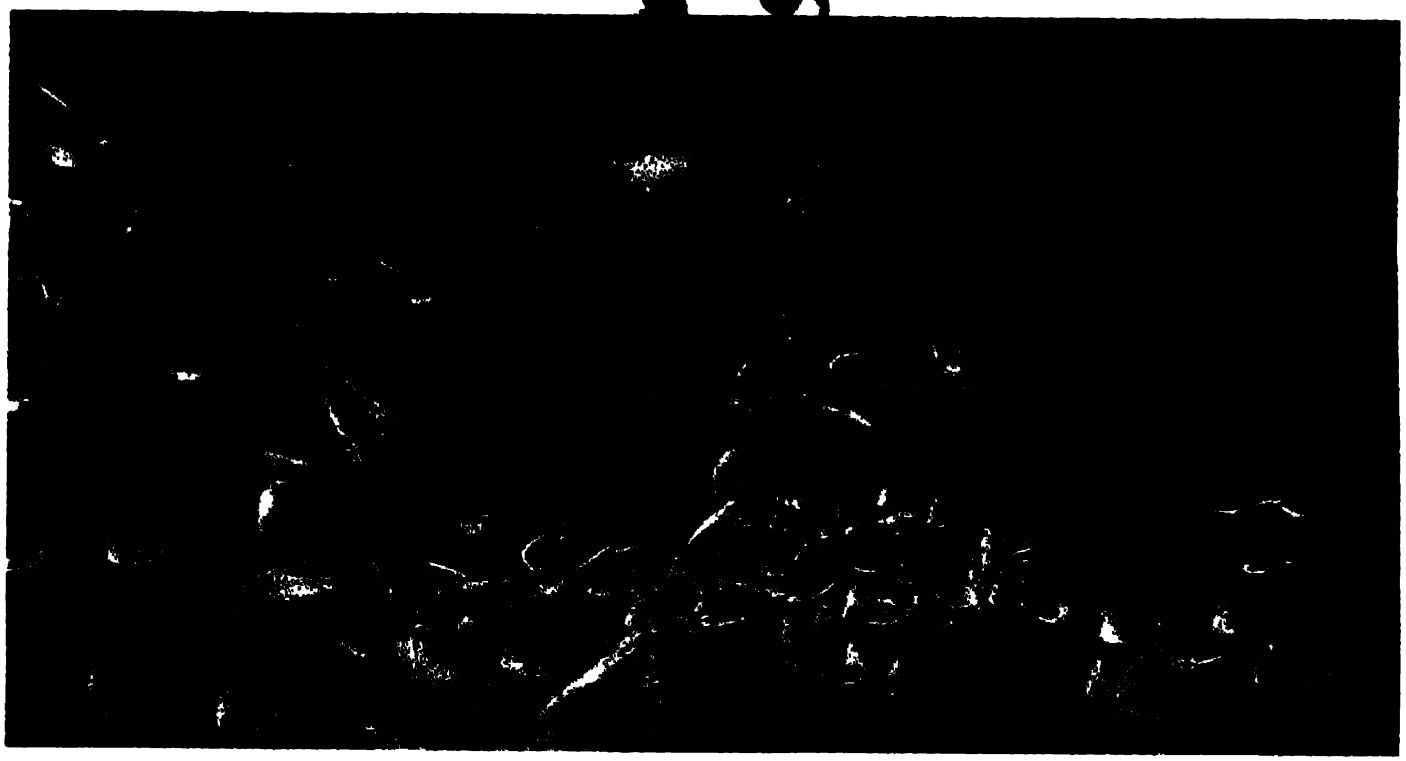
> **What is your source of sustenance?**
>
> **Food, friends, family — in that order (laughs)**

Acting.
What is your source of sustenance?
Food, friends, family — in that order (laughs).
On what occasions do you lie?
When avoiding the truth can save a hurt.
What is your greatest regret?
Not having concentrated on mathematics.

What has been your happiest moment?
When I shared the news of having received the National Award with my wife.

What brings tears to your eyes?
Anger and more anger.
How do you relax?
By sleeping.
What do you envy most in others?
Simplicity.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a father of my progeny.
How would you like to die?
Breathless.





Iso winding it way to Muscat, Kuwait, Fujairah, Ras-al Khaimah, Da
ingapore, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, Male Kathmandu and Dhaka.

इंडियन एयरलाइन्स
Indian Airlines
WELCOME AREA

Classic

shirting

fabrics

from

Raymond.

Raymond

has a wide

range of

shirting

fabrics

that

includes

cotton, silk

polyester,

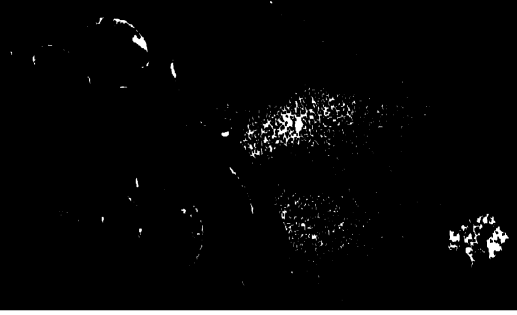
linen,

and blends

in stripes,

plains

and prints.



Raymond

SINCE 1925

4 FEBRUARY 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Cyber Fever

■ To the layman phrases like cyber entertainment, cyber education, cyber shopping, cyber cafe and cyber lifestyle may sound a bit bizarre, but once he gets hooked to it, a wide, new exciting world opens before him ('Getting Hooked', December 10).

It is incredible that we can get any information that we may seek at the press of a button: From what is on at the New York Stock Exchange, to literature, art, history, cinema and science.

And the information reaches us even before television or newspapers report it. It is amazing what modern technology can achieve.

Sumantra Ghatak,
Calcutta

> ■ Cyber will remain a curious concept for most people till it reaches them.
> ***Dipankar Koley,***
> *Jhikra (Howrah)*

■ I was really taken aback seeing the monk-like Shammi Kapoor on the cover fiddling with computers. What a difference! The hero who gyrated to the tune of *Yahoo* now the chief of the Internet Users Club of India.

Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia

Gautam Patole

Shammi Kapoor: Fascinated by Internet

■ The cover story was most informative and predicts correctly what lies ahead for India in the information highway.

But the Magazine did not mention the high cost of maintaining the system which needs an excellent telecom infrastructure.

Vijay Toolsidas,
Calcutta

■ Internet is actually going to take care of all our needs. My brother got married last December through Internet.

The matrimonial advertisement appeared in Internet's Soc.Culture Bengali, a bulletin board meant exclusively for Bengalis around the globe.

The SCB was started some time back by a group of young Bengali graduates and professionals settled in the US where Bengalis can discuss anything from Suman Chattopadhyay's latest album to Bengal's economic problems.

Shubu Mukherjee,
Calcutta

Christmas Treat

■ The First Person on Santa Claus (December 24) was brilliant. The Magazine really charmed its young readers for whom it was a big Christmas treat.

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ This is the second time the Magazine came out with a wonderful First Person. The earlier one on the common man was witty and intelligent.

This time, the one on Santa, became an instant hit with adults and children. It read almost like a real interview with Santa.

Kaberi Das,
Calcutta

Crossing Border

■ Khushwant Singh's praise for Pakistan is bound to infuriate many in the saffron camp ('Sarson Da Saga', November 26).

He may love talking about women and sex but he has always been candid, liberal, outspoken and impartial, never hesitating to call a spade a spade.

Syed Tajdaar Bakht,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Rashbehari Das

Madhuri Dixit

PAGE 4

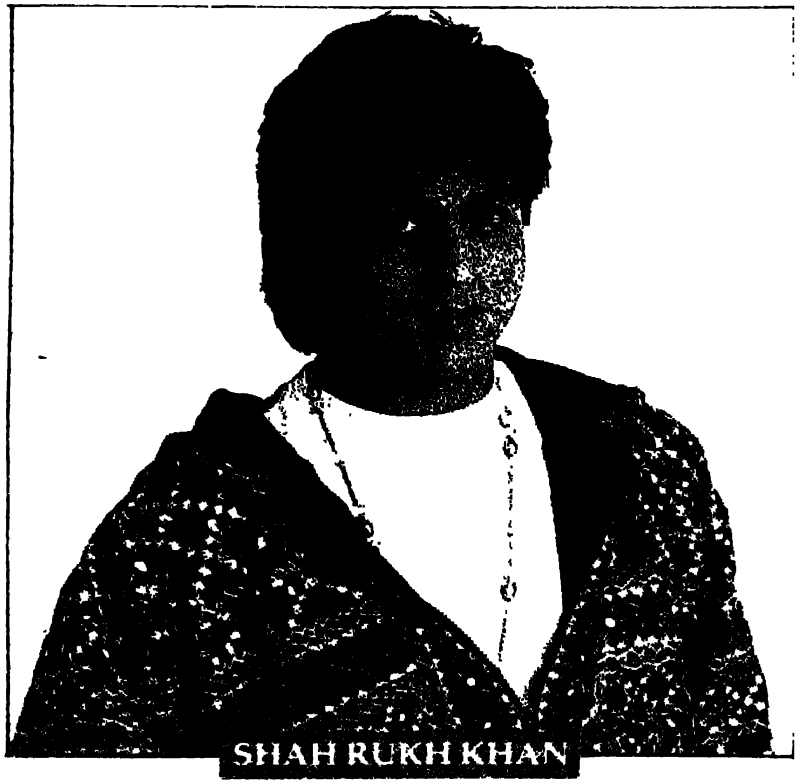
THIS IS the concluding part of *The Telegraph* guide to the faces to watch out for this year in cinema, fashion and music

16 TIME TABLE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
30 FIRST PERSON

COVER STORY

THE FACES OF '96

*This week, **Seema Goswami** lists those worth watching in movies, music and fashion*



SHAH RUKH KHAN

Last week, **The Telegraph** *set out to list all those who would count in 1996. But space constraints being what they are, we could only list those in politics, business/industry and television. This week, therefore, we write about the putative movers and shakers in the worlds of movies, music and fashion. And those for whom 1996 could prove to be the make or break year*

MOVIES

Shah Rukh Khan

The conventional wisdom in the entertainment business was: once a TV star always a TV star. The argument was simple — once people had watched you for free on their television screens in the privacy of their living rooms, they were not going to pay good money to see you act on the large screen in a theatre.

It is to Shah Rukh Khan's credit that he managed to break that rule. Beginning his career with roles in such tele-serials as *Fauji* and *Circus*, Khan looked fated to become the Alok Nath of his generation. But those who were inclined to dismiss him as just another pretty face on the idiot box had reckoned without Shah Rukh's burning ambition.

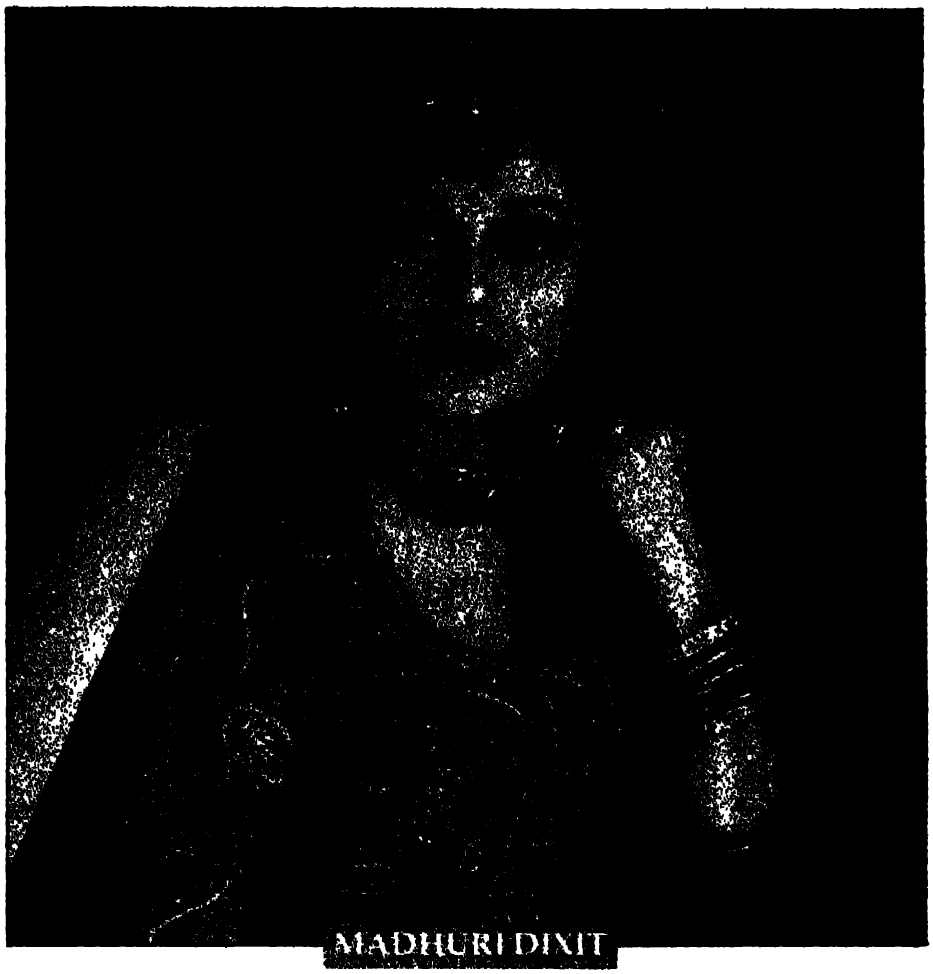
Unkind souls have been known to suggest that the only reason Khan made the transition to the large screen was because the tube was too small to accommodate his swollen head. But whatever the truth of that, Shah Rukh arrived in Bombay, all set to storm Bollywood with his mega-talent.

His first release, *Deewana*, was disappointing, as Khan floundered in his attempt to grasp the workings of Bollywood. But Shah Rukh — smart St Columba's kid that he is — had soon worked out his USP.

In an industry overflowing with chocolate-box male stars, Khan would play the anti-hero. Not the villain, you understand, but a hero who had a dark side to his personality (but not dark enough to alienate the front-benchers)

The strategy worked. Both *Baazigar* and *Darr* proved to be runaway box-office hits, and Shah Rukh was soon being talked about as the next number one. But even as Khan was celebrating his new-found status in the industry came the embarrassing failure of *Anjaam*, yet another movie where Shah Rukh played the 'bad' guy.

Karan Arjun restored the balance somewhat, but it was the mega-success of *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* that really established Khan in the big leagues. After a hit that eclipsed even



MADHURI DIXIT

the performance of *Hum Aap Ke Hain Kaun*! there was no doubting Shah Rukh's appeal at the box-office

Strangely enough, Khan's biggest hit (*Diluale*) came when he was playing the kind of chocolate-box hero that he had always claimed to loathe — an indication, perhaps, that the day of the anti-hero was long over.

Not that any of this really matters. Khan will continue to be offered big banners even if his next few releases bomb miserably, on the strength of the *Diluale* collections alone. But 1996 will show whether Shah Rukh can sustain the impetus that his career received in the previous year.

Madhuri Dixit

This could prove to be a very tricky year, indeed, for the number one heroine in Bombay (yes, she is still top of the heap despite *Yaarana*). She may still be able to execute the bumb-and-grind routine with rare relish, but there's no denying that Ms Dixit is getting on.

Her smile is as sweet as ever, and M.F. Husain is very sweet on her, but the first signs of middle-age spread can be seen on that famous waist. In the *Mere piya ghar aya* number, for instance, her stomach seems to have a life of its own, jiggling in gay abandon even when Madhuri herself has come to a stop.

Then, there is the problem of casting. As Dixit begins to look more mature, it will be difficult to find heroes who can play opposite her, and not look like her kid brothers. She can get away with acting as Sanjay Kapoor's love interest, but Akshay Kumar or Saif Khan? Forget it.

Sridevi encountered the same problem a couple of years ago, and had to reluctantly accept voluntary retirement when the roles began drying up. Now, of course, she is back, looking much slimmer and younger (some say with a lot of help from the plastic surgeon) and is working on a film called *Army* with several young heroes (including Shah Rukh Khan).

But tellingly enough, Sridevi plays the avenging angel, so there's no question of running around trees with young men who appear to be ten years younger than her.

Madhuri may not be in quite the same kind of trouble, and she has a couple of big releases lined up (including Rajiv Kapoor's *Prem Granth*). But if they fail at the box-office — or even do just moderately well — the Bombay film industry may well decide that she is not the draw that she used to be. And with such fresh talent as Urmila Matondkar and Manisha Koirala around, who could blame them if they decided to give Ms Dixit a miss?

The actress realises this as well, and has already begun making noises to the effect that she would love to settle down abroad with a husband of her family's choice. Of course, another mega-hit would change all that, and Madhuri may continue to delight Husain and the hoi-polloi alike.

Either way, this year will prove to be crucial in the life of the *Ek do teen* girl

SUBHASH GHAI

Subhash Ghai

The year started on a very bad (very bad) note for this self-styled show man of the film industry. *Trimurti* turned out to be the turkey of all times, and Ghai's reputation as a producer-director lay in tatters.

But those who know Ghai believe that the portly chief of Mukta Arts will soon bounce back. He is already claiming that *Trimurti* has done remarkably well in the overseas

territory (clearly, people in this country don't know a good thing when they see it). And in private conversation, he has been known to suggest that the flop was all Mukul Anand's fault.

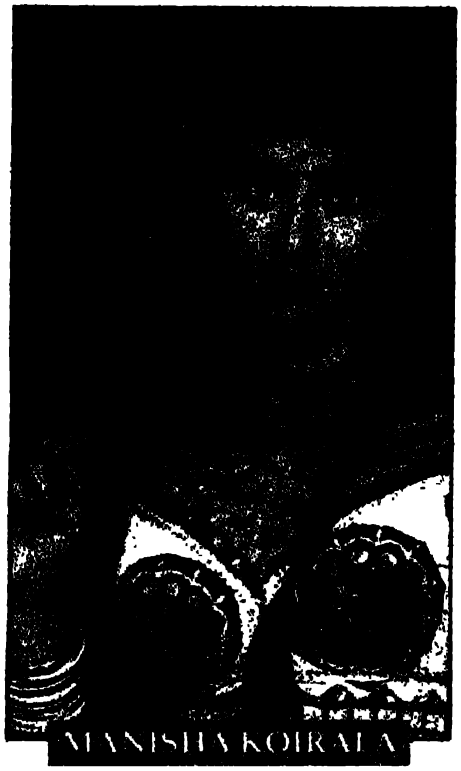
Ghai has now staked his reputation on his forthcoming movie, *Shikhar* He has cast Shah Rukh and Jackie in it. The music will be scored by A.R. Rahman, and that itself increases the chances of the film being a hit. And Ghai has announced that this time he will be wielding the megaphone himself rather than relying on hired help.

Will this work? We'll find out later this year.

Urmila Matondkar

It is hard to recognise the innocent young girl of *Masoom* in her skillfully painted face. But then Urmila doesn't want anyone to remember her as a once-child actress. She'd much rather be known as the rising young star.

And why not? That's exactly what she is, after the amazing performance of *Rangeela* at the box-office — not to mention Matondkar's equally amazing transformation.



MANISHA KOIRALA

Gone is the gauchy, badly-dressed heroine of *Aa Gale Lag Ja* (in which she starred opposite Jugal Hansraj, who played her half-brother in *Masoom*). And in her place stands a svelte, sophisticated young girl, showing her figure to best advantage in bustiers, swim-suits and the most revealing of minis.

There are those who insist that *Rangeela* is just a flash in the pan. And that director Ram Gopal Verma was so besotted by Urmila that he spent all his time ensuring that she stood out in the movie. Let's see how well she does when her director's not in love with her, say these people.

This year will give us the answer to that question. Is Urmila really the new sex symbol of the Hindi film industry? Or is she just a one-film wonder?

URMILA MATONDKAR

Manisha Koirala

For all of 1995, Koirala was dogged by bad publicity. First, there were the stories about her drinking and coming late on the sets. Then, the rumour mill went into overdrive with talk that Manisha had arrived drunk for shooting and had been sent back home by the director.

Even going abroad to escape the attention of the gossips didn't help

Even before Koirala had returned to Bombay, the film magazines were carrying stories about how she had got drunk backstage during a star nite and had fallen down on the stage when it was time to perform her item.

When the glossies weren't writing about her drinking, they were laying her love life bare. There was her affair with Rahul Roy that died a premature death when Roy went to the press with it. This was followed by a brief flirtation with Samir, a cousin of Salman Khan.

Then came Ranjeev Mulchandani, a model best known for his long affair with Mehr Jesia. The relationship ended messily, with the two trading insults in print. Manisha said that he'd been two-timing her with Aishwarya Rai and Ranjeev said...well, most of it was unprintable anyway.

Unfortunately, amidst all this, people seemed to lose sight of the fact that Manisha was turning in some very impressive performances. She was probably the best thing about *1942, A Love Story*, even though the film proved to be a disappointing failure. And *Bombay* reinforced her credentials as one of the finest actresses in the industry.

There is some hope that Manisha will settle down in 1996, and treat her career more seriously than she has in the past. She is currently involved with Nana Patekar, who is years older than her, and appears to be a stabilising influence.

Certainly, Koirala appears to have mellowed down and doesn't drink as much (one story has it that Nana hit her in full view of everyone when she arrived on the sets drunk; it was apparently, love at first sight).

Will that make her a better actress? We don't really know. But, perhaps, proximity to Nana will help.

MUSIC

Alisha Chinai

ALISHA CHINAI

She began life in the entertainment business as a Madonna wannabe. And in that limited endeavour, Chinai succeeded beyond her wildest dream. In an interview to a foreign publication, Madonna confessed that of all the people who tried to sound like her, an Indian singer called Alisha came the closest.

But Chinai has come a long way since then. Today, if Madonna is a regular on MTV, Chinai is a fixture on Channel V. Her *Made In India* video is shown several times a day by the channel, and Alisha now has fans in Bangkok and Dubai as well as in Bombay.

At least part of the credit for Chinai's success must go to her husband Rajesh Jhaveri, who produced her albums and marketed her as a 'Baby Doll'. But the marriage did not survive Alisha's success: the couple are now separated and may well divorce (apparently, Rajesh wanted a baby and his wife didn't).

On the professional front, though, things appear to be going swimmingly for Chinai. Her latest album has done good business, she has attained enough celebrity to feature on the *Mesco's Great Indian Manovaigyanik* show, and she is in better voice than ever before.

Hence, the general bewilderment when Alisha picked this moment in time to accuse music director Anu Malik of sexual harassment. The incident, apparently, occured several years ago, with Malik 'molesting' Chinai when she refused his advances. Malik, of course, strenuously denied the allegations.

Did the sexual abuse really occur? Or was it merely a figment of Alisha's artistic imagination? We may never know — it is, after all, just her word against his.

BIDDU

But one thing is without doubt. The publicity came in handy for Alisha just when the hype around her album was fading.

Nobody can, however, make a habit of such stunts without risking ones own credibility. And in 1996, Chinai will have to try and make it to the headlines on the basis of her music rather than her contribution to the cause of gender justice.

If she succeeds in doing that, she may well become the Janet Jackson of India rather than just another Madonna wannabe.

Biddu

He first hit the headlines in India when he scored the *Qurbani* hit, *Aap jaisa koi meri zindagi me aye*. Sung in Nazia Hassan's fresh, if a little untrained voice, the song proved to be a runaway hit, and Biddu's reputation as a music director was established beyond doubt.

The *Qurbani* triumph was followed by *Disco Deewane*, a non-film album with Nazia and brother Zoheb as the singers and Biddu as composer. There were some who complained that there was a certain sameness to all of Biddu's tunes, but who cared when the sales kept mounting?

So, what happened? Why did Biddu fade away from the Indian music scene after such a rave reception?

Industry observers say that it was the failure of *Star* that finished him The Kumar Gaurav film had music by Biddu and playback by Nazia, but flopped at the box-office, anyway

The music didn't do too well either, and Biddu went back to where he'd come from.

Biddu's musical career had begun when as a young teenager he had paid his way through Europe by taking on musical engagements. But he hit the big time when he wrote the number one hit, *Kung-Fu fighting* for Carl Douglas. His other hits included *Dance little lady* by Tina Charles and the disco version of *I could have danced all night*.

But clearly, the West can't hold the music director's attention for too long

A.R. RAHMAN

And Biddu is now back in India, scoring such albums as the popular *Johnny Joker* by Shweta Shetty. He has now remixed the *Star* soundtrack and re-released it. And the song *Boom boom*, sung by Nazia Hassan, is already climbing the charts.

Will Biddu manage to sustain this successful run in his second attempt to storm the Indian entertainment business? Or will he give up at the first hint of failure and head for foreign climes? We should know the answer by the end of 1996.

A.R. Rahman

There isn't much you can say about Rahman that hasn't been said already. By now, everybody who can read knows that the music director was born Dilip Kumar Shekhar, the son of a South Indian music director. His father died young and the family converted to Islam.

Rahman's musical career began when he was yet a boy. He used to play in Ilayaraja's troupe to supplement the family income. But once his education was complete, Rahman went on to composing ad jingles before Mani Ratnam gave him his first break.

NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN

Reams have already been written about Rahman's musical triumph in *Roja*, followed by the even more successful *Bombay*. And his cross-over into Hindi cinema with *Rangeela*, proved that Rahman was equally good whatever language he was dealing with.

By then, of course, he'd bridged the language divide anyway. *Roja* was the first bilingual film (it was dubbed into Hindi) to become a nation-wide hit, with chief election commissioner T.N. Seshan announcing that every Indian should see it.

***Roja*'s success was ascribed to the patriotic theme: a South Indian gets kidnapped by Kashmiri militants; his interaction with them; his wife's attempts to get him freed; and his eventual escape.**

But such jingoistic films are a dime a dozen in India. So, why did *Roja* prove to be such a commercial success?

The answer lies in Rahman's musical genius as much as it does in Mani Ratnam's skill as a director. The songs of the film — particularly *Chotti si asha* and *Rukmini Rukmini* — climbed inexorably up the charts. And the box-office takings increased at the same rate

But while *Bombay*, *Kadalan*, *Gentleman* and *Rangeela* made Rahman an even hotter property than he already was, faint murmurs of disenchantment could be heard in the distance. Rahman was repeating himself; there was a certain sameness to all his songs; he had run out of inspiration; he took too long to score the music; movies were being delayed on his account, etc., etc.

There is some truth to all of this. Some of Rahman's songs suffer from being over-orchestrated, while others sound uncannily similar to his earlier tunes. And even Rahman concedes that he is repeating himself. His defence is: if other people make money by copying him, why shouldn't he do the same?

The problem with that is self-evident. If Rahman fails to come up with something new, he could all too easily find himself the flavour of last year. And 1996 could belong to someone else entirely.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan

His father never intended him to become a *qawwal*, even though the family had been steeped in that music form for six centuries. Fateh Ali Khan want-

Continued on page 26

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

The sun in your angle signifies gains, a fatter pay packet, funding, investment, gaiety and socialising. Happiness of children and grandchildren, hosting dinners, parties, speechmaking, acting and a tremendous fondness for music and electronics are foretold.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

This is the appropriate time to fuse pleasure with work, contacts and contracts, money and honey, and very specially buying and selling. Many of you will be ready for partnership, be it personal or strictly business. Emotional bonding and business contacts may not necessarily go together.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

Visits, interviews, conferences, meets, inauguration of factory or industry, a housewarming or moving, renovation and decoration could well be on the agenda. The new moon does activate job opportunities, family ties, trips, meeting of minds and hearts. Close associations will be formed.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

This will be a pretty expensive time for Cancerians, so learn to like it. A journey is in the offing and so is a job offer. Love, birth/conception of children, research and education, new projects and plans, hobbies and sports will be the mainspring of your existence. Loans and funds will be of great significance.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

You will work and play in equal measure, render and demand justice in full proportion. Excellent chances to make a buck, go in for permanent benefits, bag new and fine assignments as well as deals. Do launch out and lunch out in style. News of a welcome nature will reach you shortly.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

The main tone will be of loans, joint finances, buying and selling, trading, commission, insurance and benefits, health schemes and security, funding and investing. Parents, in-laws and boss play a larger-than-life part now. Learn to tolerate it. Luckily, friends will pitch in for you.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Long-distance connections, publicity and publishing, acting and directing, a lot of behind-the-scene activity are on the cards. Take February 6-7 for useful work if possible, as a more congenial climate for operation and relationships will prevail. You could be called upon to aid the ailing.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

A good time for a job switch, loans, funds, moving, getting your house in order, planning a campaign, taking a major decision, signing an important lease, document and deal. You may also apply for a divorce or alimony, plan another marriage, or try marrying for the first time. A week of many possibilities.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

The lure of distant places and pastures will be irresistible as the sun hits the right chord for you. Additions to the family are likely. You will be on the fast track and the chances are kicks, kisses, legal battles and new beginnings in the offing. Amidst all of these, the home too will be thoroughly highlighted.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Focus on job and work once again. You will continue to be imaginative and mighty ambitious. The work you put in will have happy returns for long, long time. A job-switch is also foretold, or a pay hike. Different projects will interest and excite you. Hard work, rewards and a change for the better foretold.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Best to get on to ads, pamphlets, posters, travel, shows, publicity and new ventures. Acting, publishing, music and electronics also take up much of your time. Children, sports and hobbies give ample delight. The luck of the draw will be with you. You can make it work for you. Be generous.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

There will be outlets for love, job, business and profession. If you feel like taking a chance, please do so. Home and office, too, will have their full share of your energy, money and attention. Parents and in-laws will have their important say, whether you like it or not. The second half of the week will be profitable.

BIRTHDAYS

February 4: Ganesha says this full moon promises maturity. A stronger you will emerge with a sense of values. Marriage, birth and happy incidents are on the cards.

February 5: Venus-Neptune sextile assures comforts, luxuries, money and active imagination. Those in business and publicity do superbly.

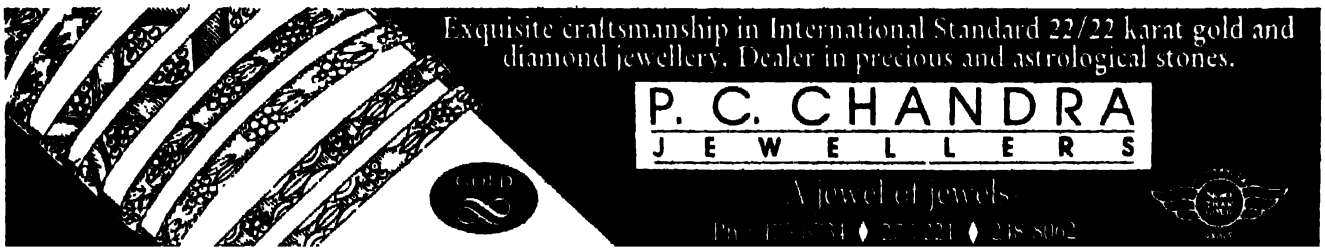
February 6: Moon trine Jupiter makes for a complete you, in the sense of being well-rounded. You will be truly versatile. Writers flourish.

February 7: Mercury sextile Saturn helps you to get things done, take the initiative, be of good cheer and thus be efficient and well liked. Many will be making their mark in communication.

February 8: Moon-Pluto sextile gives you the cutting edge because you will hide caution with skills of wisdom. Those in science, computers, research and sports do well.

February 9: Moon trine sun bodes excellent for government officials, judges, diplomats, politicians and educationists.

February 10: Venus sextile Uranus leads to originality and inventiveness. The results will be excellent whatever be your field of activity.



EXTRACT

An American in INDIA

Extracts from ***Anurag Mathur's*** *new novel,* Making the Minister Smile

As the first workers of the morning shift trudged towards the open factory gates, a taxi drew up beside them. Four men jumped out.

"You can't go in," said one of them, barring the way of the workers.

The workers recognised the four as office bearers of the factory union.

"Why?" one asked the person blocking his way, though he suspected he knew already. In answer, the union official simply jerked his thumb backwards at the other three men who had come with him.

Two had scaled one of the pillars on either side of the huge wrought iron gates and was sitting on top of it. One held a short stick with a small rectangular red flag on it and the other passed a rope around it and all around the pillar so that it was held upright tightly. Then he tied it into a knot with two quick hitches that displayed much practice. Taking a knife from his pocket, he flicked it open, cut the rope and both men jumped down to go across to the other pillar to put up a similar flag.

The fourth man was standing in front of the pillar to the left of the gate. He had several rolls of paper in one hand and a can with glue and a brush in the other. He unrolled one sheet, smeared the glue on the back of the paper and slapped it on the pillar. Carefully he smoothened it with his hand so that it was stuck flat.

The small group of workers near the union official could read it from 15 feet away.

"Strike."

The red letters stood out boldly. Below it was written in smaller size "KapCo Industries workers on strike. Meet our just demands." By then, the second roll of paper had also been pasted next to the strike poster. This said, "Our Demands." It listed 32, ranging from higher salaries to increased overtime allowance and ended with "rickshaw fare for all workers from nearest bus stop to factory gate." This last point had aroused considerable debate among the union officials since the bus stop at which most workers alighted was about 50 feet from the factory gate. However, it was finally included as one of the bargaining chips to be given away to the management during the hectic negotiations that would doubtlessly follow.

The number of workers had rapidly swelled as more people arrived to report for work. They saw the flags fluttering, the notices pasted, and milled about restlessly. They grinned at each other in excitement mixed with uncertainty and some anxiety. Certainly it had been building up to this for a month, ever since Prabal Kumar had arrived at the same gate and delivered a speech that suddenly showed them how much more they could get for their labours. But still, it was one thing to talk, even to demonstrate and raise slogans, another to actually strike. And hadn't the *maalik* been good to them? Hadn't he after all been like one of them, starting his career as a man who rode his bicycle through Delhi, selling the utensils piled behind him?

True, if this fellow Prabal could get them even half of what he had promised they would be getting three times their current wages, but supposing it didn't work? And then, what were they supposed to live on while the strike was on? So when the union official barring their way sensed their uneasiness and raised the cry of "Long live Prabal Kumar", their response was feeble.

Quickly he changed the slogan.

"We demand our rights," he shouted. "What do we demand?" he asked.

BY ANURAG MATHUR

Extracted from *Making the Minister Smile* ***by Anurag Mathur; Published by ANB Publishers. Price Rs 100***

This time their shout was more full throated. "Our rights," they said

"What do we demand?" he shouted again

"Our rights" This time it was a roar.

"Our rights" He chanted and they picked up the refrain, "Our rights, our rights, our rights" The roar continued and grew in volume as more workers arrived

The guards at the factory gates who had been waiting to see if any of the workers would break ranks and enter the factory, began to push the heavy gates shut. The workers saw the gates begin to close inexorably and began to chant even louder The loudness of their voices, the sense of solidarity, even the hypnotic rhythm of their chant gave them a feeling of confidence

Yet when the gates shut with a clang, every one of them flinched, and in their hearts there was fear because all of them knew of strikes that had failed, where workers had lost terribly, yet they also knew of many cases when they had won greatly So they chanted even louder, because now with the closing of the gates the battle had begun How long it would go on, what sacrifices would have to be made, they didn't know, but they did know that they were prepared to fight for as long as it took to get as many of their demands as they could

The head of KapCo's security, Captain A S Singh, who had joined the company after retiring from the army, looked at the chanting mob through the grilled window of his office adjacent to the gates. He held a telephone receiver in his hands and spoke to the manager of the facory, Lal Verma, who was in his office having reached that morning half an hour before the first workers

"Sir," said Singh, "it's begun. No one broke ranks and I have shut the gates before they decided to come in and cause violence."

"Has their been any violence yet?" asked Verma.

"Not yet, sir They are simply raising slogans"

"Is Parbal Kumar there?" asked Verma.

"No sir, only his assistants He may come later in the day when the men of the second shift have also arrived"

"He may indeed," thought Verma sardonically "He certainly enjoys the larger audience than a single shift crowd"

He picked up a dial-less telephone on his desk, an instrument plugged into the hotline that connected the factory at Faridabad to Delhi "Get me Kapoor *sahib*," he told the factory operator

For once the hotline was working and Verma was soon talking to Mr Sunder

"Seth*ji* is doing his prayers," said Mr Sunder "Is it important enough to disturb him?" Mr Sunder controlled access to Mr Kapoor at his house and he wasn't about to let any of the executives forget it, even if they outranked him

"It is," said Verma curtly

"Perhaps I can pass on the message," suggested Mr Sunder, who really didn't like Verma very much "You know I am the first person he sees every morning"

"Good" said Verma "Kindly tell him the workers have gone on strike and we have shut the factory gates"

"I'll get him on the phone right away," said Mr Sunder who had long ago learned it wiser not to be the carrier of bad news

The phone trilled on the table just outside the little prayer room Ram Avtar Kapoor had built in an alcove inside his bedroom The little cubicle was dark and nearly bare in contrast to the opulence of the rest of the bedroom

On a small table covered by a white cloth were three pictures, one of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, one of Shiva, the destroyer and curiously, a little to one side, a black and white coloured picture of Kapoor's wife who had died 18 years ago

The photograph had been taken when she had only had a few weeks to live after a battle with cancer that had lasted for a long year The suffering and pain had marked her face and there were lines that looked like they had been drawn with a pen, particularly since her skin looked so pale and fragile as to be translucent It was a face of great gentleness, of someone who had seen much agony but borne it with courage The eyes had a warmth and kindness to them that came through even in the photograph

Kapoor had nearly worshipped her when she was alive and he actually did so now that she was dead As usual, every morning, he was thinking of her, just as he had every day on waking for the last 18 years since she had died He sometimes wondered if the pictures of the other deities weren't just an excuse to let him pray in front of her photograph

He couldn't remember a time when he hadn't known her Their families were neighbours in one of the little alleys of Lahore and when she was born and he was a mere five years old, their parents had decided that the children should be married later When he was 17 and she 12 they had been wedded Immediately thereafter he had gone away to study at a college, but before that there had been years of watching, growing, of playing with her, "I can remember you wetting me when I first picked you up," he used to tease her in later years, "how many

Anurag Mathur

husbands can claim that?"

The burring phone interruped his thoughts. He let it ring for a while, half sensing what the call was about. He let himself indulge the weakness of missing his wife for another few seconds, a weakness that strangely enough strengthened him for the challenges of the day. Then he picked up the phone and listened to Lal Verma at the other end.

"I see," is all Kapoor said. So its begun, he thought to himself. The first ever strike in the 35 years since he had set up the factory. It was a problem he would have to resolve by himself. Ajai Vir was too young, too idealistic to handle the rough times ahead, but he could learn from this too. He wished he were [illegible] son who had been educated in the best boarding schools and colleges, but had grown up away from home. Besides which, in one unwise moment when he had been particularly annoyed with Ajai Vir over some trivial disagreement, he had told his son: "The first priority in my life is the company. You are my only [illegible] but you come second."

Since [illegible] Ajai Vir had devoted nearly all his time to the company, but there had been an unbridgeable chasm between them. "It doesn't matter," thought Kapoor, "so long as he learns enough to keep the company moving when I'm gone. That will be my way of being remembered." But first he had to make sure that KapCo survived this crisis.

Kapoor carefully combed the last remaining strands of hair on his head and went out, a medium sized figure tending to plumpness, bespectacled, in a brown safari suit. He walked down the corridor to Ajai Vir's room, knocked and walked in. His son was ready to leave and looked surprised as Kapoor sat down.

"It's started," said Kapoor. "They've gone on strike. Tell me, which of the three B's should we use?"

"It's probably wise to bribe Prabal Kumar as well as the workers," suggested Ajai Vir. "It's too late to butter them and we don't have the kind of mind required to try and bash anyone."

Kapoor nodded. The boy's logic is sensible, he thought, but good sense never broke a strike.

Father and son walked out to the car that would take them to the factory and acknowledged the chauffeur's salute. They sat back as he started the car and drove away.

Chris woke up an hour later as the smell of hot tea filled his room. The servant who had brought the tea tray slipped away. Chris sat down by the window, sipping his tea, a habit he had picked up in India. He beheld Mr Sunder coming towards him and braced himself.

"They have gone on strike," informed Mr Sunder. "I do not know what is to become of this country when it is full of such wretched people. I think there are no strikes in America," he announced. "That is how the country has become so great. But India will go to dogs with such scoundrels I am telling to you."

An old woman dressed in a sari silently entered and began to dust the room. She was, Chris had learned, a lady called Tai by everybody, which means Father's elder sister. She had no discernible role as far as Chris could see, but was kept on since she had been with the family for years and had practically brought up Ajai Vir during his mother's long illness and thereafter whenever he came home on vacations.

Chris had found the presence of ser

vants pervasive and irritating but he had learned how much easier life became with them around.

Mr Sunder was still hovering nearby, clearly ill at ease

"I am reading lots about America," he said finally fidgeting "But I am not finding any reliable magazine. Are you having any?"

"Well, nothing immediately," said Chris, "but I can get some. Which one do you want?"

"Anything good," said Mr Sunder, "Something about social affairs to give me really true picture."

"Well, maybe I could get you *Cosmopolitan*. They do a lot on social affairs"

"No, not that way. I am meaning some really social magazine that will give me true picture" He shuffled his feet and looked penetratingly out of the window

"Such as?" enquired Chris.

"Oh," said Mr Sunder very casually, "I am hearing lot many things about social magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. Of course, I am never seeing before," he began to mumble, his spectacles shining. "But if you are having I will take to my friends who are wanting to know. Of course, I am not interested, but for sake of my friends I am asking."

"Naturally, of course" soothed Chris. "I am sure your friends will be interested. I don't have any right now, but I'll see what I can do."

"Of course you are not mentioning this to Ajai Vir, I hope He may be not understanding."

"Naturally not," agreed Chris

"I hope," said Mr Sunder anxiously, "you are not thinking all Indians are wanting to see all such magazines. I am only asking for sake of some friends You are not thinking I hope that all Indians are like this"

"No, of course," reassured Chris "In fact I don't even think of Indians as being different from me I just think of Indians as being Americans whose freckles have joined [illegible]

Much relieved, but [illegible] that freckles might be. Mr [illegible] ted

Chris grinned to him [illegible] magazines, he thought [illegible] He At least the guy is [illegible] a shower and dressed [illegible] al-pana to arrive

Kalpana Singh [illegible] friend and they were [illegible] married as soon as [illegible] blems got resolved. [illegible] daughter of a [illegible] had fallen [illegible] aura of royal [illegible] and opened [illegible] approved of the [illegible] because, [illegible] pana's family had [illegible] among other [illegible] of whom [illegible] in politics.

Kalpana lived [illegible] apartment nearby [illegible] preferred to live [illegible] palace somewhere [illegible] the Himalayas. She [illegible] tall, dusky [illegible] exported [illegible] one of the [illegible]

ever seen in his life. He was also in a dilemma, because he sensed that she reciprocated his interest. However, there was the small matter of Ajai Vir and the possible repurcussion on their business arrangement if matters got out of hand. Also, he didn't know what the other ramifications would be if news of an affair leaked out. Would he have to marry her? Would Ajai Vir shoot them both? He was planning to raise the subject in an indirect way this time when she came to take him on yet another sight-seeing trip around Delhi. These excursions had the full blessings of Ajai Vir who saw it as a good way to keep Chris entertained, which duty he would have had to perform otherwise.

Chris saw the gates open and Kalpana's red Maruti appeared. He went out and they drove away.

"Where to this time?" he enquired.

"We're going to see the Qutub Minar. It's a tower that was built for some reason or the other and it's really very interesting."

Chris braced himself for the wild chariot race that was the normal Delhi traffic and throughout the ride kept pressing imaginary brakes. Kalpana noticed it again and laughed at him.

"You're an over-protected Yank," she giggled. "You'll have to learn to think in terms of missing the other car by millimeters rather than yards like you do. It's quite safe. I've never had an accident."

Chris ungritted his teeth and tried to calm down. He became more aware of her proximity and the perfume she was wearing. Kalpana's hand brushed his leg everytime she changed gears. "This," Chris thought, "is unbearable. How exactly should I broach the subject?"

When the Qutub Minar, a minaret several hundred feet in height came to view, he was struck by inspiration.

"Doesn't it look," he asked, "like some guy with the world's most severe case of hard on?"

Kalpana laughed, "I've seen better." She looked him in the eye.

They were walking towards the base of the tower. "How's that?" asked Chris. "I always thought Indian girls were virgins till they got married."

"That was in another century. Today almost no one is. And one or two experiences don't really count."

"You mean they have their fun, get married and become good, faithful wives."

"Good yes, faithful no."

"What does that mean."

"It means the fun really starts after they get married."

"You're joking?"

"Not really!"

"You mean I have a chance with Indian girls."

"Of course. More than Indian men."

"Why?"

"Because you are safe. You won't tell your friends about it and a girl won't lose her reputation. Besides you'll return home and there won't be any complications later."

"I'm shocked."

"Don't be. It's all quite civilised."

"What if the husband finds out?"

"Usually they never do. And even if they do, so what? They're usually hav

Illustration: Debashis Deb

ing affairs on their side too."

"Amazing. But it must be among the elite only."

"Well yes, but also among the poorest people. And even the middle class is catching up. The only rule is 'Don't get caught and don't cause a scandal.'"

"I think you better stop. You're giving me ideas."

"I certainly don't intend to." She gave him a half smile.

They reached the base of the tower but Chris wasn't really paying attention. They dutifully circumnavigated it and then went to see a nearby iron pillar that was a metallurgical marvel since it hadn't rusted for centuries despite being exposed to the elements. Chris couldn't concentrate on that either. Kalpana brushed against him and giggled again.

"You're starting to look like the iron pillar yourself," she said innocently. "Whatever could be the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing, I was just thinking that you really live in an ancient castle."

"I see. Old castles excite you, do they?"

"Absolutely," said Chris, regaining control of himself. "do you have pictures of the place?"

"Probably, but they're locked up somewhere. You sure you want to see them?" she teased.

"However distasteful the job, duty is duty as Hitler used to say."

They walked back to the car and went to her apartment.

"Would you like some water?" She asked as she opened the door.

Chris reached out for her as they stepped inside and she came into his arms. "I would like you," he said as they embraced.

Later, when they both lay back naked and exhausted, he noticed with surprise that they hadn't even made it till the bedroom. He was also surprised by her skill.

"You and Ajai Vir must be practising this quite a bit." He checked to see if she was displeased.

"Sort of," she stretched languorously. "Though I have a strict rule for him."

"Which is?"

"Only above the waist and below the knees."

Chris laughed. "Why?" he blew on a strand of wet hair across her cheek.

"Oh, good Indian girl and all that you know. Saving myself for my wedding night. And not a word about this from you." She grabbed a chunk of his hair.

"Ow, ow, okay. Scout's honour."

She let go and got up stretching.

"She's gorgeous," thought Chris, desire stirring again.

"Not now," she said, slapping away his outstretched hand. "Time to get back."

"Yes Memsahib," thought Chris. "I've done my duty!" he thought with surprise. "It's as though I've been used. She wasn't involved emotionally. I was just a useful, well, tool?" He grinned sardonically to himself. "But who am I to complain?" he thought complacently, remembering the last half hour.

She drove him back to the house.

"I hope I'll see you soon?" asked Chris.

"Maybe," she said casually. She drove off. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
			[illegible]	1030	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1250	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1150	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1610	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1555	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
			[illegible]	1900	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BOMBAY					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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DIBRUGARH					
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			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
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GOA					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AMSTERDAM					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BUCHAREST					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0410	[illegible]
BG-082	[illegible]	1 2 3 [illegible] 7	BG 091	1110	1 [illegible] 6 7
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 724	1520	1 2 3 6
BG-094	[illegible]	1 2 [illegible]	BG [illegible]	1825	1 2 [illegible]
BG 091	[illegible]	4	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	4
BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
BG [illegible]	2100	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
RA [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 112	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
[illegible]-538	[illegible]	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
PARO					
KB-100	1105	3	KB-109	0800	[illegible]
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
SQ [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]-436	[illegible]	[illegible]
BI [illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
TOKYO					
AI [illegible]	1910		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Rajdhani Express [illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]		Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
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[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Saral Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
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[illegible]		Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	--
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	--
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Expres [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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EVENT

BUREAUCRATS RULED

At the recently concluded International Film Festival in Delhi, says ***Amita Malik***

Rashbehari Das

The inauguration of the film festival

It began with Zhang Yimou's *Shanghai Triad* and ended with Antonioni's *Beyond the Clouds*. A perfect beginning and end to India's 27th International Film Festival held this time in Delhi.

But alas, it is what goes on in between that really matters. And since this is a government-run festival with the film industry contributing neither money nor management expertise, the total number of gaffes and evidence of mismanagement only mount with the years. Specially when it is held in Delhi with politicians and bureaucrats grabbing the major share of the spoils and the film buff is left practically in the buff.

Most of the major film festivals are inaugurated with a brief speech of welcome by the city mayor and an equally brief introduction by the festival director. The jury is also presented with dignity and impresses everyone with their stature. But not here.

The minister of state, the chief minister, the secretary of information and broadcasting, the director of festivals all dominate the stage and the chief guest who is usually someone from the industry hardly known in international circles, adds to the lengthy — usually ghost-written — speeches which repeat all the highlights of the festivals, its statistics and uniformly mispronounce the names of foreign guests. On paper, each speech never lasting more than one to five minutes, is timed to the second.

But this year, as before, they took a full hour and Tejeshwar Singh, the very competent compere who had

already given all the highlights, the statistics and the names correctly pronounced, seemed to have wasted his time.

The same procedure is followed for each and every opening. Biplab Roy Chowdhury's *Nirbachana*, the opening film for the Panorama, was held up for 45 minutes by long-winded speeches while the impatient audience squirmed in their seats. Biplab spoke for hardly a minute.

The press and media, supposed to cover the opening function for the morning editions, gets seats in the extreme left corner and never gets near the film celebrities for spot interviews and gets hopelessly outnumbered by all the female ushers dressed like brides, who form a close circuit round the celebrities and jostle each other to get on to the TV cameras

In fact, they are only outnumbered by the announcers for each film who strut across in high-heeled shoes, backless blouses and rustling silks, with bosoms thrust forward like pouter pigeons and eke out their lines as long as they possibly can. They cannot memorise even two or three lines and when the cameras are on they also read out long synopses of each and every film and the bio-data of the director although this is already in the brochures and the festival bulletin.

Some announcers, like Sheila Chaman, address even the most eminent foreign personalities by their first names on stage. Her crowning moment was when she was introducing the director of *Erotic Tales*. After introducing her, she asked cheerily, "Are you erotic?"

Among the biggest disasters of the festival were the conducting of the several daily press conferences under the auspices of Press Information Bureau. This year they selected a timid little *bahenji* probably because of her seniority since there seemed little else to recommend her. She was, not surprisingly, from the ministry of agriculture and it is an index of her lack of alertness that she was ignorant of the fact that Balram Jakhar had been dethroned.

She seemed largely voiceless and kept on pointing a pencil to those who wanted to ask questions. They went right ahead and asked questions as and when they wanted and hang the queue. Although tutored by despairing experienced film critics to ask the most persistent and largely unknown questioners to identify themselves, she failed at that too. And as the loudspeakers from the Open Forum across the road infiltrated into the press conference, she at first did not notice and then failed to get them toned down.

However, her real moment of glory and that of the festival came when, after every minor Ram, Shyam and Jadu had been given a solo press conference immediately following their film, three major northeastern directors, Jahnu Barua, Aribam Syam Sharma, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, both international and national award winners and Jwngdao Bodoso, the brave maker of the first Bodo film, were lumped together in a hastily-summoned press conference at the very end, long after their films were over.

As they made their individual strong protests before walking out, the lady from agriculture first murmured that it was because there was no time. Then that they had been difficult to locate (all were festival guests at the festival hotel) and, finally, that the purpose was to put the focus on the northeast

As if all this were not bad enough, the official festival bulletin, this time produced and edited by another wing of the ministry of information and broadcasting, Advertising and Visual Publicity, carried a review of a Malayalam film officially selected for the Indian Panorama and described it as "dull and boring" although the official bulletin is supposed to be purely factual. The outraged director, T V. Chandran, also pointed out angrily that the foregin press and delegates, for whom the Panorama is a vista of exposure, were taken on a sightseeing tour of the Qutab Minar and other monuments when this film was being screened.

One of the reasons why film festivals are held is to encourage trade and commerce. *Bandit Queen*, after all, was made internally and commercially because it got rave notices at Cannes. But here at our festivals, it is mainly NRIs who lap up Indian films for overseas and local distributors who made a bid for the more steamy foreign films.

A market is a market, nevertheless, and the National Film Development Corporation, which does very poor business at foreign festivals, had however, provided an annual outlet for Indian films over the years. This year, the Film Festival Directorate entered into a sordid and self-defeating dispute with the NFDC and denied its usual small but very strategically placed slot on the Siri Fort lawns adjoining the auditoriums. So there was no market at all at the festival and several foreign buyers went on television to express their disappointment and anger at being deprived of an amenity for which they had come a long way at great expense to Delhi.

Then to the much hyped but disastrous competition section Every opportunity was availed of at every possible function by the minister downwards to proudly point out that after years, when competition had been stopped because of the poor quality of films, it had been restored

Festival director Malti Sahay; chairperson of the jury, Jeanne Moreau; filmmaker B.R. Chopra; I and B minister, P.A. Sangma and filmmaker Ramanand Sagar at one of the screenings

Rashbehari Das

Director Sayed Mirza chats with newcomer Mayuri Kango at the festival

and with a fashionable Asian slant Now even the most ardent feminist cannot in all conscience claim that Asia is truly over-populated with women directors. The directorate almost literally crawled to get the entries into low two figures.

A distinguished colleague from the most distinguished south Indian English daily, with whom I have covered many of the best foreign festivals came to me in-between and at the end, almost literally tearing his hair. Because against my advice, he had conscientiously allotted himself daily coverage of the competition films while his delighted younger colleagues watched the foreign porn and a few outstanding films. "After all," he had said to me, great trouper that he is, "the most important part of a festival is the competition," with memories of Cannes, Venice and Berlin, not to speak of Montreal. "Never, never," he wailed, "have I seen such rotten films."

I believe that Jeanne Moreau, the distinguished chairperson of the jury, conveyed more or less the same sentiments to the festival authorities, and recommended that next time there should be preliminary weeding out of sub-standard films. Alas, many of them came from India. Never was such a distinguished jury asked to choose such undistinguished films.

No wonder that the ever tactful and former Cannes festival grand jury chairperson Jeanne Moreau said at the presentation that the jury had bypassed technical excellence and laid more stress on good themes. Obviously, Indian women directors could not prove even that. Nevertheless, so anxious were the festival authorities to yield to pressure from higher authorities, that they even admitted an Indian film which was described variously by film experts as "laughable" and "a poor student excercise".

Furthermore, it was listed in the Panorama as a non-feature film and in the competition as a feature film, although it did not fulfil the strict condition laid down by FIAPF, the international accredition body in Paris, that a feature film in competition must be of a minimun of 60 minutes. But, never say die. The same film is going to the Bombay festival as a documentary.

Yes, the festival had some outstanding films together with expected trivia, although the retrospectives were so many and so overladen, that genuine film buffs bit their nails in anguish missing many of them, although some of the best retrospectives ran to empty houses at commercial cinemas. Typical of Delhi. In Calcutta they queued overnight for Godard.

That the directorate cannot manage the simplest of functions was proved by the disastrous lunch at the no doubt picturesque Dilli Haat which had none of the orderliness of its real rustic counterparts. This lunch is always open house for the junior staff of the ministry, and a very kind thought but they had brought along entire joint families. grandmas, babies and all.

Queues were broken and a fat lot of use they were when the kebabs were at one end and the rumali rotis at another. Food rapidly ran short and several foreign guests as well as your columnist left hungry. Also, for some odd reason, one could not get tea on the Siri Fort lawns, only coffee, very weak and diluted.

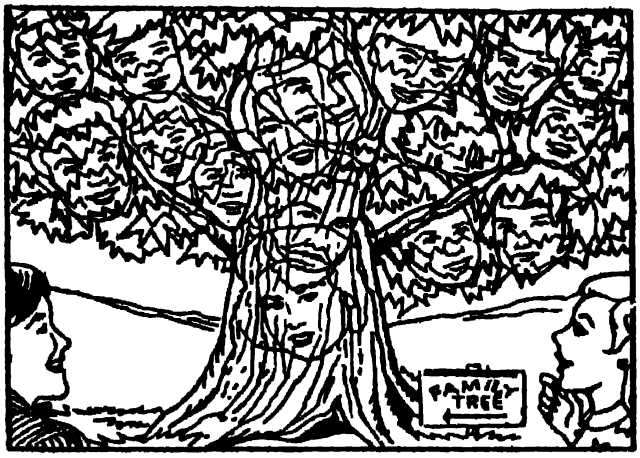
Lend, as every festival in Delhi begins and ends with their august and overwhelming presence, with the bureaucrats Having seen the uncensored version of *Bandit Queen*, I wanted to see if the cut version in the festival had harmed the film. I did not even attempt to get into the delegate and press show because it was overrun by bureaucrats and their families and sundry minions from the ministry, and the police had to be called in. They almost broke down the solid doors of the auditorium, having occupied all the seats for the dull film which had preceded this highlight of the Indian section

It was a comparatively sedate bureaucratic audience which invaded the auditorium in force for the closing function. Speeches, awards, culminating in Antonioni's first film after his stroke The best seats were occupied in advance by section officers etc. (just like the Dilli Haat) who hadn't heard of Antonioni but wanted their porn.

In front of me sat a meek looking man, his obese wife and a *paan* chewing teenage son As, rather overdone for Antonioni, but not surprisingly from co-director Wim Wenders, the nudies and copulation increased, the obese matron stared in horror and then pulled at her enthralled husband's shirt. "*Chalo ji*," she said loudly and harshly as he mildly lingered and finally shuffled to his feet, eyes still glued on the screen. The son continued to chew *paan*. That is when mom in classic *desi* style, pulled him firmly up by the ear and "*chal, jaldi, hut*," and dragged him out of the auditorium, still by the ear.

Which should be our epitaph on the festival audiences. Except that exactly the same thing will continue to happen at every film festival held in this city of bureaucrats. It is really time they stopped holding festivals in this vast bureaucratic Dilli Haat. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL HAL KAUFMAN



UP A TREE! Our artist claims there are 16 faces among branches of this family tree. How many do you see?

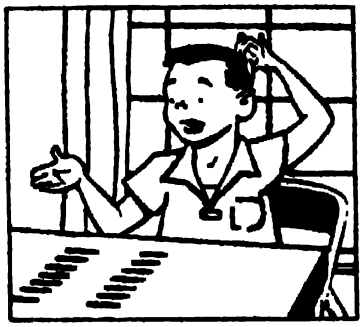
SPORTS CAST!

Name a sport with which each of the following B-words is associated: 1. Bunt 2. Bogey 3. Butterfly 4. Bootleg 5. Blueline 6. Blinders.

Time Limit: 1 minute.

1 Baseball 2 Golf 3 Swimming 4 Football 5 Hockey 6 Horse racing

QUICK PICK!

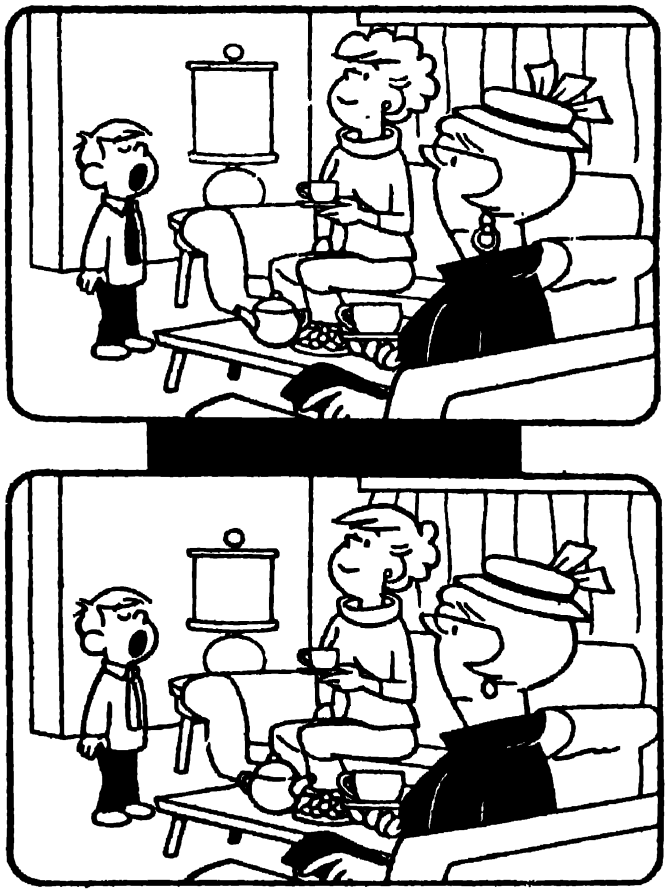


Place 14 toothpicks on the table. In turn, you and an opponent are to pick up one, two or three. Object is to force opponent to pick up last toothpick.

Here's how: If you go first, you can't lose. On first turn, take one. On next turn, pick up fifth toothpick in removal order. On next turn, see that just five toothpicks remain.

If opponent goes first, try to proceed similarly, but this method may not always succeed.

HOCUS-FOCUS



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Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. The is different. 2. Lamp shade is smaller. 3. Teapot is reversed. 4. Hair is different. 5. Earring is different. 6. Ribbon is missing

1	I N _ _ _ _ _
2	_ I N _ _ _ _
3	_ _ I N _ _ _
4	_ _ _ I N _ _
5	_ _ _ _ I N _
6	_ _ _ _ _ I N

IN IT TO WIN IT CHALLENGE

YES, you have to be IN to win it — or, in this case, to solve it. Six seven-letter words shown contain the word IN in progressive stages. You are asked to fill in these words in accord with the following definitions:

1. Due to arrive, as a plane or train.

2. "A horse! A horse! My ___for a horse."

3. Hanger-onner of sorts.

4. Gone but not forgotten, as the dinosaur, moa, etc.

5. Astonishingly hard to believe.

6. Bad guy hissed by old-time audiences.

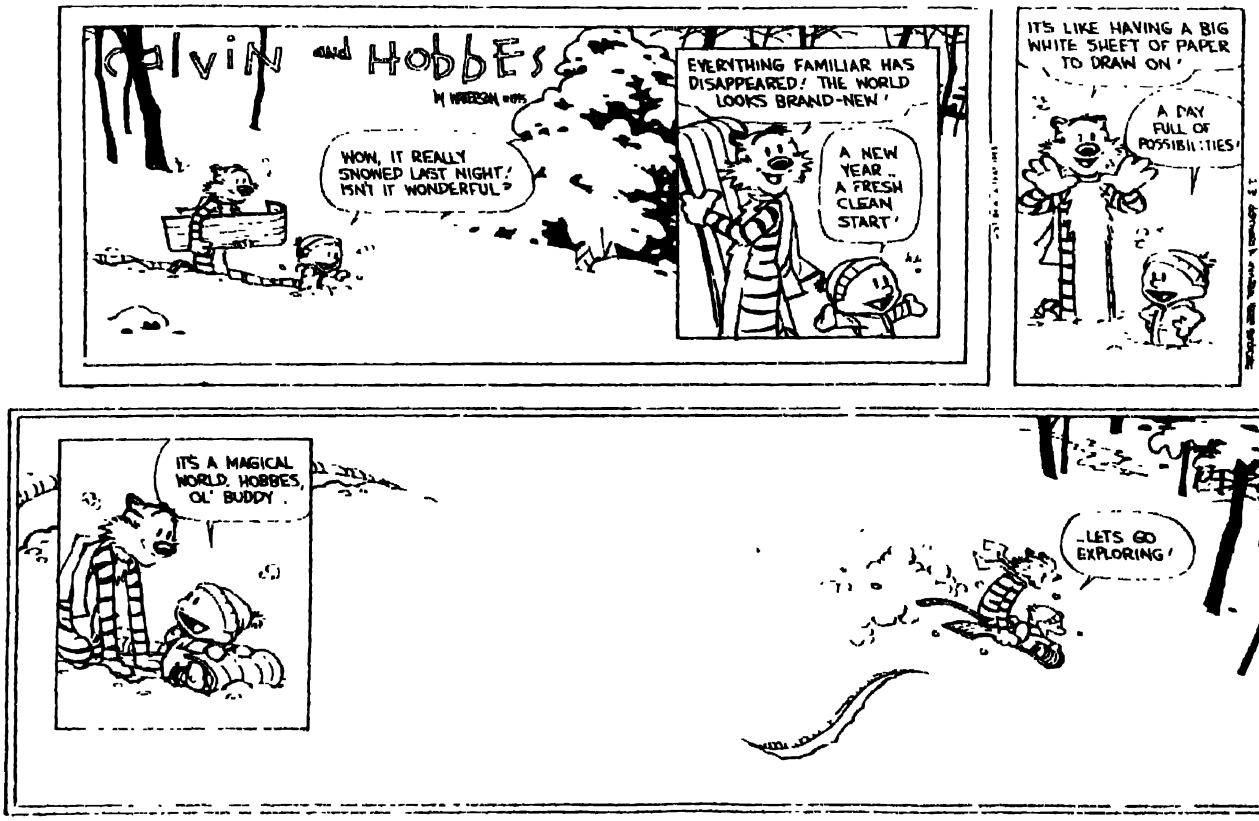
How quickly can you puzzle them out?

Time: 2 minutes.

1 Inbound 2 Kingdom 3 Clinger-on 4 Extinct 5 Amazing 6 Villain

ARCHIE

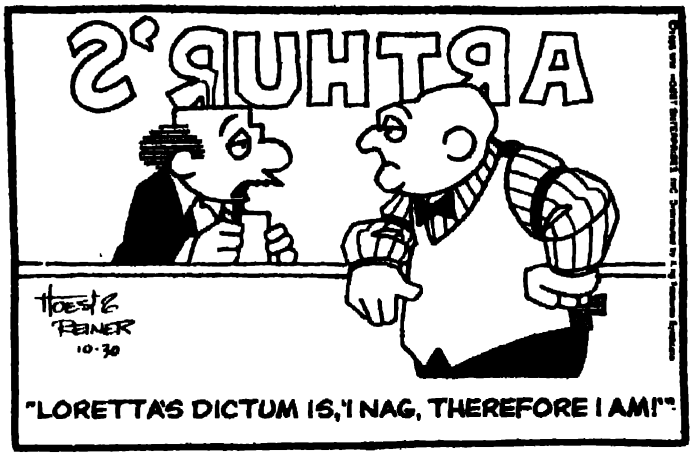
CALVIN AND HOBBES □ WATTERSON



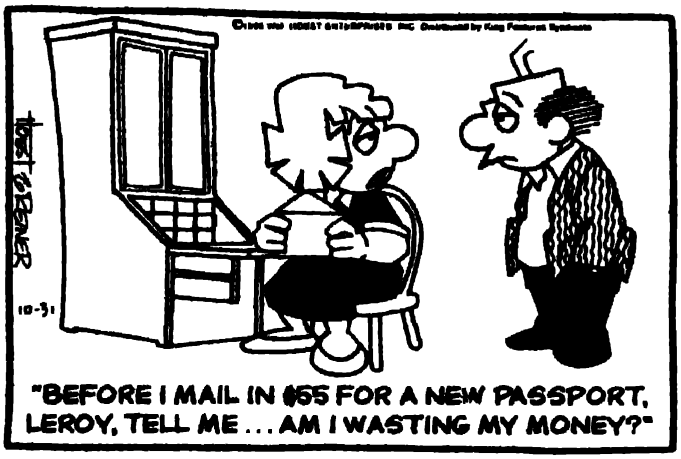
THE LOCKHORNS

"LEROY'S ABOUT TO HAVE A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE!"

"GEE, LEROY, HAS IT BEEN A YEAR ALREADY SINCE YOU FORGOT MY BIRTHDAY WAS THE NEXT DAY?"

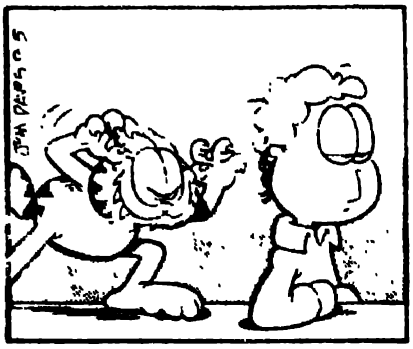


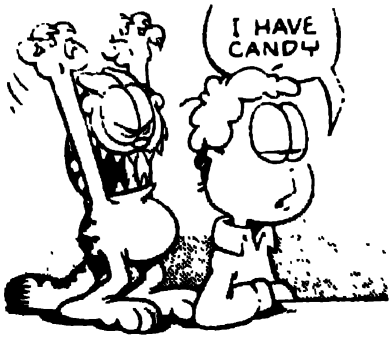
"LORETTA'S DICTUM IS, 'I NAG, THEREFORE I AM!'"

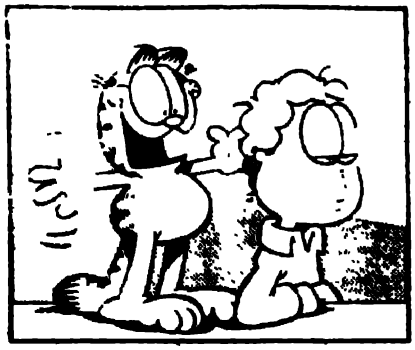


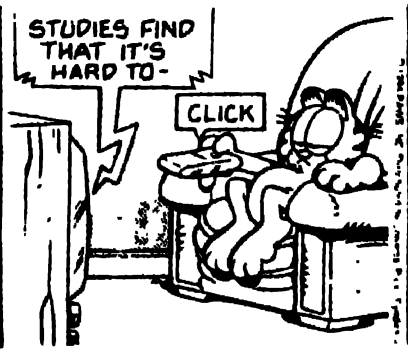
"BEFORE I MAIL IN $55 FOR A NEW PASSPORT, LEROY, TELL ME ... AM I WASTING MY MONEY?"

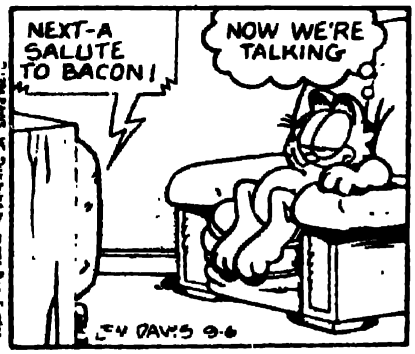
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



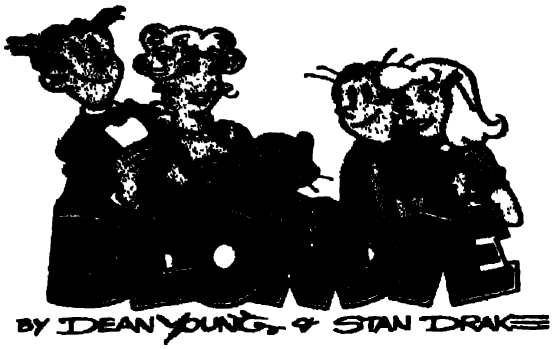






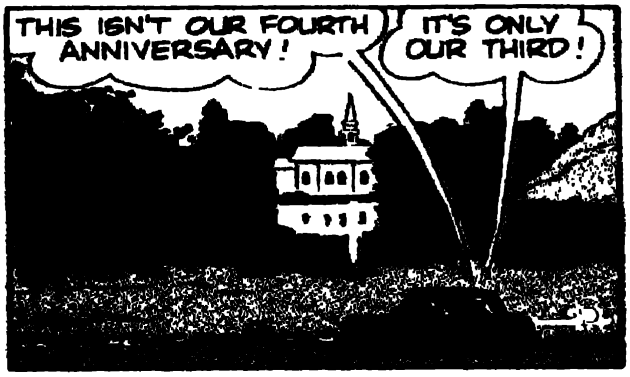


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

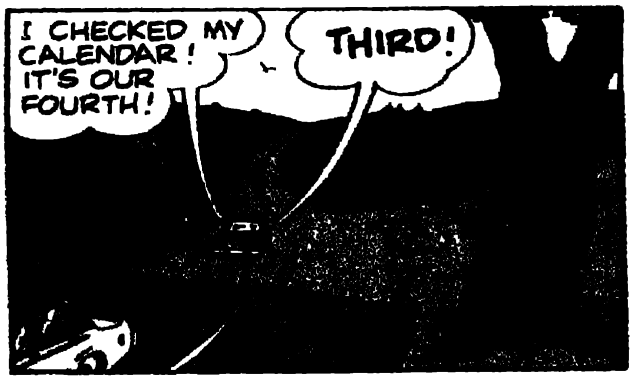

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

I'LL BET YOU'VE ALL FORGOTTEN WHAT DAY THIS IS
WHAT DAY?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DO YOU REALIZE THAT TODAY IS OUR FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF CAR-POOLING TOGETHER?


THIS ISN'T OUR FOURTH ANNIVERSARY!
IT'S ONLY OUR THIRD!

DAGWOOD'S RIGHT, IT'S OUR FOURTH!
THIRD!


I CHECKED MY CALENDAR! IT'S OUR FOURTH!
THIRD!

IT'S THE FOURTH!
THIRD!
FOURTH!

IT'S AMAZING THAT WE'VE STAYED TOGETHER THESE FOUR YEARS
THREE!!
YOUNG & DRAKE 7 30

Continued from page 8

ed his son Nusrat to be a doctor.

Nusrat would perhaps have gone along with this plan, if it hadn't been for a dream he had as a teenager, in which he saw himself singing at the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer. The young Nusrat took this to be a sign and began training to be a *qawwal*.

And his dream became reality when on a visit to Ajmer in 1979 (Nusrat was in India to perform at the wedding of Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh at the invitation of Raj Kapoor) he was asked to sing at the shrine

Khan is a superstar in his native Pakistan, where he is called Shahenshah-e-Qawwal, but his brand of devotional music travels well across borders. Khan has sung to both British and French audiences and he is very big in Japan, where there are six books and single-issue magazines devoted to his life and music

International stardom came to Khan in 1987 when he was asked to sing for Martin Scorcese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* by Peter Gabriel. Gabriel was looking for a singer whose voice could express the anguish of Christ and he felt he had found it in Nusrat Ali.

The experiment worked, and Gabriel's record company, Real World, brought out Khan's album, *Musth Musth*, which was an instant hit. Several other albums followed, all under the Real World label, each one of them a success.

Khan's *Musth Musth* was re-mixed as a dance album by the record company, Massive Attack, and made it to the dance charts, the first time a *qawwali* had featured on them.

Musth Muth had its fans in India as well, at least one of whom was a plagiarist. Hence, the *Mohra* number, *Tu cheez badi hai mast mast*, which was a straight lift from Khan's track.

But that wasn't the only Nusrat Fateh Ali number that was cannibalised. Akshay Kumar and Ayesha Julka danced to *Jhule Jhule Lal*, a copy of Khan's *Mast Kalandar*. And more recently, Madhuri Dixit danced to Nusrat's *Mere piya ghar aya* in *Yarauna*.

Indian copyright laws being what they are — not to mention the Indian legal system itself — Khan has little chance of getting justice in the courts. So the rotund singer has decided to follow that tried-and-tested dictum: if you can't beat them, join them.

Nusrat Ali has decided to begin composing for Hindi films as well.

GIANFRANCO FERRI

GULSHAN KUMAR

After all, if other people are making millions out of his talent, why should he be left out?

The entry of Khan into the Hindi movie arena could well change all the rules of background music in India. And the A.R. Rahmans and Anu Maliks of the world would have their work cut out coping with the competition.

Gulshan Kumar

Call him crude, call him vulgar, call him what you will. But there is no denying that Gulshan Kumar has changed the face of the music industry in India.

When Kumar was a small-time shopkeeper, with a side-business in cassette piracy, the big time music companies like the Gramophone Company of India channeled all their resources into the production of records. Cassettes were seen as a new-fangled invention that nobody would take to, and were very highly priced as well.

That was before Gulshan Kumar decided to take matters into his own pudgy hands. He began manufacturing cassettes in his Noida factory and selling them at prices that were less than half of those charged by the giants in the business. Kumar intended to make up in volumes what he lost in price. And as the sales of his company soared, he succeeded in that objective admirably.

Soon, every neighbourhood *paan-wallah* had a cassette recorder, and the profile of the music industry had changed completely.

Kumar then turned his attention to the software sector. Hiring various small-time singers — who often sounded uncannily like Kishore Kumar or Lata Mangeshkar — he began record-

ing old hits on his T-Series label. This experiment with cover versions led Kumar to his next destination: film music.

When Gulshan entered this sector, he was best-known as the Pirate King, whom no self-respecting businessman would associate with. But this didn't prove to be a drawback in the film industy.

But Kumar didn't just buy the rights to the music of various films. He did more: he made music a 'territory' in itself. Earlier, the music rights would go for as little as a couple of lakhs. By the time Kumar moved out of the business, they often amounted to as much as Rs 60 lakh.

But if he was doing so well, why did Gulshan move out of the business?

Simple. With music becoming more and more expensive, his profits were declining. So, Kumar decided to give filmi music a miss, and record *bhajans*, folk music and semi-classical music instead.

According to Kumar, film music was not that great a seller any more. People, he said, had got too used to seeing Hindi film songs (on television) rather than hearing them. So cassette sales had fallen. Folk music and *bhajans*, on the other hand, didn't suffer from this drawback.

By then, however, Gulshan was already a movie magnate in his own right. His first film, *Aashiqui*, made in collaboration with Mahesh Bhatt, had been a hit. Emboldened by this, Kumar decided to introduce his brother, Kishan Kumar, as a hero.

The attempt failed. Kishan's first two releases sank without a trace at the box-office, though the music did quite well. But just when people were saying that Kumar had finally come a cropper, he proved all of them wrong with *Sanam Bewafa*.

Starring Kishan Kumar (yes, again!) and Shilpa Shirodkar, the film was based on the real-life story of Ataullah Khan, a Pakistani singer. And against all odds, it did remarkably well at the box-office. Gulshan had emerged triumphant again.

But where does Kumar go from here?

Gulshan will have to reinvent himself yet again in 1996 if he is to remain on the top of things. He has already announced plans to bring out a CD player which will cost as little as Rs 1,500. And it is clear that he intends to diversify into the hardware business in a big way.

Going by past record, he should pull this one off as well. If he does fail, however, it will be a first for the erstwhile Pirate King.

FASHION

Gianfranco Ferre

His is the first big name in international fashion to make an entry into India. (No, Pierre Cardin doesn't count; everyone in the fashion industry regards him as a bit of a joke.)

Ferre, in collaboration with KB+T, has opened stores in the major Indian metros to sell Italian suits to Indian men. The clothes on offer are, on the whole, conservative and well-cut, though the range is a little restricted as of now.

Those who bought a Ferre suit, jacket or blazer in the first month or so of the opening have got the bargain of all times. Since the Gurgaon factory hadn't been commissioned on time, the clothes had been flown in from Italy. So, the lucky ones got a made-in-Italy suit at Indian prices.

Those kind of bargains are not to be had now. And at Rs 10,000 for a blazer, Ferre is not cheap by any standards (unless, of course, you're used to shopping on Sloane Street).

Most Indians balk at paying those kind of prices for a suit. But if you do get your credit card out, rest assured that the money will be well-spent. A Ferre suit is a good investment, will last you a lifetime, and if it is cut in a classic style, you can even pass it on to

ABU JANI-SANDIP KHOSLA

your son when you die.

As far as competition with Indian designers is concerned, the only one Ferre needs to fear is Shahab Durazi. And even Durazi's volumes are so low, that he is only a limited threat.

As for the others: Rohit Bal's suits look as if they've been made by a blind man; Ravi Bajaj caters to the lower end of the market; and the rest don't really make clothes for men (it's salwar kameezes all the way to the bank).

So, Ferre will have a relatively easy run in India. That is, of course, if he refrains from pricing himself right out of the market.

Abu Jani-Sandip Khosla

They're the Toy Boys or the Bad Boys of Indian fashion, depending on whom you're listening to. But hate them or love them, you have to admit that Abu and Sandip have been a seminal influence on the design scene in India.

Their beginnings in fashion were rather humble. They used to sell clothes on Bombay's Linking Road, before they were offered their own label, Jashan, by Tarun Tahiliani, who was then in the process of setting up his designer store, Ensemble.

After that, there was no looking back for The Boys, as they were known in the fashion world. Their Indian womenswear leapt off the shelves, and even though they parted company with Tahiliani in acrimonious circumstances — and tought with Sunita Pitamber, their former mentor somewhere along the line -- they retained their hold on the designerwear market in Bombay.

Their rivals maintained that their popularity had more to do with their talent for keeping the ladies who lunch happy than their talent for designing clothes. But while it is true that The Boys hung around their clients as they chose their shoes and bags — hence the name Toy Boys — there is no denying the ability of the duo.

They are credited with inventing the churi sleeve (long sleeves that gathered into churis at the wrist) and the double sari (an outfit made by draping two saris at the same time). And like old-style couturiers they sell out of their studio-cum-house in Juhu, Bombay.

Like fashion designers abroad, Abu and Sandip have branched off into related fields. Their furniture exhibition held in Bombay a couple of years ago was a complete sell-out. And one of the biggest buyers was interior designer Sunita Pitamber, who has now made up with the duo.

More recently, Jani and Khosla organised a ball in Delhi, in collaboration with such society ladies as Bim Bissel, Sunita Kohli and Shireen Paul. And most of their clients in Bombay flew down for the event.

Some fear that this branching off into related fields has already begun affecting the quality of the designing duo's clothes. And that they should look to their kalidar kurtas if they don't want their label to go the Pierre Cardin way.

GITANJALI KASHYAP

Gitanjali Kashyap

She hasn't been hyped as much as either Rina Dhaka or Ritu Beri, but Kashyap is nevertheless one of the more exciting designers on the scene right now. In the past, she has been slotted as a sari designer and dismissed thereafter, but Gitanjali can do much more than just paint an exquisite pallav (though she's very good at that too).

Kashyap's strength is that she is not afraid of colour While others may stick to safe shades, or even monochrome, Gitanjali experiments with vibrant yellows, oranges and maroons.

Her latest collection — though praised in the media — was a little disappointing. The pleated salwar kameezes were too close to Issey Miyake's 'Pleats Please' label for comfort. But one lapse in an otherwise memorable career can be forgiven.

Kashyap, for her part, maintains that she never looks at any fashion magazines while working for fear that she may be subliminally influenced by the pictures she sees If she keeps to that policy, she will be the designer to watch in 1996.

Jatin Kochar

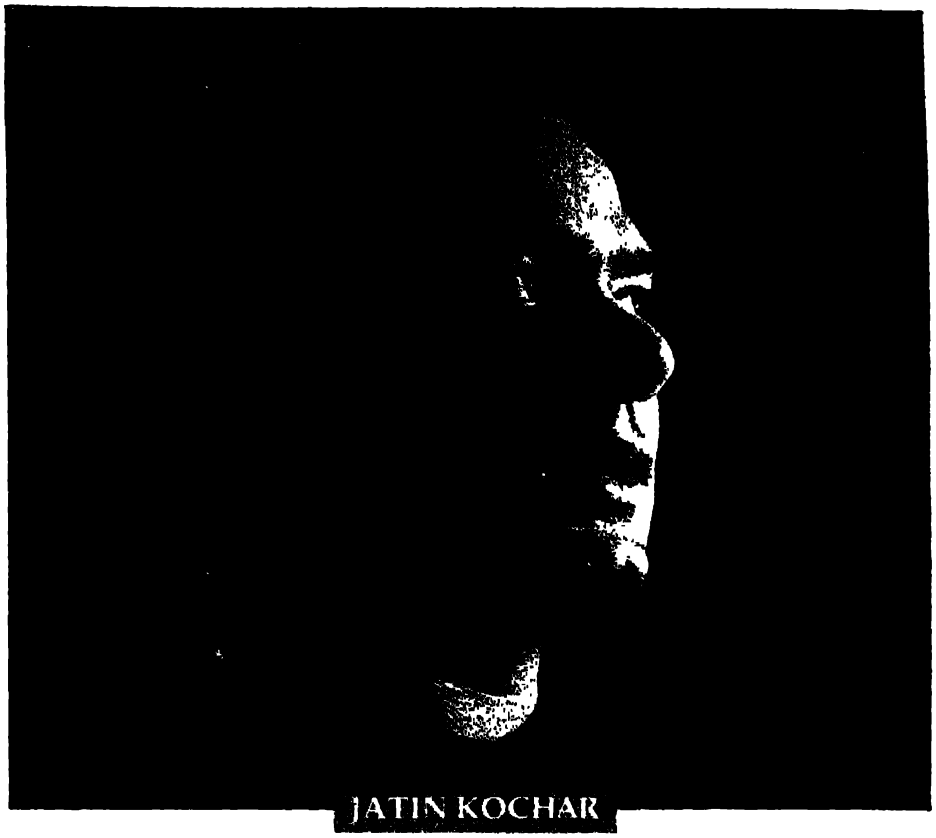
Unfortunately, he is better-known for a botched nose job (which had to be corrected by a second operation) than his work as a fashion designer But Jatin Kochar is a talented designer for all that.

And what he lacks in talent he makes up for in enthusiasm. Consider the range of his work: he has designed shoes, swimwear, and is now working on clothes for women of a certain weight. This, while churning out the usual summer, winter, fall collections every year.

But most important of all, Kochar is a fashion designer in the Rohit Khosla mould He dresses and acts the part and understands the value of publicity — both good and bad

Thus, you will see him on Star TV, hiding his (apparent) nakedness behind a briefcase; you can read about his cosmetic surgery in the gossip columns; and if you're in the business, you will be inundated with calls for an interview

Pushy he undoubtedly is, but don't damn him for that — in his field of work that's what marks the wiz-kids from the has-beens. And if Jatin manages to work quite as well as he net works, 1996 could see him emerge as a designer of consequence.



JATIN KOCHAR

Shahab Durazi

He lives the way he designs. The hallmark of Durazi's clothes is quiet understatement, and that same laid-back elegance characterises the designer himself

Not for Durazi the media interviews, the TV appearances, the press releases that other designers set so much store by. Shahab is much happier working away on his sketch-pad, designing clothes that owe much more to Giorgio Armani than they do to Gianni Versace.

SHAHAB DURAZI

He makes both menswear and womenswear, but the cuts are similar: classic and conservative. And the look is very tailored In fact, Durazi is so much of a perfectionist that he insists on cutting every garment himself to ensure high standards. Hence, the sobriquet, the Azzedine Alaia of India.

But then, Shahab can afford to be so finicky. His volumes are low, and he makes clothes only in three sizes, small, medium and large If you don't find your size among the clothes on display, then forget about owning a Shahab Durazi. The designer refuses to do any alterations, for fear of spoiling the line of the garment.

Despite this take-it-or-leave-it attitude, Durazi has his list of faithfuls, which includes Maureen Wadia and Karmeshwar Godrej, the arbiters of taste in Bombay. And there are several society ladies who have been known to pick up swatches of fabric abroad and bring it back home to Bombay so that Shahab can make a suit out of it

Last year saw Durazi reluctantly emerge into the limelight at the solo show that he held in Bombay If he manages to overcome his distaste for publicity this year, Shahab's will be the name on everyone's lips in 1996 ■

NAFISA ALI SODHI, *who burst on the national scene when she was crowned Miss India in 1976, took everyone by surprise when she bade farewell to her career in modelling and films and opted for marriage and a quiet life away from the limelight. Two decades later, at 38, this former national swimming champion, decides to devote herself to the cause of society, raising funds through fashion shows for Umang, a charitable organisation in Delhi, which looks after destitute street children.*

Nafisa Ali Sodhi: In her younger days

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A world where there is no religion; in which nature and man live in balance; the environment is protected and man uses his intelligence, power and material gain for the future and growth of the world.

What is your greatest fear?
The loss of my family. I always pray for their health and happiness.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My inner drive and, of course, my family. The total love I receive.

What do you dislike most in others?
I never judge people. I always try looking at things from their point of view. Who am I to dislike anyone?

What do you dislike most in yourself?
My emotional state.

What is your most precious possession?
The health and well-being of my children and family.

What objects do you always carry?
The black horses — a horse shoe nail ring on my finger, the bracelet my mom gave me and my family photograph in my wallet.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

My emotional state

What makes you most depressed?
The pain and suffering of people and animals and I wish I had the power to help them.

What is your favourite word?
'Think'.

What is your favourite journey?
My journey of self-discovery. There is so much to learn in life and from life. I want to eventually reach a place full of peace, harmony and a perfect environment.

What is your favourite dream?
To be in a valley of flowers and greenery, waterfalls cascading down the mountains, the sea close by and tame wild animals and birds surrounding me with affection and my little house on a hill.

What is your nightmare?
The death of anyone close to me.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My children and the love of my family.

What is your source of sustenance?
My inner God as I call it. He is always with me. I talk to him all the time and he is a great helping hand.

On what occasions do you lie?
I hate to lie because I want to be in a position where my experiences in life, whether good or bad, will enrich others.

What is your greatest regret?
That no one thought of putting my name up for the Arjun Award in 1974 for my winning the Nationals in swimming.

What has been your happiest moment?
Happiness overwhelms me all the time. I live from moment to moment and day to day and little things make me happy I cannot pick on any one moment.

What brings tears to your eyes?
Tenderness and love shared.

How do you relax?
By reading books on spiritualism and philosophy at night before I sleep

What do you envy most in others?
I am grateful for everything I have. So I envy nothing in others.

How would you like to be remembered?
I am just a simple, ordinary human being. So who will remember me, other than my children with whom I have shared a life of love, hope, caring and sharing.

How would you like to die?
I am such a coward I pray to God always to make my death fast and painless. Maybe, to fade away in my sleep would be most peaceful.

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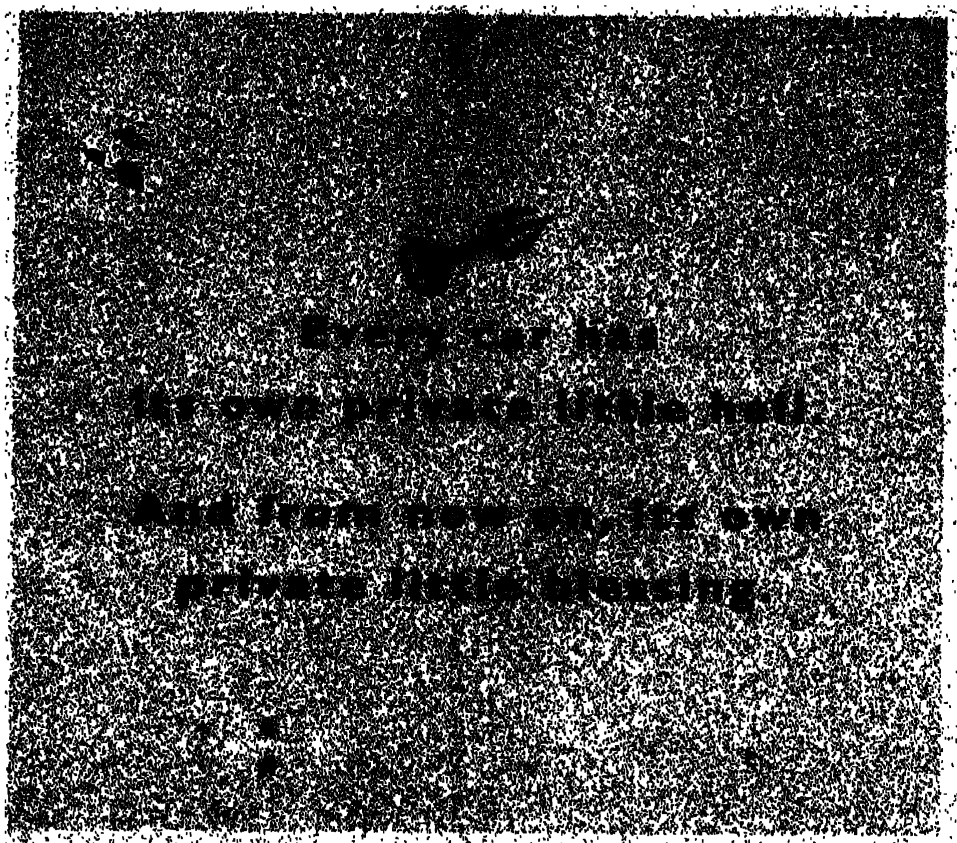
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THE FORMULA TO FIGHT CAR STRESS

11 FEBRUARY 1996

The Telegraph *magazine*

POST MORTEM

The World of Amjad Ali

■ Amjad Ali Khan's absolute devotion to the sarod made him the legend that he is ('Play On..., December 17). Like an able *shishya*, he carries on the musical tradition of his father, Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan.

Indian classical music has much to thank patrons for its promotion. In the ancient days it was the *nawabs* and *rajas* who patronised musicians.

Now, there are no *nawabs* to appreciate good music. So classical singers and musicians have to depend a great deal on sponsorship to keep their art alive. In some instances, corporate houses have come forward to promote and popularise Indian classical music.

But although we have a large following of classical music, I wonder who will replace the great masters: Ustad Bismillah Khan, Balmurali Krishna, Bhimsen Joshi, Ravi Shankar and Amjad Ali Khan.
Nirmalendu Chakraborty,
Cooch Behar

■ Amjad Ali Khan has become a cult figure of sorts for his innovative *ragas* which evoke a variety of emotions. Besides being the most recorded musician of our times, he has not surrendered his creativity to the synthesiser culture of today.

The freshness and charm of his music appeals to all.
Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan: Stringing new *ragas*

■ Amjad Ali Khan's respect for his contemporaries and his soft and gentlemanly manner have conquered the hearts of music lovers.

What is admirable about him is his humility and desire to learn still more.
Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ Music is like an ocean, the more you learn the more you want to delve into it. Amjad Ali Khan's life has been a long quest: exploring new vistas and creating new *ragas*.
Partha Pratim Modak,
Howrah

■ For a musician with a demanding career, Amjad Ali Khan looks a happy family man: in love with his wife and devoted to his two sons.
Susanta Sen,
Calcutta

■ With his winning smile and handsome good looks, Amjad Ali Khan would have been a sought-after cine star had he not been a sarod player.
Abhijit Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ Amjad Ali Khan is one of those musicians who has been abundantly successful at home and abroad. His is a combination of a classical guru and a modern gentleman.
Somnath Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ Subhalakshmi, wife of Amjad Ali Khan, has been his constant companion inspiring him to conquer new heights of excellence. Without her support and love, Amjad Ali would not have been that successful.
Meenakshi Roy,
Calcutta

Last Person

■ It is high time the Magazine did away with First Person for the questions are getting very boring. Either you change the questions or change the layout.
Sujata Sarkar,
Calcutta

Nowhere To Play

■ 'Where Do We Go To Play? (January 7) was a thought-provoking article. It is really a pity children have no playgrounds in the city where they can play.
B.P. Chatterjee,
Burdwan

INSIDE

Kajol

PAGE 4

IS KAJOL, the vivacious daughter of Tanuja, to dislodge Madhuri Dixit from the number one slot in tinsel town?

PAGE 26

THEY ARE trendy and they are smart. Many Indian women now go for chic costume jewellery rather than the real ones.

SECTIONS

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Cover: Gautam Rajadhyaksha

COVER STORY

Move over, Madhuri!

After the success of Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, *Kajol is all set to take over the number one slot, reports* ***Lata Khubchandani***

SHE IS SHORT, DARK AND PLUMP. SHE DOESN'T BLEACH THE BLACK DOWN ON HER UPPER LIP. Nor does she remove the hair that joins her eyebrows until they look like one fine line. She doesn't wear make-up, and you can often catch her with spectacles perched on her snub nose.

No, she isn't the girl next door, who has her face perpetually buried in a book. Her name is Kajol, the daughter of yesteryear actress Tanuja and Shomu Mukherjee. And she is one of the most successful heroines of the Bombay film industry today. Her latest film, *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, has broken all box-office records, its takings leaving even that other blockbuster, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!*, in the shade.

And the diminutive Kajol looks all set to unseat Madhuri Dixit from the number one position that she has occupied for so many years.

On one level, this isn't cause for any surprise. After all, Dixit has had a fair run, is on the wrong side of 30, and it is only a matter of time before a younger star replaces her at the top. What is amazing, though, is that that heroine should be Kajol.

First, of course, there are her unconventional good looks. She doesn't have the peaches and cream complexion of the average Hindi film heroine; Kajol's colouring is more olive and wheat. She refuses the several layers of foundation and lashings of rouge favoured by her colleagues, preferring to let the youthful translucence of her skin shine through on screen. And in an age when heroines are getting leaner and leaner — consider Manisha Koirala or even Urmila Matondkar — Kajol seems more than comfortable with a hint of belly and fleshy upper arms, which she displays with an utter lack of self-consciousness in halter-neck blouses.

Tanuja

Even as recently as five years ago, Kajol would have been laughed out of producers' offices if she had arrived, announcing that she wanted to make it in the movies. The

Aditya Chopra directs Shah Rukh Khan in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*

conventional wisdom on how Hindi film heroines should look had been decided, and Tanuja's first-born did not fit that bill. She may have been okay as the hero's sister, with her non-threatening sexuality, but the leading lady? No way.

Clearly, things have changed a lot since then.

So, what accounts for Kajol's success in an industry where everyone prefers to play it safe? Some say that it is her unusual appeal itself that has helped her race ahead in the stardom stakes. The audiences are tired of heroines who look exactly like one another, right down to the pouting lips outlined in hot pink. And one thing that you can't say about Kajol is that she is anyone's clone. With her heart-shaped face and large brown eyes she is as different from the run-of-the-mill heroine as chalk is from cheese.

And what eyes! Large, limpid, and very, very expressive indeed, they are her best feature. They laugh along with her generous mouth, they cry when she is sad, and they flash scorn at all those who dare suggest that she is anything less than the best

MILESTONES

Following Kajol's career graph

BEKHUDI

Kajol's debut film, and a bit of a disaster. But strangely enough, even though Kamal (he played the male lead) Sadanah's career never recovered from this bad start, the flop of *Bekhudi* never affected Kajol in the least. She still got the big banners, A-grade heroes still vied to act with her, and directors conceded that she was among the more talented newcomers on the scene.

YEH DILLAGI

This re-make of *Sabrina* had Kajol playing the Audrey Hepburn role. And as the daughter of the family retainer who falls in love with one of the sons of the house, Kajol displayed a fresh-faced, playful charm that had not been seen on the screen since the days of the young Gita Bali.

The movie was only an average hit, though the number *Ole Ole* climbed inexorably up the music charts. But most people felt that Kajol was the best thing about the movie.

BAAZIGAR

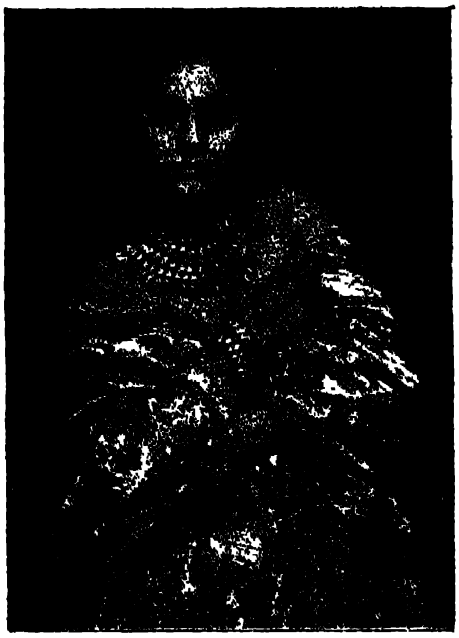
This was Shah Rukh Khan's movie from the start to the finish and the heroines—Shilpa Shetty in the first half and Kajol in the second—didn't have much to do except sing songs and run around the mandatory trees. But despite the limitations of her role, Kajol made quite an impression, specially in the *Kali kali aankhen* number. This also signalled the beginning of the Shah Rukh-Kajol pairing that has worked so well at the box-office.

What producers and directors set store by most is her natural, unaffected manner. Says Indra Kumar, who will be directing her in *Ishq* opposite Ajay Devgan, "She's fantastic. She has a beautiful face and what I like most about her is her naturalness. None of her expressions are *filmi*. She's doing a brilliant job in my movie. She looks like an Indian girl, she is very talented, and she is very different from all the other heroines."

It is this "difference" that has become Kajol's USP. Aditya Chopra, for instance, says that he signed her on for Simran's role in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, because "there was more to her" Says Chopra, "When I wrote the role, I realised that besides a good-looking face I also needed a good actress and personally I place her right at the top I think her appeal is her natural body language She hasn't got a conventionally good body, but there is a natural flavour about her that is very attractive."

This fresh charm was apparent in Kajol even when she made an entry into the movies. She was first signed on by Rahul Rawail for *Bekhudi*, opposite Kamal Sadanah The director saw Kajol at Gautam Rajadhyaksha's place (he had written *Bekhudi*) and was immediately struck by her

Rawail remembers now, "When I



Kajol

first saw her, I particularly noticed her vibrancy, this tremendous energy she exudes which translates very well on the screen So, I asked Gautam to do some pictures of her There is nothing put-on about her, and that's what made me decide to cast her. She was very spontaneous as an actress Her energy along with a certain child-like quality made her click on screen "

It was this spirited quality of her performance in *Bekhudi* that drew the attention of Naresh Malhotra, who was looking for someone to play Audrey Hepburn's role in the Hindi remake of *Sabrina*. "I needed an actress," recounts Malhotra, "who looked spirited enough to go against her parents, against set norms and she had that look Her eyes are very expressive."

Yes, those eyes, again. They are a recurring lietmotif in Kajol's career. And perhaps without them, she wouldn't have had much of a career at all

As a child, Kajol showed little interest in the movies Her father Shomu Mukherjee remembers how he would take her with him on his out door shoots. And instead of being intrigued by the business of acting, Kajol would continually pester him with requests to be sent abroad to study computers "She was telling me that she wanted to do this course or the other," recalls her father, with a laugh "There was never any question of joining films "

And anyway, in those days, Kajol was too busy having a good time She was a very, very naughty child, according to grandmother Shobhana Samarth "Kajol was born after Tanuja had suffered a miscarriage," says

HULCHUL

Ajay Devgan may be Kajol's main man in real life, but as far as reel life is concerned, the couple just don't cut it. Both *Hulchul* and *Goondaraj*, in which Kajol played opposite Ajay, were box-office turkeys. And this apparently, caused some problems in their personal life, with Devgan finding it difficult to cope with a girlfriend who was more successful than he was. But as for Kajol's professional life; it went on without a hitch.

***Hulchul*: Kajol with Ajay Devgan**

KARAN ARJUN

Yet again, Kajol starred opposite Shah Rukh; and yet again, her role basically consisted of one good song: *Jaati hoon main*. Even Kajol conceded that she had made a mistake by signing on for a movie in which she had nothing to do. But fortunately for her, this miscalculation didn't prove too costly to her career. After all, by now Hindi film audiences are used to heroines that are just wheeled on for the song sequences.

DILWALE DULHANIYA LE JAYENGE

Kajol's coming of age. Little did she realise when she signed on for Aditya Chopra's first film as director that it would catapult her into the Madhuri Dixit league But that's exactly what happened with *Dilwale* becoming an even bigger hit than that other mega-grosser, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* ! And putting Kajol ahead of everyone in the race for Number One

Samarth, "and so she was very pampered, very spoilt and almost impossible to control. I just couldn't tolerate her mischief. If the car had to take the two of us somewhere, she'd jump up and down so much that I'd tell the driver 'either get her off the car or I will get off'"

In fact, Samarth would often get so annoyed with her irrepressible granddaughter that she would pick up anything within reach — a book, a pillow, — and throw it at her in an attempt to quell her high spirits. Today, she is somewhat ashamed of her bad temper. So much so, that she even apologised to Kajol recently for having struck her.

And Kajol's response? "I've forgotten about it," she told her grandmother, "I don't know why you want to remember it. There is nothing to forgive."

Shomu Mukherjee's recollections about his daughter's childhood are similar. "As a kid she was very mischievous," he admits, adding hastily, "but then, all kids are mischievous. She was a go-getter and something of a bully. And she always knew her mind."

That, at least, has not changed. Even today, Kajol is very sure what kind of movies she wants to do, and which ones she doesn't. "She makes sure of her role before signing on the dotted

THE STAR STAKES

Who are Kajol's rivals?

URMILA MATONDKAR

With *Rangeela*, she is among the front-ranking heroines in Bollywood. Her's is an appeal far removed from Kajol's make-up-less innocence. Urmila is sexy, sophisticated and attractive in an obvious sort of way (you can't miss her charms in those halter-necked mini-dresses, can you?) So, it is unlikely that the two girls will ever compete for the same slot. But then, as Kajol showed in some scenes of *Yeh Dillagi*, she too can be a *femme fatale* when she wants to be one.

Urmila Matondkar

RAVEENA TANDON

She hasn't had a real hit ever since *Mohra* (where she gyrated brilliantly in *Tu cheez badi hai mast mast*), and that was a very long time ago. But then, Raveena seems to have lost interest in her career ever since she fell in love with Akshay Kumar -- and it can't help very much that he refuses to acknowledge their relationship. Rumours of her secret marriage have scared producers away, but if the gossips have it right and Tandon has ended her affair with Akshay, then she may well come right back in the reckoning.

Raveena Tandon

MANISHA KOIRALA

She has fallen behind in the race after the less than impressive showing of *Akele Hum Akele Tum*. But Manisha, with her ravishing good looks and searing talent (as seen in *Bombay*) can't be written off no matter how many flops she stars in.

Manisha Koirala

KARISHMA KAPOOR

Her rivalry with Kajol extends to their private lives as well. Karishma's ex-boyfriend, Ajay Devgan, is now going steady with Kajol and there's even some talk of them getting married in the near future. Karisma has taken the defection very badly, more so because Kajol persists in looking through her in public (Kajol's explanation: she didn't have her contact lenses on). So, it must hurt Kapoor a lot that Kajol has left her far behind after *Dilwale*. But if Karishma's recent record is anything to go by, Kajol need have no worries on her account.

Karishma Kapoor

TABU

She may have a champion in Boney Kapoor, who believes that Tabu will make it to the top one day. But Tabu's run in the film industry has been jinxed from the word go. Both *Prem* and *Vijaypath* did badly, and Tabu had to cope with the tag of a flop heroine. And to make matters worse, Tabu put on so much weight that she could easily play Aamir Khan's mother rather than his lover. But she has gone on a strict diet since then, and is trying her best to salvage what remains of her career.

Tabu

line," says her father. "It's not that if she's offered a role with Shah Rukh, she'll sign on the dotted line. She gets the best of offers, but she's got to hear the role and like it before she accepts. Nobody can discuss the role with her and thrust it down her throat. Even Tanu (her mother and Shomu's estranged wife) has no say in the matter."

According to Mukherjee, this is one reason why Kajol has been so successful in a short span of time, and has been nominated thrice for the Filmfare award. Last year, she had lost to Madhuri, but her father hopes that she will pip Dixit at the post this year.

This proud father routine is particularly touching because Tanuja and Shomu separated when Kajol and her younger sister, Tich, were very young. Since then, Tanuja and her kids have shared their home with Shobhana Samarth, while Mukherjee lives apart from his family. But Tanuja and Shomu never divorced, and Kajol and Tich spent most weekends with their father.

Today Kajol shares a close relationship with her father, despite not having lived with him. Says Mukherjee, "Kajol is more like my mother than my daughter. She looks after me more than I look after her. It's always, 'Dad, have you done this, have you done that? How is your health?' She's more bothered about that."

Despite her undoubted potential, Kajol's career began with an unqualified disaster called *Bekhudi*. Rahul Rawail's film flopped miserably at the box-office and all the pundits predicted that this would be the end of both Kajol and Kamal. They were right about Kamal, but completely wrong about Kajol. She went on to sign *Yeh Dillagi* opposite Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali. And since that movie did good business, Kajol's fortunes were revived.

But it wasn't until 1995 that Kajol hit the big time. The year began with *Karan Arjun*, in which Kajol played the romantic lead opposite Shah Rukh. The film was a big hit, and Kajol benefitted from that despite the fact that she had a minuscule role in the movie. Even Kajol was a little embarrassed by her blink-and-you-miss-me performance, and explained she had only signed the role because of her personal relationship with Rakesh Roshan. But whatever the truth of that, *Karan Arjun* did increase Kajol's popularity with the producers, not to mention her pay packet.

Kajol: A natural performer

And then, of course, there was *Dil wale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*. Based loosely on the *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* formula, the movie was a runaway hit, and Kajol was catapulted to the top of the heap of Hindi film heroines.

But will Kajol be able to maintain the momentum that her career has received? Nobody knows for sure. For one thing, audiences have become very fickle of late, and switch loyalties from one star to another with remarkable ease. And it is quite possible that they will forget Kajol all too soon, and decide to make Raveena or even Karishma the flavour of the month.

And then, there is the fact that Kajol herself does not appear to be very serious about her career. Says Indra Kumar, who is directing her in *Ishq*, "I wish she would concentrate more on her work. I don't think even she is aware of the amount of potential that she has. She is among the most promising of the newcomers. A little more seriousness and she'd be right on the top. She's great even now, but with a little hard work, she'd be mind-blowing."

Aditya Chopra agrees with this analysis. "Her potential has not been tapped until now," he says. "She's capable of doing far more than she has done right now." Adds Naresh Malhotra, "Earlier when she started working, she had this attitude, 'Chalo kar leti hun', but she has grown more serious. Even now she is not so conscious as the other artistes, but the thing with her is that even if she does not work hard, she is very good."

It is this natural ability that is Kajol's greatest strength. Says Taran Adarsh of Trade Guide: "Madhuri Dixit better watch out. What works with audiences is your chemistry with them, and Kajol has that. When I watch her, I can identify with what she is doing. My sister or my girlfriend would behave in the same way. She's a natural performer. Not many people can do what she can."

Agrees Vikas Mohan, editor of *Complete Cinema*, "Her appeal lies in her freshness and youth. She's a potential number one."

It's always dangerous to make predictions like these. After all, a couple of flops could change the picture completely, with Kajol being seen as an also-ran. And if her affair with Ajay Devgan ends in marriage, she may well decide to bid the movies good bye. But until that happens — if it does at all — Kajol will continue to bask in the limelight trained on a front ranking heroine. And we can't think of anyone who deserves that more. ■

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

They are a passion with Narendra Kumar, the publisher of Har-Anand books, who has a special affinity with first-time authors, writes ***Tanuka Chakraverty***

These days you have only to mention Narendra Kumar's name in polite company, for people to respond "Kusum Sawhney, right?" Yes, such was the hype surrounding the release and marketing of *Kindred Spirits* Sawhney's first novel, that the name of Narendra Kumar, the man behind the Har-Anand Publishers, has come to be inextricably linked with Kusum's.

But there is more to Narendra Kumar than that: he is described as the father of Indian publishing, and with some justification. Kumar is the man behind Vikas, the man who published that bestseller of all times, *Freedom at Midnight*, by Dominique Lappiere and Larry Collins, and who is now running the Har-Anand imprint, which has published more women authors than even that bastion of feminist writing, Kali.

Kumar is very clear about his aims. Unlike most other publishing houses, he is all too keen to give first-time authors a chance, and if they are women, then that's even better. Says Narendra Kumar, "A good publisher doesn't have to read a manuscript to know that it is a good book. He should be able to smell a good manuscript, and then read it merely to confirm his first impression. And that's exactly what Kumar does, settling down with all the manuscripts he is given after dinner and reading late into the night. And the authors that he has selected through this process include the poetess Renee Ranchan, short story writers and Gajra Kottary and Ritu Bhatia, fiction writer Anju Mohan and Sarala Gopalan, secretary in the department of women and child development in the ministry of human resource development.

According to Kumar, Har-Anand is committed to publishing works by Third World writers which will then be distributed worldwide. While this is yet to come about Har-Anand has shown a rare commitment to nurturing new talent in the field of writing. Kumar, who is himself a prolific writer and a political biographer, says that he does not find publishing rank newcomers a risky proposition.

Says Kumar, "On the contrary, I find newcomers a challenge, particularly in the context of a developing country. I enjoy working with new writers for the sheer intensity that is an invariable characteristic of their maiden venture. And then, of course, there is the fact that they always have something new and novel to say."

Kusum Sawhney

Kumar first hit the headlines in recent times because of the hoopla that surrounded the launch of Kusum Sawhney. Photographs of the beautiful Ms Sawhney were splashed all over the newspapers and magazines and *Kindred Spirits* was launched at the Delhi Book Fair. Giant-sized posters of the author were in evidence, as was the lady herself, signing copies of her first novel for all those who bought a copy.

The media panned the book, of cour-

Gopi Gajwani's cartoon of Narendra Kumar

se Reviewers said that Sawhney didn't have a clue as to how to plot a novel, and that the success of the book was only because of the hype surrounding it. But as book sales mounted, Kumar had the last laugh. After all, what were all the bad reviews worth, if the readers were lapping up the work of this latter-day Shobha De.

Not that Sawhney was comfortable with such descriptions of her writing style. According to her, she was dealing with issues connected with Indian women, and was a feminist writer of consequence. Any comparison with De was just a lot of hogwash from the media, which were only too keen to hang a label on her While Kusum's pretty face bagged all the publicity, Har-Anand was also publishing such serious books as *Women and Employment in India* by Sarala Gopalan, who was a secretary in the government of India. This book dealt with the problems women faced in finding work, how their employment was restricted to certain areas; the difficulties inherent in climbing up the organisational ladder with the glass ceiling being what it was; and the vulnerability of women to the changing scenarios in the trade and industry sector

But while Kumar encourages all kinds of talent, he appears to be partial towards women journalists who are keen to make a breakthrough in the field of serious writing. Renee Ranchan, for instance, who has published a collection of poems, titled *Pain Propels*. Ranchan's poetry dwells on memories that refuse to go away It concentrates on the challenges inherent in growing up as a woman in a man's world *Pain Propels* conveys a sense of maturity and degree of sensitivity not often found in the work of new authors.

Another author whose achievements Kumar is very proud of is Gajra Kottary. The wife of journalist Sailesh Kottary, and a proud mother of two, Gajra has just come out with a collection of short stories titled *Fragile Victories*. She had given up on her journalistic career once the kids arrived, just doing the occasional freelance piece. But once the children were slightly older, Kottary found herself with some time on her hands, and decided to try her hand at short story writing.

The result was *Fragile Victories*, which is a collection of stories that revolve around the interests, needs and fears of women But Gajra is at pains to point out that she is not a feminist, except in the sense that she is proud to be a woman.

Kottary confesses to being fascinated by women and the dynamics of their complex and multi-faceted relationships, and hopes that she has helped provide a comprehensive portrayal of their world in her stories

Like all other first-time authors, Anju Mohan, too, admits that she is indebted to Har-Anand Publishers for giving her a chance to explore her creativity While Mohan was working for Delhi *Mid-Day* some time back as a feature writer, one of her stories was picked up by Narendra Kumar, and now forms the nucleus of *Shangri la*, a novel that is due to be published soon.

The novel is set against the picturesque backdrop of Sikkim and is essentially a spy thriller that revolves around the disappearance of two American tourists. But there is more to the novel than just mystery and suspense, it also deals with the identity crisis that most Nepalese and Sikkimese people suffer from these days

Sathya Saran

Says Mohan, "I write for entertainment only and not for any didactic purpose." She is inordinately proud of being India's first female spy writer and is profusely grateful to Narendra Kumar for investing so much confidence in her abilities.

Another high-profile journalist who has been published by Har-Anand is Sathya Saran, the editor of *Femina*. Her collection of short stories titled *Night Train and Other Stories* deal with the para-normal. At a recent reading organised in Bombay, Saran read out a story about encountering a ghostly figure (from Transylvania) on the night train to Edinburgh, sending shivers up the collective spine of her audience. Kumar's imprint publishes nearly 1,000 titles by women authors every year. He explains his fondness for female writers thus: "Women constitute roughly 50 per cent of the population of the country. And they are the best people to write about the various

Renee Ranchan

Gajra Kottary

are something that the publisher is bound to provide. He has an obligation to ensure that his author's work is widely read and appreciated." Pramod Kapoor of Roli Books has much the same attitude. "Every publishing house takes on newcomers," he says, "so we all take risks." And anyway, says Kapoor, "What matters is the quality of the manuscript, not whether the author is a first timer or not."

Hence, Kapoor does not consider Har-Anand to be any competitor for him. He professes great respect for Penguin India, which he says is a more professional outfit.

But despite this tendency among people in the book trade to dismiss Kumar as a has-been, there is no denying that he is doing his bit to keep Indian publishing alive. But then, by now publishing is in Kumar's blood. He entered the profession soon after completing his post-graduation, and was closely involved with the National Book Trust.

He was, in fact, in the running for the coveted post of director in the National Book Trust, but was pipped at the post by Arvind Kumar. Narendra is not particularly happy about that, but it is difficult to draw him on the subject.

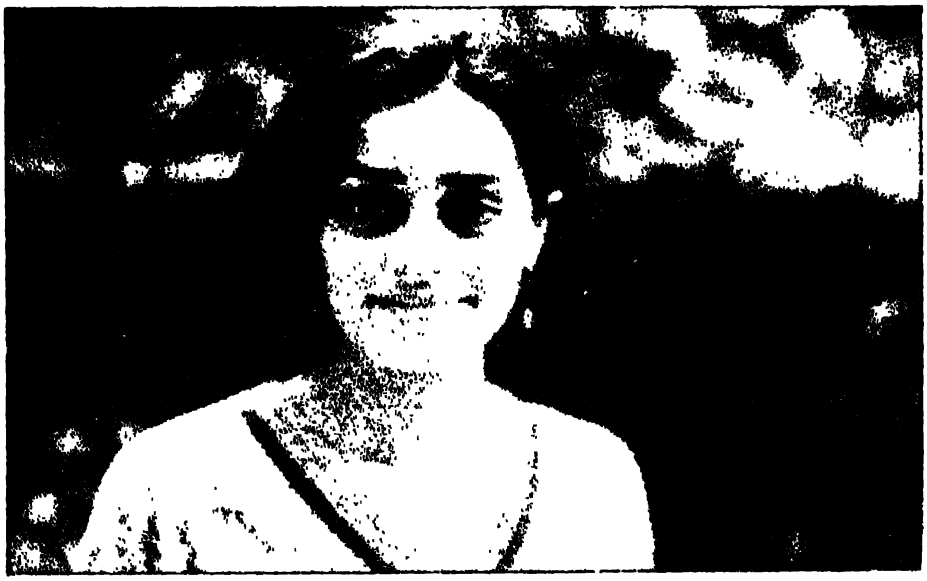
But publishing is not all there is to Kumar. Few people know that he is also the oldest paper setter in Delhi University, and that he is quite a prolific author himself, having written on such varied subjects as agriculture and Zimbabwe.

These days, though, Kumar confesses that he leaves the day-to-day running of his publishing empire to his son, while he himself concentrates on finding new authors whom his company

issues that confront us today, because they give us a fresh perspective on the problems of modern life."

In his preference for women writers, Kumar is rivalled only by Kali. But at Kali, they prefer to deal with more serious writing that revolves around such issues as communalism, feminism etc. And here, they are all praise for Kumar, for giving women a podium from where they can hold forth on issues close to their heart.

Other publishing houses are not quite so generous with their praise. Ravi Dayal, who runs an eponymously-named imprint, for instance, finds nothing great about Kumar's promotion of first-time authors. Says Dayal, "All publishing houses invariably promote new authors. Marketing and publicity, too,



Ritu Bhatia

Narendra Kumar

can promote. Not that he has a great deal of difficulty doing that. Having acquired a reputation for encouraging new writers, Kumar is constantly deluged with manuscripts by people who want to make a breakthrough into fiction-writing.

And to Kumar's credit, he religiously goes through each and every manuscript, noting down how they could be improved. Once he selects a manuscript for publication, Kumar spends a lot of time with the author, telling him or her what changes could or should be made in the book. Once the book has been launched, Kumar's publicity machine goes into overdrive. He sits with his author at the India International Centre as members of the media troop in one by one to interview him or her at Kumar's invitation. If your book is published by Har-Anand and fails to make an impact, it won't be because of any lack of effort on the part of the publisher himself.

Kumar is convinced that despite the popularity of movies and TV, and the onset of the satellite revolution, books will continue to be bought and read and that the publishing industry will continue to flourish in India. And with it, the fortunes of Har-Anand Publishers will continue to improve.

The next few years will tell us whether Kumar's powers of prophecy are as good as his eye for a good manuscript. Either way, he will continue to entertain us with books, whether they are ghost stories, spy thrillers, or those tried and tested sex and shopping novels. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

You will be going great guns, says Ganesha. Do anticipate collaborations, ties, meets, conferences and rendezvous. You could well be a tremendous crowd puller if you are a public figure. Yes, the right time to be known, to communicate, to extend to people around the world.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Many Taureans will be busy with financial matters, loans, funds, joint-account, insurance, premiums investment, buying/selling/shopping. An office or house move is possible that is if one has not happened recently. Even if it has, you may move again. Be optimistic but not much.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

This is the dawn of partnerships, contacts, associations, influences and ties in general. At the same time your work and your independence will also be more important to you. A journey is on the cards. Alternatively, do expect visitors. Fateful decisions will be taken.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

News from distant places will keep you busy and on your toes. New and exciting career avenues do open out to you. It is absolutely certain that great responsibilities will be placed upon you. You could be involved with the education of a child. Remember to share your needs frankly.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Once again, children, education, creative pursuits, taking chances will fascinate you. There is every possibility of overindulging/overspending either yourself or others or very probably both. You must learn to market your considerable skills. The right time to advertise or sell an idea.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

There is the distinct possibility of planning or discussing a new office or home with your partner or parents. The beauty is that ordinary activities take on a deep meaning and acute importance. Your awareness will be honed to a fine pitch. You must do some tightrope walking to maintain balance.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

New contacts and acquaintances, and consequently, plenty of buzz and excitement in your life, both personal and professional. Socially, a busy time. Health safeguards are the key to happiness. Ganesha says: try not to overdo and do get rest. You will splurge a great deal and that will give happiness.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Thanks to hitting the target you will be in the money. Love will be very exciting but immensely complicated. Venus in your sixth sign according to Western astrology, gives you charisma or almost fatal attraction. A serious proposal is on the way. Money will help you to grow in confidence and use it for public welfare.

Sagittarius
November 23 - December 20

Important work must be finished on time and that may not be as easy as you think or hope. You will be a bubbling volcano of energy and enterprise. Try not to be overbearing or dictatorial or you will undo many good things and surely that is not what you want. The past will affect you.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Group, community and social activities as well as responsibilities and duties keep you fully engaged, specially as duty means much to you. Membership in organisations will be mutually beneficial. A little extra effort and care in personal relationships is strongly advised.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

People will no longer make empty promises but do exactly what you want them to. And that will be a most welcome change. You are very definitely in the actual process of building some thing solid and substantial. You will be connected via organisations and meets and that is great.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

Get your travel-kit ready. Alternatively expect friends, foreigners, total strangers, to visit you, even stay with you. Hard work and matching rewards are very likely for Pisceans. Please expect a goodly share of compliments and applause. Trips and ties are foretold. So get set to travel.

BIRTHDAYS

February 11: Mercury conjunction Neptune makes you very introspective, spiritual, yet expressive and dextrous. The lure of distant places will seize you.

February 12: Moon's last quarter is finely placed with Saturn, progress and position. Naturally, there will be financial increase.

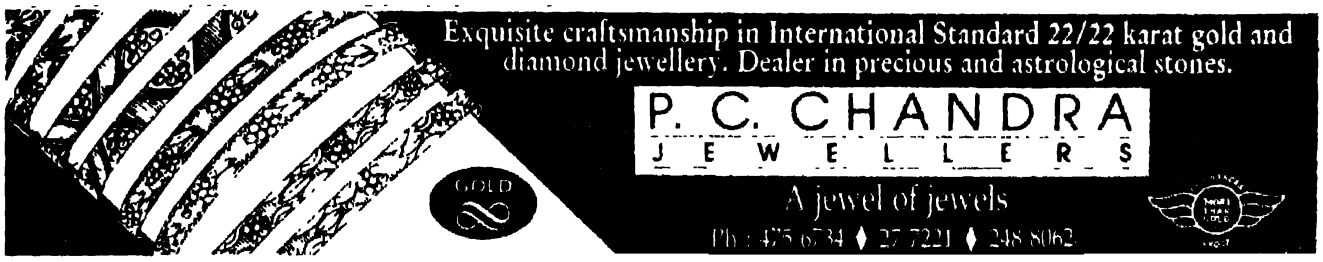
February 13: Moon-Pluto conjunction leads to fame and fortune, hobbies, romance and speculation. Do socialise to gain and to be happy.

February 14: Moon sextile sun Mars means you could go all out to grab the goodies, be it love, finance, business openings, an official engagement, collaborations and profits. Travel is on the cards.

February 15: If interested in science, research, organisation, moving and immigration, this is a good year. But expenses will soar.

February 16: Mercury conjunction Uranus is an exceptionally powerful one. For those in sales, journalism, law and religion, spread your wings.

February 17: Moon sextile Venus Pluto assures success, comforts, and a generous dash of romance and beauty. A year to show the world how good you really are.



TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	0800	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC 741	[illegible]	1
IC 743	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
MD 127	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 125	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
SG 026/027	0850	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AGARTALA					
IC 301	0830	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC 171	1250	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DG 181	1330	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DG 181	1200	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
BANGALORE					
IC-771	0500	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W 511	400	daily	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
DS 401	0700	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 541	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 705	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VI 106	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	1
BOMBAY					
IC 677	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DG 102	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	AI [illegible]	[illegible]	
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DG 104	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 809	[illegible]		IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 305	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 30	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
IC 2[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 304	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
IC 61	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 30	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	1
SG 006	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 302	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 856	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
IC 737	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 810	[illegible]	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 812	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC-257	1145	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
GOA					
SG 026/027	0850	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
DS 601	0800	[illegible]	DS [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 703	0830	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 611	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
M[illegible] 321	1230	daily	MD 322	1510	daily
IC 301	0840	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1500	[illegible]
IC 70	0830	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	1620	daily
IC [illegible]	1510	daily	[illegible]	1645	[illegible]
4S 816,813	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 3[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC [illegible]	1615	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 789	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 136	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 511	[illegible]	daily	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 25	0910	[illegible] 7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	1140	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
DS 402	[illegible]	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 511	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	
IC [illegible]	0815	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
IC 4[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 812	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 812	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
SILCHAR					
IC 2[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD 3[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
IC 21[illegible]	1140	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1140	[illegible]
VARANASI					
DS 406	1330	[illegible]	DS [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ-185	1145	4	RJ 184	[illegible]	1
AMSTERDAM					
KLM 876	0420	[illegible]	KLM 875	0630	7
BANGKOK					
KB 104	0850	[illegible]	KB 104	[illegible]	
			KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 730	0850	[illegible]	TG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 854	1100	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible]
TG 314	1355	1 [illegible] 6	IC 732	1500	[illegible]
AI 306	1915	5	AI 309	1625	5
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	[illegible]	[illegible]	RO 075	1 00	5

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
LONDON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
PARO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Pourva (New Delhi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Serai Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Puna) Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37

FOCUS

NOT THE HOLE STORY

***Samita Bhatia** on how rival brands slug it out through competitive campaigns*

If Lalitaji (remember her?) did a Surf hard-sell some time back comparing the blue detergent with other washing powders (without naming brands), more recently Mint-o launched a no 'holes' barred battle against Polo. Such competitive advertising, trying to outdo the rival brand by taking pot shots at it, has become very common nowadays.

Some have called such campaigns taking the battle into the enemy's camp. While brands slug it out quite openly in the West, the concept of taking on rivals head-on is yet to find it's feet in India. Competitive campaigning may still be in its infancy here but attempts are being made, nevertheless.

While most admen agree on the need for an aggressive ad campaign, explaining that a marketing strategy allows for competitiveness, they also concede that it works most efficiently in products with specific attributes. Says Rahul Kansal of Mudra Communications, "This kind of advertising will pick up for a product category where the decision-making is 'rational'. For certain product categories one can't but compare the features that are common to both brands. In such cases, the consumer needs to know through a comparison, the features of one against the other. Ad campaigns must then reduce the arguments to hard facts. This is only fair."

Such comparisons really help the consumer to arrive at a just decision. But undue aggressiveness can put people off. Adds Kansal, "It's unfortunately such advertising that jars rather than works. One shouldn't go overboard taking pot shots at rivals, deliberately running them down and by taking up cudgels on behalf of your own product." In such instances, the brand personality emerges as brash, aggressive, belligerent and the consumer may not fall for it.

However, the ad world should not shy away from competitive advertising, feels Kansal. "I'm not suggesting that one should use it sparingly, but use it only when it is truly required. The attack on the rival should hold, should be valid without looking too aggressive." Advertisements become pure fun when there is no moralising about the product.

Says HTA's Shankar Rajan, the man behind the Pepsi creative ads, "Competitive advertising is a long standing and well acknowledged device, not seen much in the country as there has been very little genuine rivalry between brands."

According to Rajan, competitive advertising rekindles or heightens consumer interest in the product. And if it is done well then it builds on some benefit or advantage, direct or indirect, to the consumer.

The first brand battles on the horizon were detergent wars (Surf and Nirma) that boldly focused on the consumer. A pitched battle was fought between Tata Salt and Captain Cook — powdered salt as against granular salt. Captain Cook had taken on an established brand by the horns and even while no names were mentioned the customer knew what they were referring to.

Says Kansal, "The Captain Cook advertisement is actually a spoof on advertising that picks on stereotypes like Lalitaji. If comparative advertising is 'tastefully' done and the Captain Cook salt is an apt example — then it will not smack of a me too, specially since the tone of the ad is not that of a loser. There's a certain cockiness and brazenness in the ad." Rather than simply running down the rival product, the product tries to prove itself better by comparison.

However, if it is just a gimmick to hog the limelight, then even the consumer will reject the product, feel most admen. "Never forget that the consumer is very discerning today. And can very easily sift the essence from the chaff," feels Kansal.

Competitive advertising sparked off cola wars of another kind more recently. Pepsi Foods Limited and Coca Cola India through a series of high decibel promotions fought for their brand visibility. Instead of being put off by its rejection at the Wills World Cup bid for official drink status, Pepsi capitalised on its 'unofficial' status and touted it in a style that was almost like a celebration.

First appeared the red, very graphic commercial of Coca Cola. The Real Thing, as it flashed its very official stan-

ding. Moving away from the conventional style of using cricketers, the six Coke commercials positioned themselves very differently while at the same time visibly associating themselves with cricket and Wills.

Pepsi hit back saying there was nothing official about it. "The Pepsi ads are spunky — and clearly are the ads of the new generation. This fits in with the personality that Pepsi has created for itself," says an ad world observer.

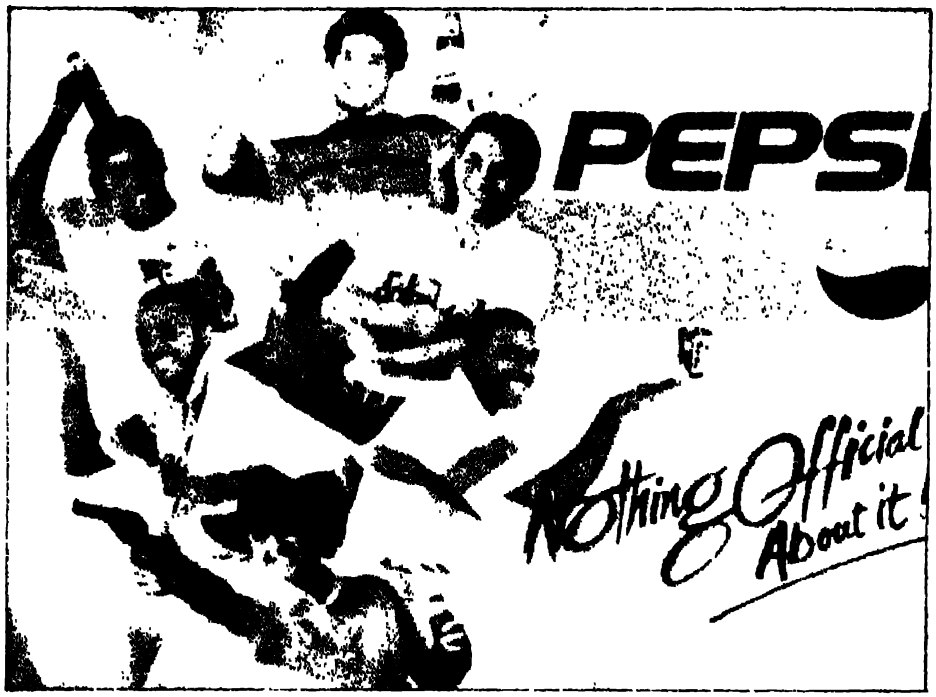
A Pepsi official explains, tongue-in-cheek, that before they launched the campaign they conducted a market survey that posed a series of questions to the core group of Pepsi drinkers in the age group of 15 to 25 years. The survey threw up some interesting facts, including the six most disliked words by this target group.

"Besides discipline, corruption and others — 'official' was the most hated word," he laughs.

And there are to be many 'officials' during the World Cup. Visa, the official credit card, Centre Fresh, the official chewing gum, Fuji, the official film roll, Wimpy's the official fast food, and of course Coke, the official soft drink.

Never one to give up, Pepsi took on its rival by unleashing a series of ads featuring role models for the young Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammed Azharuddin, Vinod Kamble, Ian Bishop and Courtney Walsh and also umpire Dickey Bird. "These are the people the youth identify with: they stand out as examples of determination, having a winning attitude. Pepsi is delighted with its long-standing relationship with the heroes of the game who share two passions with the Indian youth — Cricket and Pepsi," adds a Pepsi official.

Each of the seven Pepsi ads take pot shots at Coke's official status. Pepsi — nothing official about it, runs the line. While the Coke ads have been described as logo-centric and "nothing to them than a running caricature", the Pepsi campaign has scored high on ratings, say ad pundits.



Living up to their punchline — 'Be young, have fun, drink Pepsi' the Pepsi ads are more catchy and easily remembered. Pepsi has always emphasised on 'choice' — 'The choice of a new generation' and quite clearly 'It's the right choice, baby.' Consumers have even vouched that if one was to personify Pepsi and Coke, the former would emerge as much younger, somebody more adventurous, somebody possibly, even more Indian.

Pepsi may have lost to Coke in the World Cup fray, but they feel they have not lost much. "After all what does the official status give a brand? In stadia ads, the right to serve soft drinks to the players and the public? We really haven't lost out."

Pepsi's ad budget is just about 20 per cent of Coke for the World Cup. But a Pepsi spokesman asserts, that large figures do not necessarily imply a successful marketing stance. And its 'nothing official' campaign proves his point.

Recently, a candy made a comeback piggyback riding on the successful ad strategy of a rival. Mint-o emerged in its new incarnation, minus the hole, plus an ad strategy that exploited the 'hole' in the competitor's campaign.

It was quite apparent that Polo had caught the fancy of the consumer. Their success was two pronged - Polo single handedly created the mint market and, importantly, they had achieved this quite effectively without any obvious reference to the primary

of fundamental 'benefit' of mint

Says Pradeep Kant, vice-president Ambience Advertising, "It is a mouth freshner but the Polo ads do not single mindedly communicate this. Had they made any serious references to the mouth freshening attributes of Polo then the brand would have run the risk of being associated with products like toothpastes or mouth washes which are considered very serious products."

Polo achieved another major success. The ads, though hard-selling a candy were not juvenile. The product is such that even adults will not hesitate to reach out for a Polo. "Polo managed to break that barrier — that a candy was not just for children while at the same time it was not purely adult. The advertising lent itself to a very large audience," says an observer.

Since a mint by its very nature can not be viewed in a serious light, the Polo campaign hung its hat on the hole. Says Kant, "The hole was exploited in a manner, style and tone which was simply stupendous."

So the Polo USP became the hole and the punchline went 'The mint with the hole'.

Kant emphasises that besides arch rival Polo, Bakeman's had no benchmarks — an advantage that Polo enjoyed in terms of the opportunity of picking and choosing from a host of international Polo campaigns.

Mint-o had already existed in the Eighties, its earlier form with a hole, and Bakeman's, concentrating on the biscuit market, decided not to expand the mint market. It's after mint became a popular product that Bakeman's got serious about Mint-O. And thus the first job was cast for it — the composition and the flavour. "We had a benchmark, Polo, and it was the Polo-user who we were targeting. Customers wanted something stronger and sweeter — and that's the aspect we wanted to exploit."

With Bakeman's deciding on its mission to make itself entirely different from Polo, "The most obvious thing to do was to plug the hole, keeping the fact in mind that the entire Polo story hangs on the hole," says Kant. "Basically, as one hoarding goes, all holes barred. We couldn't have done anything else."

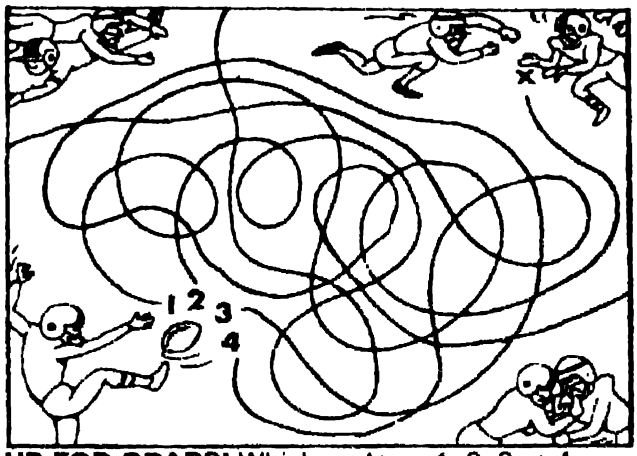
Bakeman's was quite clear that in whatever form they launched the product it was going to expand the market. The option was either to take an independent route or a Polo-centric one. Polo opted for the path of least resistance.

So Mint-o asked, 'You don't have a hole in your head, so why have one in your mint?' Attacking the hole around which Polo's success lay Mint-o told, 'The whole story. Not the Hole Story.' 'The whole mint. Not the hole mint' and definitely 'Wholesome not holesome'.

The ad pundits believe that the Mint-o campaign was amongst the finest examples of how you can create knocking advertising. "It is not knocking for the sake of it, and that's where the difference lies. The fundamental platform is product-centric and this single-mindedness is gifted to us by Nestle Polo," explains Kant.

We have had cola wars, mint wars, salt and detergent wars where one product has tried to oust the other from the market through 'fun' campaigns that have played around words or simply compared one product with the other. The strategies may have worked or may not have worked, but they have definitely caught attention and popularised the brand. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL



UP FOR GRABS! Which route — 1, 2, 3 or 4 — does the football take to reach receiver at point X? It's for you to decide.

POST HASTE!
Quickly, name the M state designated by each of the following postal abbreviations. MA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT.

(Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana respectively)

SIX PACK!

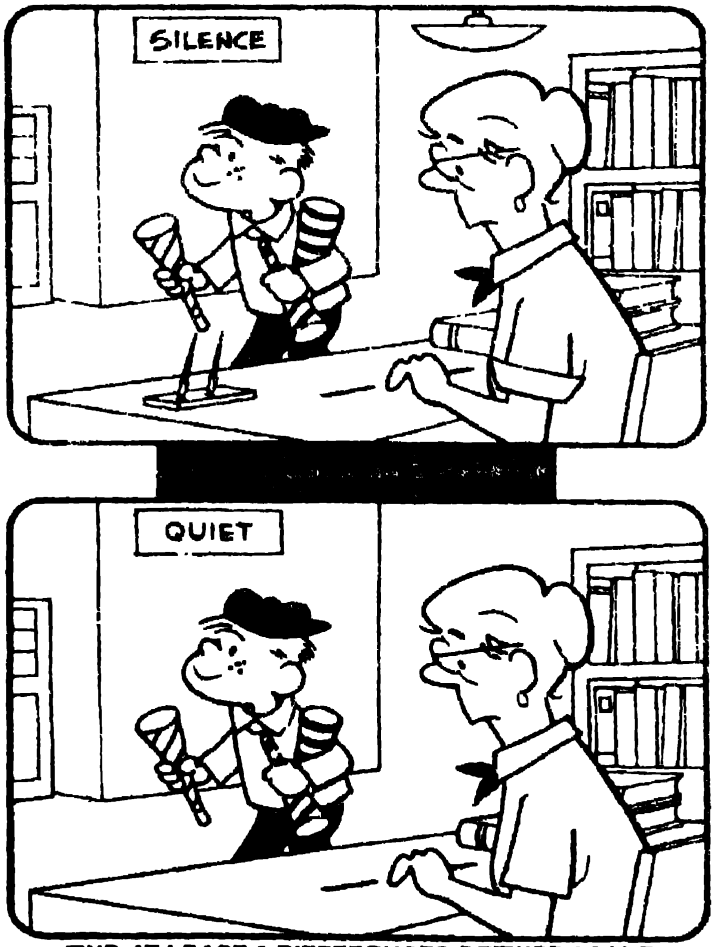
You will note that with the exception of numbers in a single diagonal row, all three-number rows in the diagram shown total six. However, it is possible to shift just one row of numbers and have all horizontal and vertical rows, and both diagonals, total six. Let's see how quickly you can make this adjustment.

Time limit. Two minutes

1	2	3
3	1	2
2	3	1

(The new 3-line bottom row of numbers also adds up to 6. Another way: Move column at far right to left side.)

HOCUS-FOCUS



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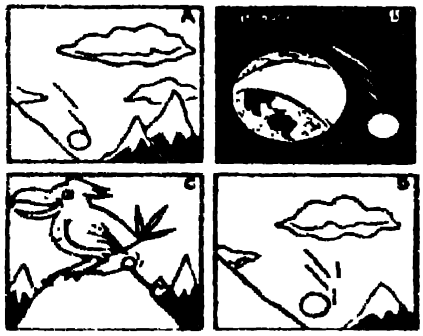
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Sign is different. 2. Horn is smaller. 3. Desk set is missing. 4 Ceiling light is missing. 5. Book is moved. 6. Cuff is missing.



MUSING OVER HIGH POINTS

HOW did earth's satellite, the moon, go into orbit? Perhaps it just snowballed down a mountain as suggested below. See if you can put these panels in a logical order.

And, speaking of mountains, each continent has its highest peak. See if you can match these continents with peaks listed below.

1. Africa _____
2. Asia _____
3. Europe _____
4. N. America _____
5. S. America _____

Peaks: Aconcagua, Elbrus, Everest, Kilimanjaro, McKinley.

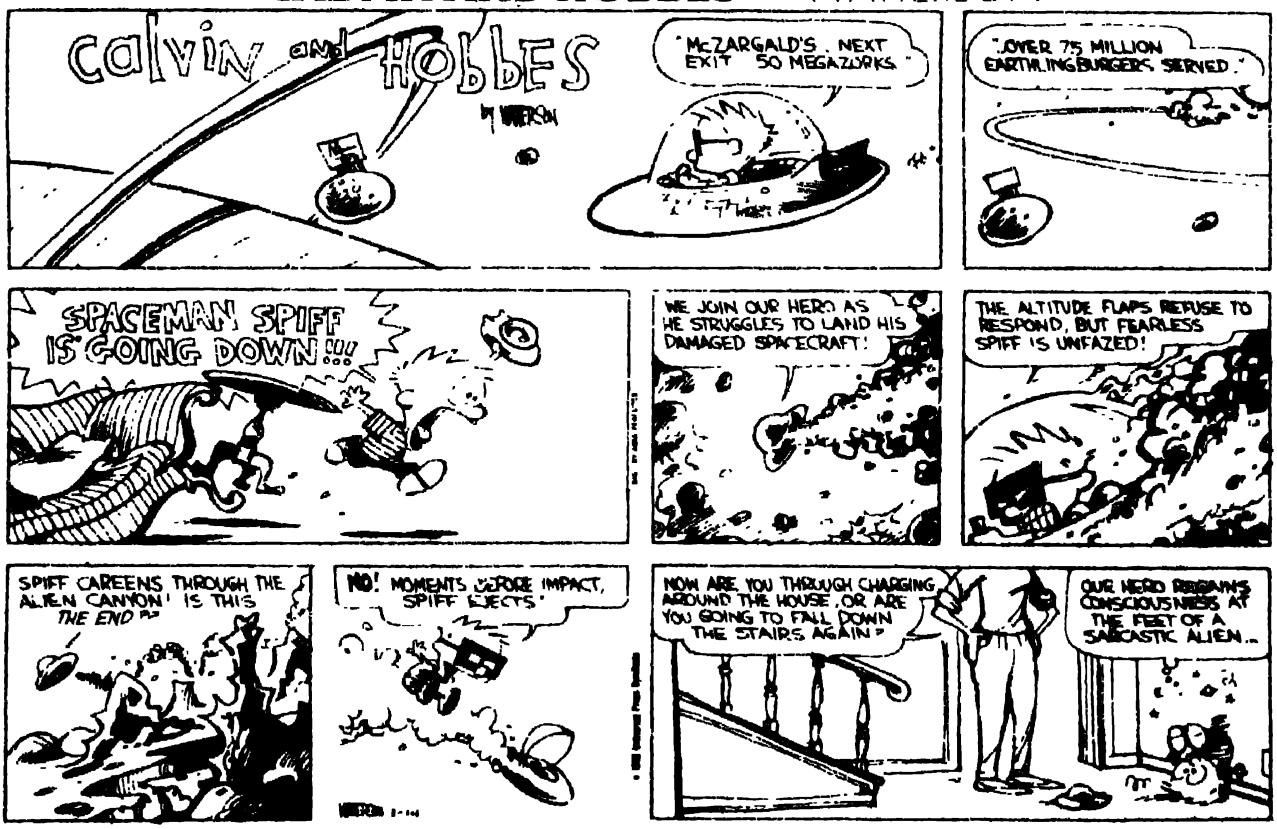
P.S.: Which peak is highest?

(Mount Elbrus, 5,633 m, Europe; Mount Everest, 8,848 m, Asia; Mount Kilimanjaro, 5,895 m, Africa; Mount McKinley, 6,194 m, N. America; Aconcagua, 6,959 m, S. America respectively)

COMICS

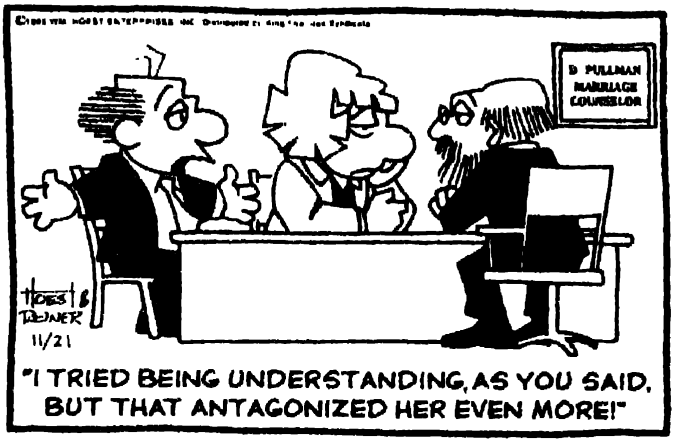
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES WATTERSON



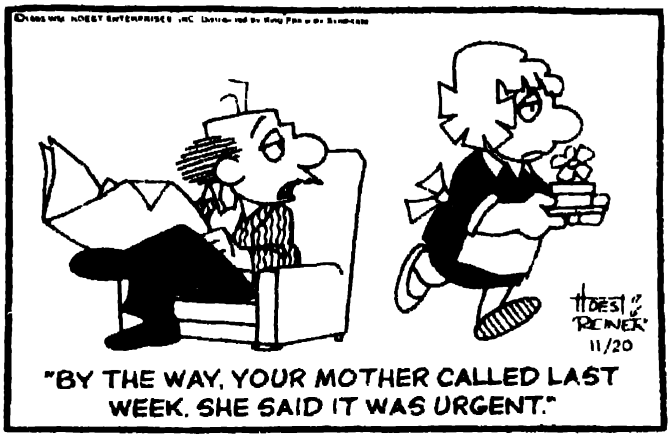
THE LOCKHORNS

"WE HAVE A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR . . LORETTA'S MOTHER IS GOING HOME TOMORROW."



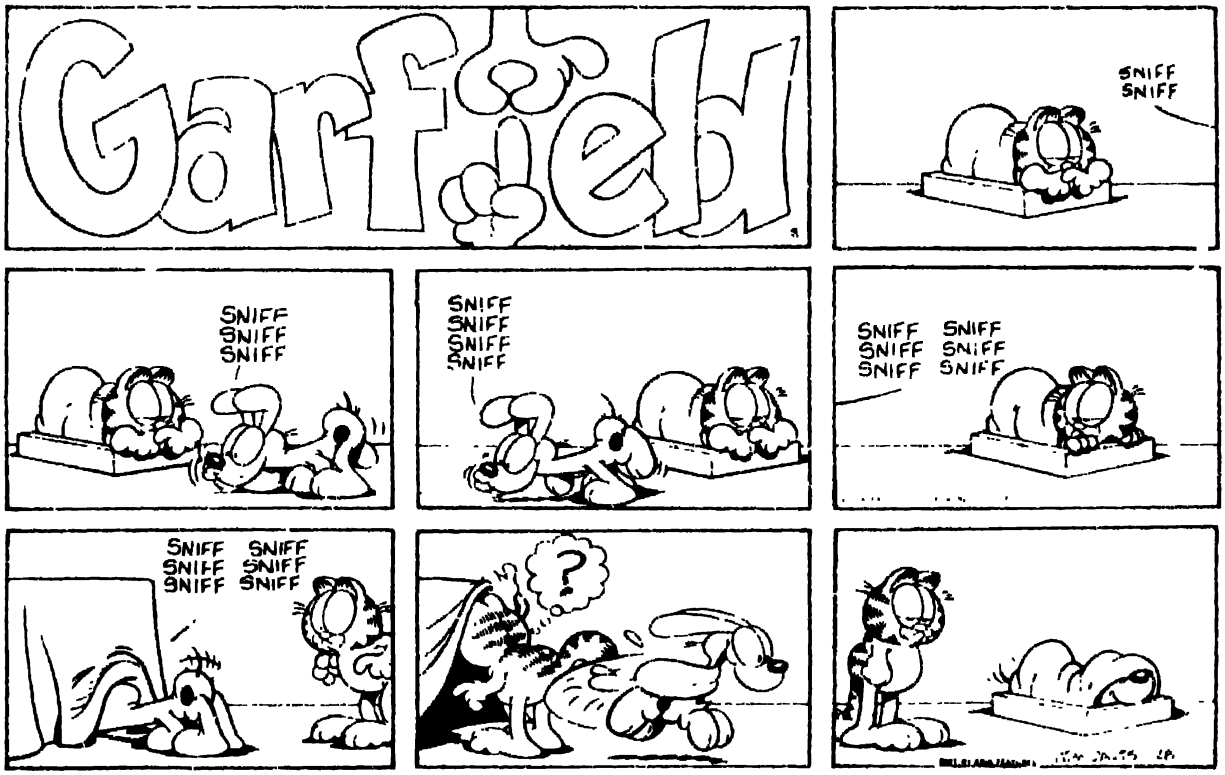
"I TRIED BEING UNDERSTANDING, AS YOU SAID, BUT THAT ANTAGONIZED HER EVEN MORE!"

"FOR PETE'S SAKE, LORETTA . . . YOU DIDN'T INVITE THE NORMANS!"

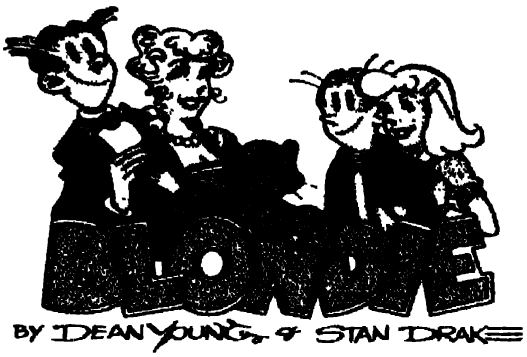


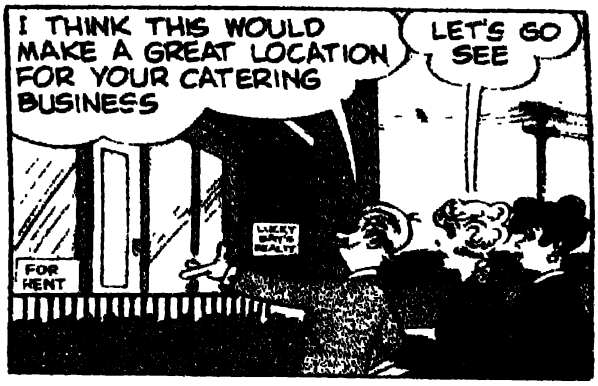
"BY THE WAY, YOUR MOTHER CALLED LAST WEEK. SHE SAID IT WAS URGENT."

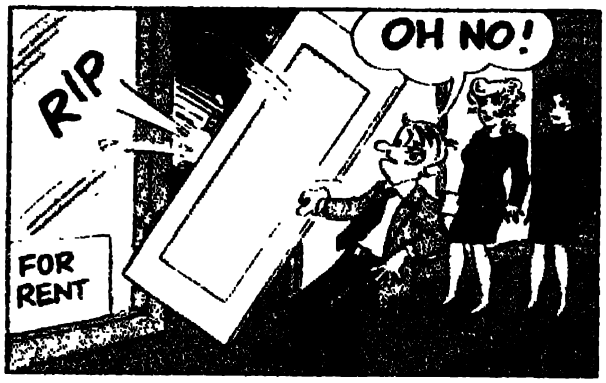
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

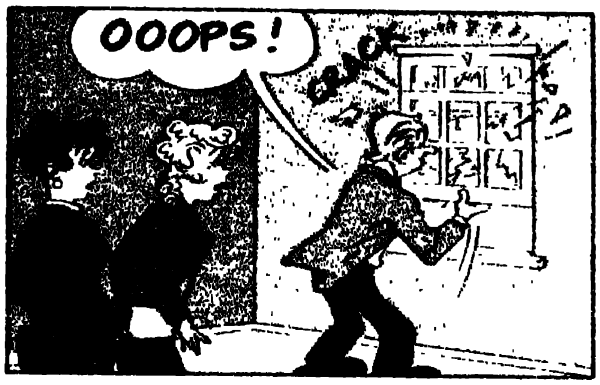


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP


BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE


I THINK THIS WOULD MAKE A GREAT LOCATION FOR YOUR CATERING BUSINESS
LET'S GO SEE
FOR RENT

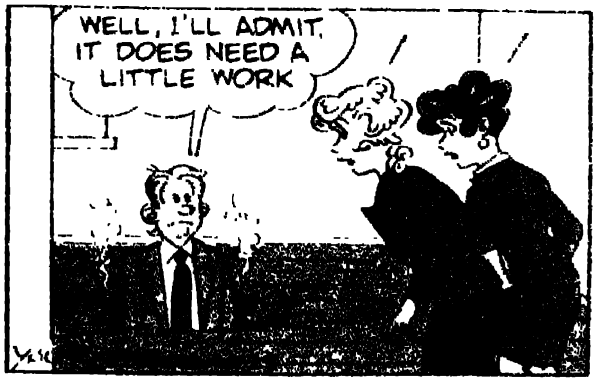

RIP
OH NO!
FOR RENT


OOOPS!
CRACK

SPLOOSH
UH-OH

OMIGOSH
KA-BLAM

YIKES!
SASH


WELL, I'LL ADMIT, IT DOES NEED A LITTLE WORK

ALL THAT SHINES...

Is not gold, says ***Samita Bhatia,*** *reporting on the costume jewellery business in India*

It has been said that accessories are fashion's best kept secret. Bold flashes of colour on dull gold polished earrings may just accentuate your style. Artfully crafted artificial jewellery in colours that are rich, earthy or neutral may just add the right touch of warmth to a plain ensemble. Coordinates have a momentum that take you from the hip to chic, and from the afternoon to the evening.

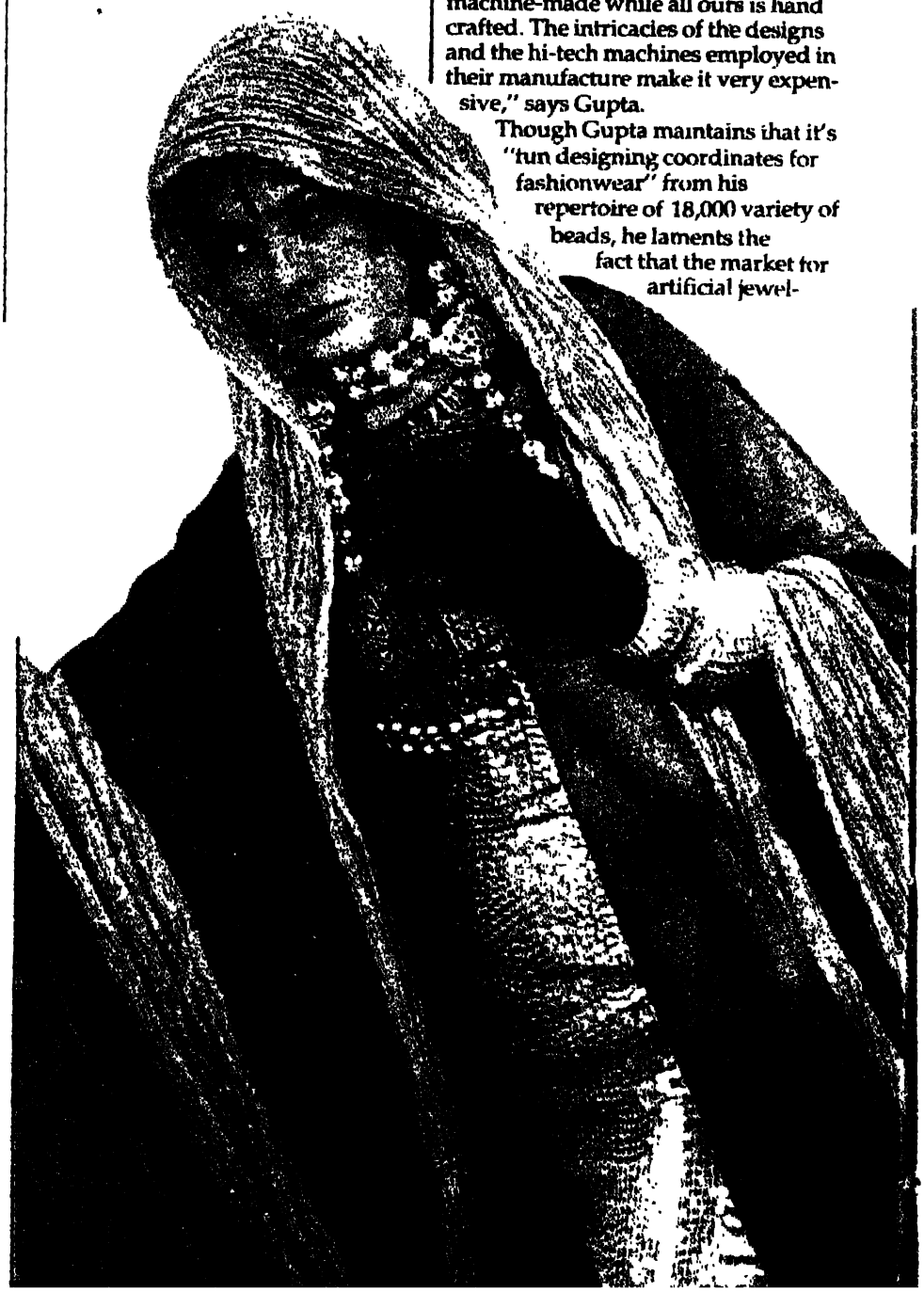
Women have even carried them off with aplomb at beauty pageants. Remember Francesca Hart, Miss India second runner up 1994, who wore huge wooden beads around her neck and on her ears during the contest? And even such media icons as the Princess of Wales, whose jewellery collection is next to none, has been photographed wearing the occasional piece.

While a multi-crore fashion business is flourishing today in India, accessories have bagged their share of this huge pie. But while the West liberally supplements its ensembles with expensive designer jewellery (*a la* the pearl and diamond chokers worn by the actresses in such soap operas as *Santa Barbara* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*) Indian women have yet to relinquish their love for the real thing.

Multiplicity of elements contribute to making costume jewellery quite different from its artificial counterpart. Most takes are created out of a mixed metal alloy, are dye-cast and manufactured in bulk with a piece finding no less than a thousand replicas. The stones (mostly semi-precious and cubic zerconia or look alike diamonds) are always pasted on and are not encrusted, though they may have been cut and processed like precious stones.

"The sole objective of costume jewellery in the West is to accentuate the look of the outfit. And it is very different from how we understand it in India," says Delhi-based accessory designer Sandeep Gupta. What is junk jewellery to Indians and can be bought off pavement shops from anywhere between Rs 15-150, can be picked up in London for no less than £100, he says. Gupta explains the price differential. "Abroad, 80 per cent of the jewellery is machine-made while all ours is hand crafted. The intricacies of the designs and the hi-tech machines employed in their manufacture make it very expensive," says Gupta.

Though Gupta maintains that it's "fun designing coordinates for fashionwear" from his repertoire of 18,000 variety of beads, he laments the fact that the market for artificial jewel-



lery is very limited in the country. The bulk of his own creations are exported to Otto Versend, 3 Suisses, Spiegel, Sears, Arla's (Hong Kong), Mayer Brothers (Australia) and John Lewis. More's the pity for the variety of Indian costume jewellery with it's multifarious influences just boggles the mind. Besides one can get international styles made with Indian materials.

Then, of course, there is the eco-friendly costume jewellery segment. This is in great demand overseas, even if it does get ignored here. Embellishments are crafted in clay and buffalo horn while a lot of the jewellery is fashioned out of natural raw materials which can be replaced, repaired and even recycled. The options are phenomenal and include rosewood, shell, mother-of-pearl, silver, white metal, buffalo bone and glass.

Calcutta, Jaipur, Bombay, Hyderabad, Gujarat, Kutch are among the regions which influence the designs that hundreds of craftsmen work out tirelessly. The raw materials are sourced from all over the country. Hence, you get a genuinely national product: silver from Kolhapur, agate from Cambay, glass from Firozabad, brass and copper from Muradabad, zinc and lead (for cast jewellery) from Bombay and glass from Madras. Additionally a lot of the material is culled from the small villages of Uttar Pradesh.

Though the players in the business claim that costume jewellery has more buyers today than the last five years, they emphasise that these accessories find favour only with the younger age-group — school and college girls and models. A swinging third-year student of the North Delhi campus, Sangeeta Chopra, loves to shop for jewellery at Delhi's Janpath, "It's inexpensive, trendy and completely safe to wear around town."

Ruchi Malhotra, the model-turned-actress who was crowned Miss Asia Pacific runner up, says, "Women need jewellery and I personally go for the popular styles in rough textures and the jungle look. Combinations in black and white are quite popular," she says.

While the ramp may lend itself to the heavily accessoried look, the concept has failed to hold the imagination or the interest of the average Indian woman. The woman who introduced India to the concept of semi-precious jewellery, Ashakamal Modi of Art Karat, says: "It's an attitudinal problem that Indians have towards artificial jewellery which many feel is not compatible with the Indian attire and will never really be considered a replacement for real jewellery. Even when precious and semi-precious stones are set in silver they don't find buyers easily though the jewellery may be really exotic."

While the West liberally supplements its ensembles with expensive designer jewellery (*a la* the pearl and diamond chokers worn by the actresses in such soap operas as *Santa Barbara* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*) Indian women have yet to relinquish their love for the real thing

Her main grouse is that most women do not have the confidence to carry off jewellery which is crafted in any metal other than gold. "Most women would be horrified at the thought of wearing silver plated jewellery with semi-precious stones for a wedding or a party. Besides they'd rather invest in 10 gm of gold than buy a piece from me priced at Rs 6,000." Therefore, the response from the ladies has been lukewarm and selling the Art Karat concept has been an uphill task for Modi. "My team and I have had to educate women about the jewellery I create. I've had to treat every new customer as a student."

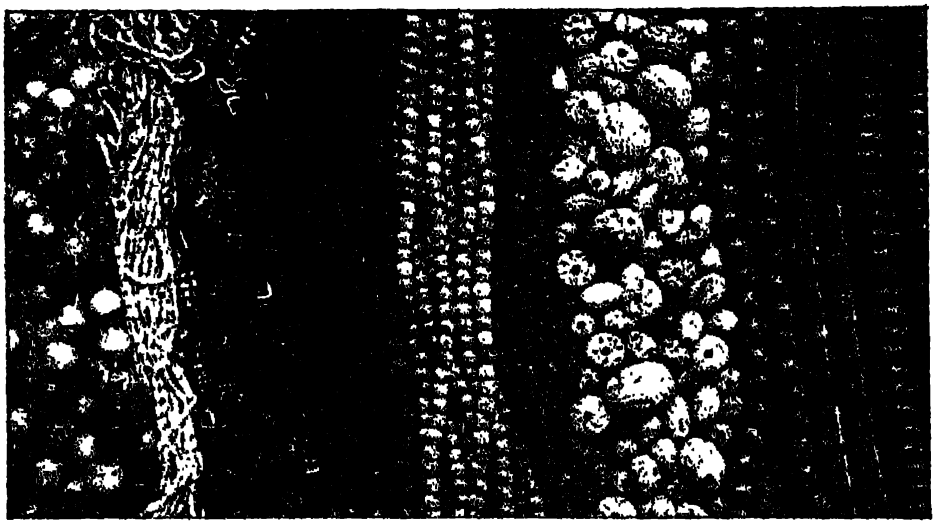
At the same time there are others like Shanaz Husain, Shabana Azmi, Dipti Naval and Sharmila Tagore who

swear by the Art Karat name. Modi explains, "These ladies who form the large part of my client base have no hang ups and feel that they don't have anything to prove to anyone Besides, Art Karat jewellery gives them a change from real jewellery."

Some designers in the fray firmly believe that if you give international quality merchandise, you will find the customers. According to Modi, costume jewellery available abroad is much better than anything in the Indian market in terms of quality. Which is perhaps why even Indian women don't flinch at buying it abroad — despite the much higher price.

Geetanjali Kashyap, a costume jewellery fan herself, maintains that the quality of the jewellery available in India is not comparable with the international products and what Indian designers put on the ramp to go with their ensembles is string jewellery which is of very poor quality "While accessories can be great fun to wear and experiment with, in India there are practically no dedicated costume jewellery designers Abroad, prices can be as steep as £1,000 where you'll just be paying for the craftsmanship and the brand name. I wear a lot of the Chanel jewellery which can cost an equivalent of Rs 10,000-15,000 — and that's not junk jewellery," she says.

Though our own creations may fail to attract the mass market, expensive items too can find buyers if the quality is of international standards Designer Louis Feraud entered the market with swanky Parisian designs and Swati Singhania, managing director, Louis Feraud, India, says, "The jewellery sales from the Louis Feraud collections are not volume sales but then the jewellery has not been mass



Though the players in the business claim that costume jewellery has more buyers today than the last five years, they emphasise that these accessories find favour only with the younger age-group — school and college girls and models

Mangal Kumar

produced."

On a Louis Feraud mannequin there are multi-coloured rhinestone encrusted in metal, wooden accessories, shiny gold and silver look-alikes. The designs are Western to coordinate with the seven collections of designer outfits that are available. While the designer sells a complete look with a great emphasis on accessories —bracelets, earrings, hat pins, broaches, scarf clips and necklaces can be bought for anywhere bewteen Rs 300-2,000. And it's not just college kids who are making a beeline for the jewellery . Says Singhania, "It has appealed to 17-year-olds as well as to working women in their 30s."

Kashyap is not too sure. She feels that even if highly priced artificial jewellery were to come into the market in the near future, the prices would keep the Indian buyer away. "The competition that future jewellery designers have from the international top-of-the-line brands is tough but they can perhaps hold their own if they can introduce a line that's interesting, breaks away from the traditional mould and is a blend of modern designs."

Currently, with most of the accessories being made primarily to meet massive export orders for foreign catalogues, the market demands very good designers. In response, the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) launched a three-year Accessory Design course to train jewellery designers. Says Jatin Bhatt, chairperson, Accessory Design, "We commenced this three-pronged course in response to the demands of the fashion industry. The idea was to introduce traditional crafts and skills into Indian costume jewellery. Besides it would give benefits of alternative application to our craftsmen."

The course which had just 12 students on its rolls at the outset now has a full strength of 30. That accessory designers are in great demand is proven by the fact that the industry demands more graduates than the Institute can meet and 65 per cent of the students find placements even before they graduate. ■

FIRST PERSON

***SHASHI THAROOR** is a diplomat, a writer and a thorough gentleman. Best known for his* The Great Indian Novel, *Tharoor now lives in New York with his wife, Tilottama, and sons. Recently in India on a short visit, he took time off to answer these questions for* The Telegraph.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

That it doesn't exist. We imperfect humans can only be imperfectly happy.

What is your greatest fear?

Of fear itself.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

My father — my mentor, guide, critic, supporter and friend. He passed away more than two years ago, and I still miss him.

What do you dislike most in others?

I try not to dislike others — they are what they are, and my dislikes won't change that.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

My chronic inability to say "no". (Including to this interview.)

What is your most precious possession?

My family.

What objects do you always carry?

Too many pens, too little paper; a visiting card holder (often without the visiting cards); assorted mints; and a Ganesh key-chain bearing keys to long-lost locks.

What makes you most depressed?

Injustice; avoidable suffering; misunderstandings; waste.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

The parts I can't conceal.

What is your favourite word?

Dictionary — because it contains my other favourite words, thousands of them.

What is your favourite journey?

Homeward, from anywhere.

What is your favourite dream?

Of my children — usually of us doing things together that we rarely find time to do when I am awake.

What is your nightmare?

Of my children not being there to do the things we never find the time to do!

Who or what is the greatest love of your life?

My wife, Minu, who is my (and our sons') most loyal friend and severest critic; whose beauty and intellect I am still in awe of 21 years after we first met — and whose laugh can shatter glass at 20 paces.

What is your source of sustenance?

Faith — in the world, in myself and in a Higher Being whose design for this planet has seen fit to include me.

On what occasions do you lie?

When answering impertinent questionnaires. (Every sentence here is untrue, specially *this* one.)

What is your greatest regret?

Not having more time with my father, not being able to enjoy him growing old.

What has been your happiest moment?

The birth of my twin sons — tinged with anxiety, because they were seven weeks premature. The anxiety passed but the happiness remains, and grows happier each passing year.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Smoke, dust, seasonal allergies and sentimental movies.

How do you relax?

By reading about cricket, and watching it when I can.

What do you envy most in others?

Their certitudes.

How would you like to be remembered?

As one who engaged with the world he found, in work as well as in writing; and who, by having lived, made a difference. (Preferably, not for the worse.)

How would you like to die?

With my family around me, at the end of a full life, and without too much remaining in the "pending" tray.

What is your favourite word?

Dictionary — because it contains my other favourite words, thousands of them

What brings tears to your eyes?

Smoke, dust, seasonal allergies and sentimental movies

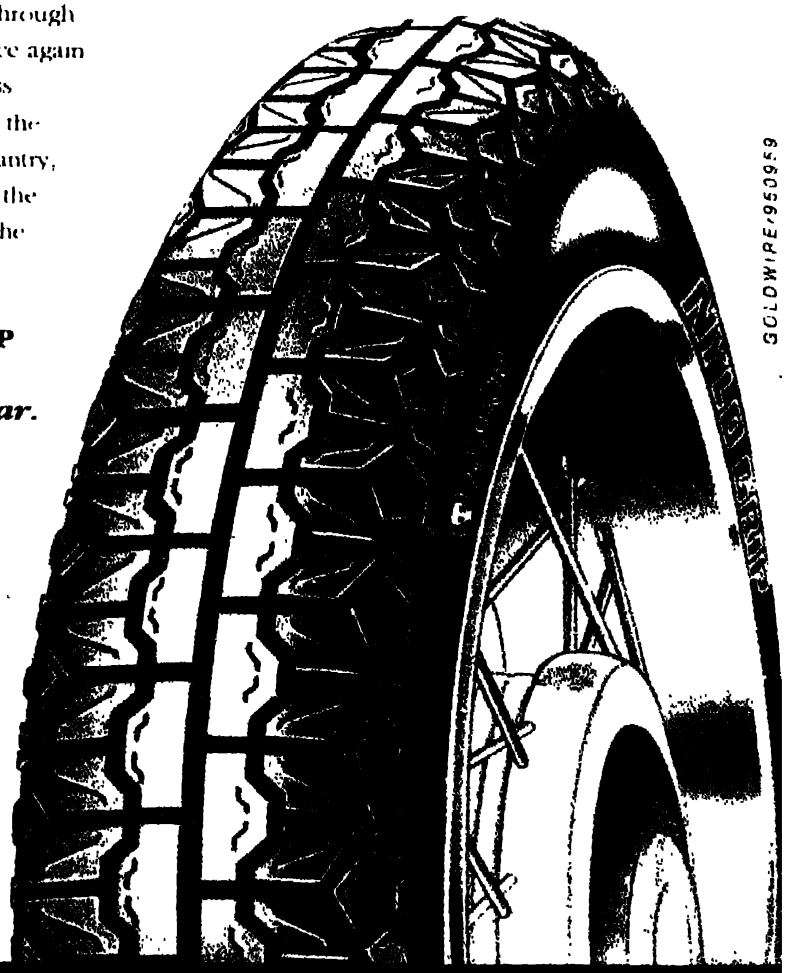
NYLOGRIP

The Tyre of the Year

MRF Nylogrip victories in the Castrol National Rally Championship for Motorcycles 1995 (CNRCM 1995)

Sl No	Rally	Name	Position
1	NASA Castrol Challenge Rally	Jagat Nanjappa	1st
2	Scissors Action Rally	Jagat Nanjappa	1st
3	Castrol MASA Rally	Shyam Kothari	1st
4	Castrol South India Rally	R H Vikram	1st
5	BPL Karnataka 1000 Rally	Jagat Nanjappa	1st
6	Castrol 13th Popular Rally	Jagat Nanjappa	1st
7	Castrol Mountain Challenge Rally	Amrinder Sandhu	1st
8	Sportscraft National Motorcycle Rally	Amrinder Sandhu	1st

MRF NYLOGRIP swept through another outstanding year, once again blazing a trail of success. In 8 Rallies spread across the toughest terrains in the country, **MRF NYLOGRIP** was the common factor among the winners. Going a long way to prove that **MRF NYLOGRIP** is undoubtedly ***The Tyre of the Year.***



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Raymond
SINCE 1925

18 FEBRUARY 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

The Home and the World

The activist or the social worker, in his mission to usher in change and improve the environment, often ends up making a mess of his own family life ('The Cause and Effect' December 24).

The family, the focal point of one's existence, is neglected, the children uncared for. The result: a broken home and marriage. The family needs as much care and attention as The Cause he crusades for.

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

Charity begins at home One should first set one's house in order before setting things right in the world. It is so important that one maintains the right balance in one's personal and professional life.

In this case, the activists pay for their selfish devotion to the cause of the world.

Susanta Sen,
Calcutta

In the case of Maneka Gandhi her strictures look too rigid for the young Varun to emulate. She should not have imposed vegetarian discipline on him at such a tender age. It is only natural the teenager will look for non-vegetarian delights outside his home.

Suchitra Bose,
Calcutta

Jagdish Yadav

Green activist Vandana Shiva: Unsuccessful in marriage, but devoted to her son

A Sportsman and a Vocalist

It is nice to learn that Veena Kichlu, wife of Pandit Ravi Kichlu, in memory of her husband is organising talent search contests for young aspirants ('Music Was His Mission' January 7).

Pandit Kichlu may have been a mighty sportsman but he was a very ordinary singer without any proper grooming or a suitable voice

Pandit Kichlu claimed to be a disciple of Ustad Fyaz Khan. Later, I learnt he was actually trained by one of the Dagar brothers, the famous *dhrupad* singers. Pandit Kichlu could never master the style of Fyaz Khan as his voice lacked the right timbre.

In fact, none from among Fyaz Khan's followers have been able to master his singing. Latafat Khan tried with all his might, but failed and finally he died

The world of classical music really needs some good vocalists and Veena Kichlu's endeavour in this field is really laudable.

Hanuman Misra,
Calcutta

No Playgrounds

It is very important that an educational institution has a playground ('Where Do We Go To Play?' January 7). Physical exercise is most essential for the mental health of a child. Staying in matchbox like houses, children need some greenery on which they can play

At least in other metros the corporation has stipulated rules that all apartment blocks should have some playgrounds for children. Why don't we have a similar rule in Calcutta?

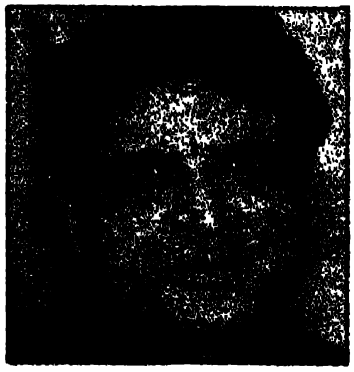
Surendra Rathi,
Calcutta

Divine Music

'Play On ' (December 17) gave a fascinating insight into the world of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan Like all creative masters, he chose the sarod to express his secular mind His sensitivity and devotion to music made his *ragas* so very divine.

Kiron Shankar Sengupta,
Jamshedpur

INSIDE



Javed Akhtar

PAGE 4

JAVED AKHTAR, script writer and lyricist, now turns to verses in middle age He was recently in Calcutta for the launch of his first audio-book of poems, *Tarkash* A profile of the poet.

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30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Jitendar Gupta

COVER STORY

MAN OF LETTERS

***Rajlakshmi Bhattacharyya** profiles Javed Akhtar, story-teller, script-writer, lyricist and now, a poet*

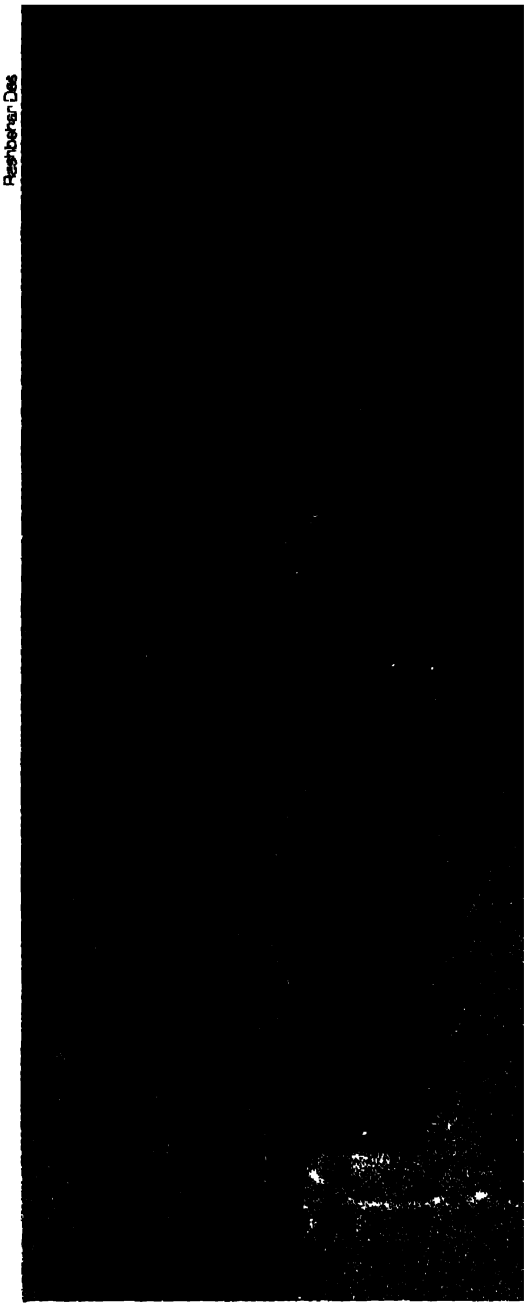
HE'S ALWAYS HAD A WAY WITH WORDS. FIRST, IT WAS AS A story-teller, then a script-writer, a lyricist, and now, a poet. Calcutta was recently treated to this last incarnation of Javed Akhtar, as the greying man of letters regaled its citizens with readings from *Tarkash*, his first book of verse.

The venue was Gyan Manch, and Akhtar was in full flow as he kept the audience enthralled with his *nazms*, ghazals and couplets. The next day, saw Javed at the Oxford Bookshop on Park Street, where the audio version of *Tarkash* was released (by Plus Music). He gave autographs, signed his book for his fans, and even recited the odd *shair* for a gathering that comprised the young, the middle-aged and the old.

But then, Akhtar's appeal as a poet transcends all such artificial barriers as age. One reason for that, of course, is the simplicity of his poetry. As his wife Shabana Azmi testifies, Javed never feels the need to show off his vast vocabulary. He is quite content to have his say in commonly understood language, without falling back on the high-falutin' Urdu of some of his contemporaries.

That's not the only unusual thing about Akhtar's poetry. By his own admission, he began writing in

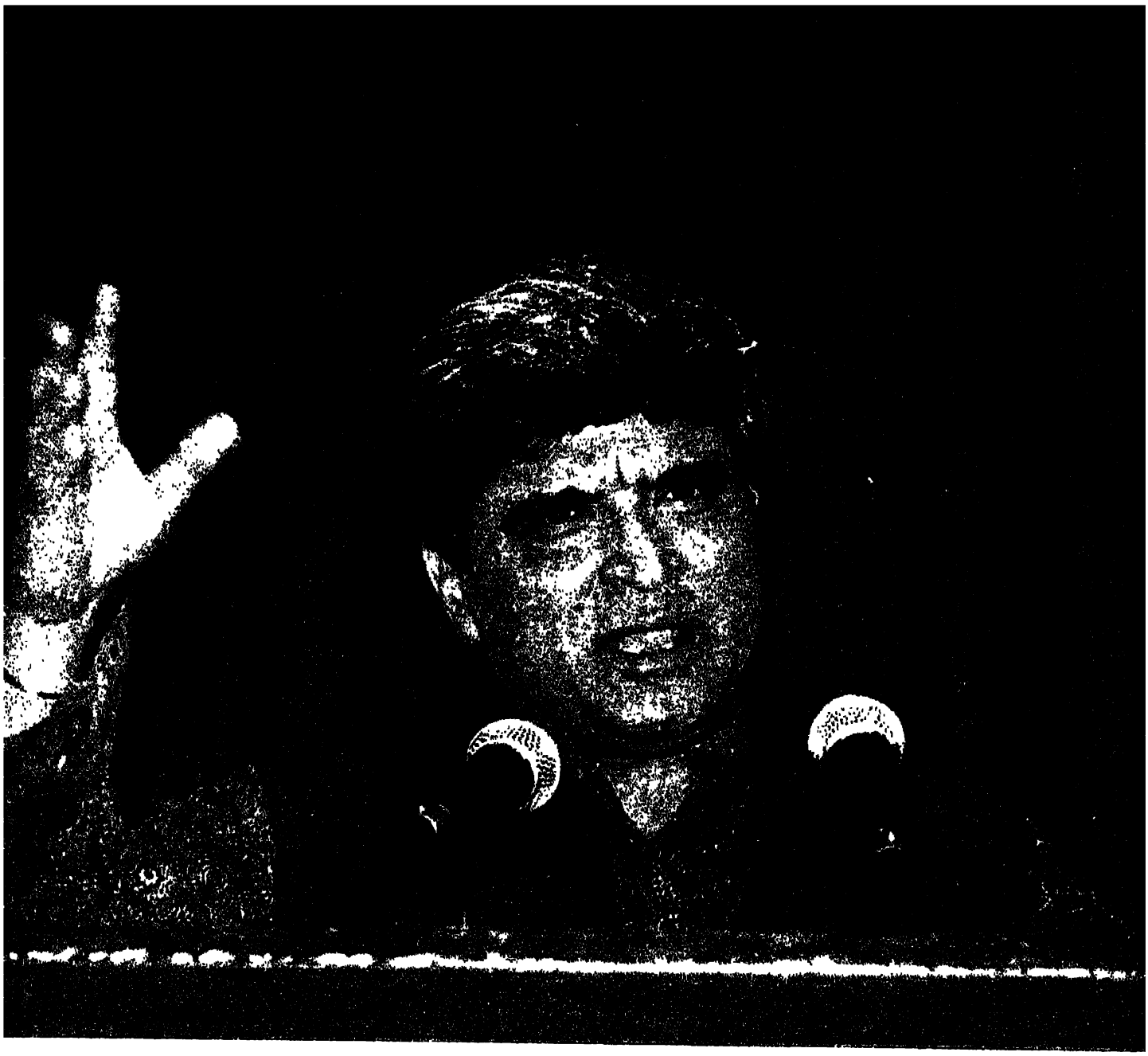
Raghubir Das



Javed Akhtar recites his poems at Gyan Manch

Signing autographs for his fans at the Oxford Bookshop

Raghubir Das



verse when most people stop. Until then, Javed had turned his back on the poetic tradition of his family his father, Jan Nissar Akhtar, was a poet of some repute (as was his maternal uncle, Majaz).

This early aversion of verse had something to do with Javed's ambiguous feelings towards his father. He was very close to his mother, Safia Akhtar, and was absolutely crushed when his father married another woman. The anger that Akhtar felt towards his father was only sublimated when Jan Nissar died in 1976. Then, confesses Javed, he regretted having rejected his father during the living years.

When Jan Nissar went off to Bombay to seek fame and fortune, Javed and Safia fell back on each other for comfort. Safia, from the very beginning, saw the seeds of genius in her son. For one thing, there was his prodigious memory. Even today, says Dr Rahi Masoom Raza, Javed (like Ali Sardar Jafri) can recite two lakh couplets, if need be.

In a letter to her husband (reproduced in *Zaire Lab*, a collection of her letters) Safia wrote, "He will be ahead of romantic progressives like you, and will never believe in flight as a formula for success. Instead, he will fight back and be more successful than you."

But Javed did not have his mother's support for very long. She died when he was still a young boy, and Javed was left all alone to cope with his grief. His loneliness only increased when his father remarried, and Akhtar left his home and family in Aligarh and went off to Bhopal to study.

These were hard days. Javed didn't have any money nor any place to stay. He would sleep on a bench in his classroom. Once he fell ill, and remained without food for two days. Finally, some classmates of his — who weren't even particularly close to him — gave him some food and looked after him. Akhtar was touched beyond measure, and even today admits that they probably saved his life.

The hard times continued even

when Akhtar came to Bombay, following in his father's footsteps. According to those who knew him at that time, he often had no place to spend the night and would end up sleeping on a bench in some studio or the other

In his attempt to break into the film industry, Javed tried his hand at anything and everything. He translated and reworked scripts; he assisted directors, and at times, he even played the gopher, running around with the heroine's slippers

Akhtar's big break came when he joined Sippy Films as a writer, and met up with Salim Khan, who was also trying to set himself up as a story-teller The two got together to form the Salim-Javed team and the rest, as they say, is cinematic history

Javed had had a solo career of sorts earlier He had written the stories of *Andaaz*, *Haathi Mere Sathi*, and *Seeta Aur Geeta* But it was only with *Zanjeer*, which he scripted in collaboration with Salim, that Akhtar hit the big time.

Zanjeer was memorable for another reason as well In this movie Salim-Javed forged the angry-young-man persona for Amitabh Bachchan, which made the lanky hero into one of the greatest superstars of the Bombay film industry

The poet with his wife Shabana Azmi: Made for each other?

Until then, nobody had been willing to sign on Amitabh as a hero. He had played the lead in *Bombay to Goa*, but the general consensus was that he was too dark, tall, thin and even ugly to play the Hindi film hero Bachchan got *Zanjeer* only on the recommendation of his then girlfriend, Jaya Bhaduri, who was one of the front-ranking heroines of that period But after *Zanjeer*, there was no looking back for Amitabh.

Salim-Javed's tight scripting and great dialogues played a very important role in Bachchan's success, specially in the movie that followed *Zanjeer: Deewar*. It was in this film, modelled loosely on the Haji Mastaan story, that the angry-young-man persona really came of age, and Bachchan was catapulted to the big league.

And then, of course, there was *Sholay*. This blockbuster of all times was a Salim-Javed movie, and made the reputations of everyone connected with it. from Amjad Khan to Ramesh Sippy.

Javed Akhtar and Salim Khan were the uncrowned kings of the film industry then. And producers queued up outside their doors, bulging briefcases in hand, to sign them up to write their next movies.

The good times didn't last though The first casualty of success was the Salim-Javed partnership itself. Nobody can really pin-point what exactly went wrong between the two, though some say that their respective egos could no longer be contained within the same script The duo split up, and decided to go their separate ways

That wasn't the only partnership that Javed was dissolving around that

SATION

Javed Akhtar on the art and craft of his poetry

Ranjan Das

Phrases like the 'room' of your childhood recur in your poems in *Tarkash*.

It is because, a room, a house, and a home was what I was deprived of at an impressionable age. This gave me the need to develop a romantic notion about it. A room guards your secrets, and it also shares your memories. That is why my room 'talks'.

Pain is a recurrent theme in your poetry.

My anger has a lot to do with the early years of my life. In our society, where conditions are less than ideal for a child, my story was no different. I have put on record what I can remember from those days. As the first born in the family, I always demanded the lion's share and even got what I wanted till my brother was born a few years later. The need for the best of everything became a conviction in me that refused to go away. It only increased my anger for the deprivation I

time. His marriage to Honey Irani, sister of child star, Daisy, had been floundering for some time. But the couple had been trying to paper over the cracks for the sake of their two children, when Shabana Azmi entered the picture.

Azmi had a string of broken relationships behind her: she had been engaged to Benjamin Gilani; she very nearly married to Shekhar Kapur; her affair with Shashi Kapoor drove his wife Jennifer to attempt suicide; and there were rumours of entanglements with the likes of Marc Zuber.

When Shabana met Javed, it was almost a meeting of minds. Both came from similar backgrounds. Their fathers, Jan Nissar Akhtar and Kaifi Azmi, were both poets and were progressive thinkers. They were both respected members of the film community, and had a love of reading and writing in common.

Javed has since described their relationship as very "talkative", as the couple shared ideas and beliefs in an attempt to get to know each other better. The friendship soon blossomed into love and ran into that most predictable of obstacles, the first wife.

As a Muslim, Javed was entitled to take as many as four wives, but Shabana wasn't going to stand for that. Even as the film glossies went to town about their affair, she issued an ultimatum to Akhtar. He had to divorce Honey and marry her, or else...

As the press vilified Shabana for breaking up the Akhtar home, her mother, Shaukat Azmi rushed to her daughter's defence. In an interview to a film magazine, Shaukat said memorably. "Shabana is already 36. She could only have found a married or a divorced man."

Javed himself must have been in something of a quandary. He was about to take a step that his father had taken so many years ago. Jan Nissar's

1942: A Love Story: Its lyrics had the best of Javed's romanticism

faced later in life.

As for the pain, it came back to me long after the sensation subsided and the memories remained

Is your poem on Mother Teresa a result of the current controversy in which she is involved?

I have asked in my poem why she condones those very people who have perpetuated poverty by snatching from the poor. But this was something I wrote 10 years earlier and has no relevance to what Tariq Ali said. Recently, I read a good quotation of a priest from Columbia where he states that if he claimed the poor should be helped, he was considered good. But were he to question why they were poor, he was said to be dangerous.

If I question the means of charity, it does not make me free from blame. I am no moralist and have all the failings that my neighbours have. In fact, in Zulm aur Saza, (Crime and Punishment), I admit that I have made compromises in life.

There is a strong sense of urban alienation in many of your poems in *Tarkash*.

Modern poets rejected man as a part of society. They started looking at an individual as an island. But the reality is somewhere in between. Yes, I am an island, but within an ocean.

Is Javed the poet always steeped in cynicism?

If I have been cynical, it is more to pierce the conscience. But if one has to provide some kind of catharsis for every play, it is not fair to the audience. For then, people will always go back purged, and will live happily ever after.

How do you maintain the delicate balance between the make-believe world of commercial cinema and your poetry?

I write for films because I thoroughly enjoy it without any contempt for commercialism. If a man makes posters and calendars and is good at the job, I see no reason to berate him as as an artist. One can be a literary poet and a bad one at that. It is a particular piece of art that will decide the art. After all, aesthetics *har cheez ki alag hoti hai*.

How would you define your style of poetry?

I am not interested in morality but in aesthetics. I am neither a preacher nor a prophet. My writing comes on as though I were a friend to my readers. What is aesthetically true is decent to me, hence has to be moral. Any process of creativity is an exercise in schizophrenia. What matters is the involvement and the commitment without which good art is impossible.

At the same time, one has to be very calculating in the usage of words. I give my all, yet I calculate. So it is always a split personality which is at work.

Ghalib has written that forgetfulness and cunningness, simplicity and intricacy can combine to produce the best in literary writing. I have always believed in his dictum.

***Sholay*: Salim-Javed's magnum opus**

re-marriage had soured relations between father and son for years on end. So, how would his second marriage affect his children?

Such reservations notwithstanding, Javed and Shabana wed, and Honey Irani was left to pick up the pieces of her life. This she did with remarkable alacrity, emerging as a story writer of rare felicity. She won an award for *Lamhe*, and in her tongue-in-cheek acceptance speech thanked Javed for giving her the opportunity to discover her talents.

Javed managed remarkably well without Salim too. After the duo broke up, he wrote the scripts for such movies as *Betaab*, *Arjun* and *Meri Jung*. His relationship with Amitabh Bachchan endured, though, and Akhtar wrote the script for his *Main Azaad Hoon*, a re-make of that Hollywood classic, *Meet John Doe*.

By then, however, script writing had begun to bore Akhtar, and he decided to try his hand at a different genre of writing, film lyrics. His first such attempt was with *Silsila* and his songs *Deekha ek khwab*, *Nila aasman so gaya* and *Yeh kahan aa gaye hum* became very popular.

Akhtar was then emboldened to write songs for such movies as *Mr India* and *Saagar* (for which he wrote the scripts as well), and *Roop Ki Rani*, *Choron Ka Raja* and *Prem*.

The performances of these films varied — while *Mr India* was a hit at the box office, *Roop Ki Rani* was one of the greatest turkeys of all time — but Javed's lyrics were widely reckoned as being uniformly good.

Tezaab's Ek do teen, in particular, became a chartbuster, if only by accident. As the story goes, the tune had been composed in advance, but Akhtar couldn't, for the life of him, find words that would fit it. He kept humming, "*Ek do teen char paanch chhe saat*" in an attempt to get the creative juices flowing, when the solution suddenly came to him in a flash.

Why not keep these words in the song itself? And thus was born *Ek do teen*, the number that made Madhuri Dixit the star that she is today.

From lyricist to poet required only a small leap of the imagination. Javed had already been writing verses of praise for his wife Shabana's *bhoori aankhen* (brown eyes), and with her encouragement decided to publish his poetic work.

The critical praise that *Tarkash* has received seems to indicate that Akhtar's birth as a poet though a long time in coming — has been a welcome event. His poems, though couched in the most simple of language, convey a great depth of meaning. And Akhtar has proved that he is a modern poet, in the tradition of T.S. Eliot rather than William Wordsworth.

But where will Akhtar go from here? He has already done it all: writing stories, scripts, lyrics and poems. There are very few worlds left for him to conquer. But knowing Javed, he will create a few, so that he can re-invent himself yet again. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says two distinct directions to the week. The first relates to marriage, alliance, business partnerships and collaborations, the last being of particular importance. A striving towards perfection, a mighty attempt to streamline managerial skills and work methods are on the cards.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

While it might not be smooth sailing all the way, the week does favour renovation, decoration, alteration, buying, selling and preparing for a major shift, move of home or office or a completion of it very recently. You will be adjusting your sights for future action and enterprise.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

The new moon leads to better family ties, dinners and parties, social progress and joy. The family could see more of you. Prepare to travel and entertain. This is also the time when friends will need your help. Health of elders may cause concern. But not to worry, things will be sorted out.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The personal element and professional expertise now merge as well as clash, making this an exciting but uneven week. Change in the home and office frontiers are envisaged. Those do turn out well, very specially in the long run. Money, loans, taxes and legacy will be important.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Money and romance make a lovely duo, despite the reality of legal cases and a bit of opposition to plans and personal inclinations. Money, loans, publicity, legacy, joint-finance, taxes and insurance are foretold. The middle of the week will be crucial. Health needs safeguarding right up to the end of March.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

You will be in a period of major transition, because expenses, work affairs, changes all clamour for your time and attention. Relationships too will be in a flux, a change which could change the tenor of your life. Secret and open deals as well as negotiations are definitely foretold.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

As Venus your main planet has regained direct motion, children, loans, funds, creative pursuits, will fire your imagination and help you to give your best shot. But healthwise, a few posers will remain right up to the end of March. Have friends, stay away from war mongers and call friends over.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

To use a cliche, a grand reaching out to people and places, says Ganesha. Your heart will be a hunter and pine for romance and understanding. Attend to calls, letters, ads and invitations. Your work load will be staggering and the home too will demand its full pound of flesh, so to say.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

New links and ties will be the prescription of fate for you. Old friends and favourites will also pitch in. Home/house/property affairs could take top priority. Renovation/decoration, reshuffling in office/shop are also quite on the cards. Business transactions and travel lead to a hectic week.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

You will be pushing ahead full steam, winning plaudits, raking in money, shedding away old attitudes and ideas and readying yourself for victory. It is absolutely certain that opportunities will await you now. It is kick off time as the Americans love to say. If a few snags come up, handle it.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

A strong focus on job, profession, finance and family are foretold. Try to be friendly but keep your self respect if it comes to the crunch. That's the key to future success. Do catch up on skills, information and update yourself as the time is ripe for it. Travel is a strong possibility and you may expect visitors.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

An abundance of energy and enthusiasm will characterise your actions, because the sun changes signs and enters into yours. New activity, ample sales, teaching, preaching, writing, trading, financing are predicted for you. The final picture will emerge around the end of March.

BIRTHDAYS

February 18: **The new moon gives you the added benefit of planning, management and an added slice of luck. Career prospects will be truly excellent.**

February 19: **Moon sextile Jupiter means you will take inspired decisions, rely on intuitions, and thus win the game of life, says Ganesha.**

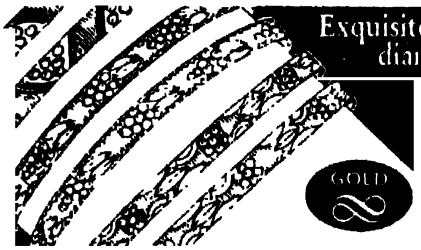
February 20: **Moon-Saturn conjunction will dampen your enthusiasm. True also, this conjunction will be over on April 7 because of Western astrology.**

February 21: **Moon trine Pluto means all round progress and achievement and it will show in property, clothes, relationships, finances, family and so on. This is a birthyear to reach the top.**

February 22: **Sun square Pluto does mean that you should be careful of the company you keep. Do not take chances at random and spread yourself.**

February 23: **Moon sun sextile will lead to professional success, marriage, monetary deals and law of averages working in your favour.**

February24: **Moon Jupiter trine could well lead to money, companionship, a touch of class in all your actions and that's important. Be practical.**



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EXTRACT

Sunaina's DAUGHTER

BY RITU BHATIA

Extracted from Guru & Other Stories by Ritu Bhatia: Published by Har-Anand Publications. Price Rs 150

Her father and his brothers owned a garment export company. Sunaina was the 18-year-old daughter of Prakash Chawla, the seniormost brother; a serious girl, who frowned slightly, and had developed a stoop because she was self-conscious about her height. They lived, an extended joint family, in a rambling five bedroom house in New Friends Colony, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunts, grandparents and great grandparents. There were lots of children who awoke early in the morning and began chasing each other around the house, shouting and screaming with joy. The atmosphere was congenial, the women chopped and cooked together, polished brassware and starched sarees. All activity ceased in the afternoon when they would disappear into their bedrooms for a nap. During the winter months they took turns on the swing bed in the verandah, that lay bathed in sunshine. Evenings were spent preparing for the return of the men and it would be long past midnight when all the noise and activity had diminished.

Sunaina spend a lot of time dreaming of being married, having decided it was the ideal state to be in. This, she'd surmised from watching her aunts, who were always whispering and giggling together, and spent hours rubbing henna and coconut oil into each other's hair. She was ecstatic when she came home from college one day and found her parents deliberating over a proposal of marriage for her. A colleague of her father's, Madan Khurana, had suggested an alliance between her and his son Sumit, who was being groomed for his father's business. In her excitement, the news she had brought home — that she stood first in the university in her BA exams — faded into insignificance. She listened to her father telling her that this really was the ideal match, their backgrounds were similar, the boy was bright, and a marriage between them would strengthen the bonds that already existed between the two families.

So Sunaina married Sumit Khurana, a rather silent, thick-set sort of man who spent most evenings at home keeping his mother company. He was an only son, and had two unmarried sisters, who lived at home. Sunaina's day now started at 6 am when she woke to give her husband and in-laws tea, which she served to them in bed. After this she started breakfast preparations: fried eggs for the sisters-in-law, porridge for the men, and french toast for her mother-in-law. Sunaina ate what was leftover. After breakfast she would get dressed up. "A new wife," said her mother-in-law, "must dress up." So Sunaina would don a heavy tinselled sari, with lots of pendulous gold jewellery on her wrists, dangling around her neck, and off her ears. She often pushed these back as she made beds and dusted, as they got in the way and weighed her down. The rest of Sunaina's day would be spent by her mother-in-law's side, pressing her legs and listening to her conversation with her daughters, Sumit's sisters. They would gossip about the neighbour's activities, the terrible dress sense of a friend, a cousin who was running around with a married man, another cousin who had failed to get pregnant after a year of marriage. In the course of the conversation a remark would inevitably be made about Sunaina's family, about how tightfisted they were. They had given only one hundred and fifty rupees to Sumit's cousins during the engagement ceremony. "Why," her mother-in-law recounted one day, "your mother did not even give my daughters a silk sari. did she want to displease us or what?"

Sunaina listened quietly, for she had been taught never to speak back to her elders. Nor could she retreat into her bedroom, for on the single

occasion she had done this, her mother-in-law had reported it to Sumit in the evening. "Our daughter-in-law does not enjoy our company it seems. She prefers to read a book instead of participating in family life." And, right there in their presence, Sumit had reprimanded Sunaina. "Why can't you sit with my mother and sisters. Is it too much to ask... is your time that precious or what?"

In the evenings, they sat down to dinner, which Sunaina had cooked. She served them all, flitting back and forth between the kitchen and dining table, bearing plates and dishes. This would be interrupted by demands. "Get us some water," her mother-in-law would say. When she returned with a jug her sister-in-law demanded some salt, and Sunaina rushed to fetch that. Just as she was about to sit down, her husband said, "Sunni, get some butter."

She served them willingly because she believed that she would soon become like her aunts, who simpered in their husband's company, their faces aglow with contentment. But Sunaina's husband didn't ask her what she did all day, how she felt and never told her that she looked pretty. The only time he noticed her was at night when she got into bed with him. He was rough and callous with her and tore into her softness with a force that made her curl up afterwards, like a wounded animal, and whimper silently. She had to smother these sounds with her pillow as her in-laws slept next door, and the dividing wall was thin.

During the day she wandered from room to room in that dark house, nursing that swollen bleeding part of her that burned and throbbed, searching for some solace, a possible solution. There was no one to share her disillusionment with, for when she tried to speak to her sisters on the phone, her mother-in-law stood beside her and said, "Don't spend too much time talking, there's work to be done." Sunaina prayed feverishly, begging the Gods to show her a way out, to enable her to bear what she now believed every married woman had to. But she could only think of the act that took place every night on their bed as an assault. She tried to avoid it by delaying her entry into the bedroom, lingering over the washing up, boiling the drinking water at night instead of the morning. But he always waited for her.

She went home for the first time two months after her marriage. Her mother began weeping when she saw Sunaina's drawn expression. "What is it my child, are they ill-treating you? Does he beat you?" Sunaina thought of those nights with her husband and began crying, great shudders running through her body. "No he doesn't beat me Ma but what he does do feels much worse." Her mother's expression changed, resignation replaced the concern. "It is your duty to satisfy him my child, he is your husband. Pray my *ram*, you will accept it better."

Four months later, Sunaina was elated to discover she was pregnant, for she believed this would precipitate a change. But she was still woken at 6 am to serve the family tea, and they still expected her to do all the housework and the cooking. Her mother-in-law stood over head and supervised. "More *haldi* girl, you are not putting enough." Although Sunaina's insides balked at the oily fumes that arose from the hotwok, she tossed in an extra pinch of the yellow powder. At mealtimes she still ran back and forth,

serving the family. And her husband still climbed on her at night.

One morning, she set off as usual for the market to buy some vegetables. She had just put some cabbage and spinach into her basket when she spotted a bus on the other side of the road. Number 16, the one that stopped right outside her parents' house. Abandoning her basket, she ran across the road.

A first cousin of Sunaina's, who exported cotton garments to Europe, came to her rescue. She gave her a small order of table linen and enough advance money to move into a room of her own with her daughter. The plaster on the walls peeled, like giant strips of fingernails. The room served as a workplace too, so as a tailor sat there during the day, strewing about tiny bits of cloth and coloured thread. The baby sat on a mat in one corner of the room playing with these and listening to the whirring sound of the sewing machine. As mother and daughter ate in this room, eventually the cockroaches and rats hidden in the roof began entering the room through tiny crevices in the walls. At night Sunaina hugged her baby daughter close to her, to protect her from hungry feet scampering barely a few inches away from their mattress. She sprinkled raj poison around their bed to keep the rodents away, and often opened her eyes to the sight of black shiny bodies slumped at the corners of the room. For the rest of the day she would have to blink away the image of those reddened, slit-like eyes that reappeared constantly.

When Sunain's daughter began going to school, she found herself far ahead of the others. Her mother had taught her to read and write very young. Sunaina would attend PTA meetings in her daughter's school, her tension relieved only when the teacher informed her: "Yes, your daughter is the best in the class, far ahead of all others, indeed she is a special child." The only time her daughter brought home a report card with a 'B' grade for spelling instead of an 'A', Sunaina glared at her: "Do you think you did your best?" And the girl said, "No mama, I'll try harder next time." Sunaina enjoyed recounting this instance, the one and only time her daughter had slipped out.

When her daughter was 10 years old, Sunaina told her about the past: how she had made this life for the two of them by battling adverse circumstances. "You must always go for what you want yourself," she often said to her daughter, "Don't ever wait for things to fall out of the sky ...they never do."

When her 13-year old daughter began developing baby fat, Sunaina immediately hired a yoga teacher for her. no daughter of hers was going to be fat and ungainly. Later, when the girl's teeth began getting uneven, her mother had a dentist fix braces. By 16, her daughter was as voluptuous as Sunaina had been lean, an affectionate bright-eyed girl with numerous friends who came and went. The phone was always ringing for her, and her mother sometimes worried that her daughter's social activities would affect her academic performance. But the girl did not let her down, she continued to be an outstanding student. Best of all, she was a loving child. Every time Sunaina sat down with a cup of tea prepared by her daughter she thanked God: everything she had undergone seemed worthwhile.

In college, Sunaina's daughter met a

boy she mentioned to her mother a couple of times: "He is such fun to be with, mama, I really enjoy his company." Sunaina listened to the girl's floundering attempts to justify her interest in this male friend of hers. "Where does he live?" she wanted to know, "What do his parents do?" When her daughter told her that the boy's mother was an actress, Sunaina seized this information to stop her daughter from developing a relationship with him. "I will not tolerate it," she told her daughter. "You can do much better than that. In any case, it's best to avoid men. Don't let them assume any sort of importance in your life, concentrate on developing yourself that's what matters."

Sunaina's daughter looked at her defiantly. "That's what you think."

"No," snapped her mother, "that's all there is to it. I don't want to hear any more about this boy."

But she supported her daughter at other times, staying up all night while the 18-year-old studied for exams. Sunaina sat watching the sliver of light that emerged from beneath her daughter's bedroom door. At hourly intervals she would take her coffee. At times, when her daughter started weeping before a paper, sobbing, "Don't make me do it, mummy — I am too tired. I can't do it," Sunaina calmed her down. "Of course, you can do it darling, you're brilliant, you're my little girl."

Soon the walls of her daughter's bedroom were covered with the certificates and prizes she had received over the years. She won the gold medal for standing first in the university in biochemistry and shortly afterwards, was awarded a fellowship to do a Ph.D at Harvard. When Sunaina saw her daughter's award letter she nearly said: "I knew you would do it darling, you always have." Promptly, she rang everyone she knew. "You know my daughter is off to Harvard, a full fellowship of course."

Two years later, her daughter made her first visit home. The first thing Sunaina noticed when she saw the girl walking towards her at the airport was the bluish skin beneath her eyes, her extreme paleness. The softness, the vulnerability of her daughter's expression was something new — Sunaina had always seen her as strong, controlled and capable. When she crushed her against her chest she felt somehow that the contours of the girl's body had changed, despite the extreme thinness of her face, her stomach seemed "looser." Sunaina thought it was probably because her daughter had not been exercising regularly. She arranged a massage for her and several times the masseuse came, only to be turned away by the girl. "It's too cold to lie around without clothes." Sunaina considered it odd because in the past her daughter had loved being massaged all through the winter. But she reminded herself that two years had elapsed since then.

She had taken a week off from work to spend time with her daughter. Early in the morning she woke up and waited outside the girl's bedroom, on the alert for sounds of waking. Sunaina hoped the two of them could have a cup of tea together. But all she heard was silence, that extended outside, to the dew silvered grass. This early the sky was dim, robbed of its light by the winter; she was reminded of the dusky suffused afternoon of her daughter's birth; she smiled as she recalled how her life had changed since then. All the plans she had made for the two of them were finally working out.

Her daughter woke around noon, and went straight out to the chair that lay in the middle of the lawn. She chatted with the gardener, a withered old man who roamed about with a cloth swathed around his head. Every now and then he would stop what he was doing to give the girl a toothless smile, and suck at his cigarette. Her daughter laughed with him, and slouched further back into her chair, gazing lazily at the purple-faced pansies that bordered the grass.

Sunaina watched the girl's lassitude from the window; it was something she did not recognise. Never before had she been as listless, and lounged around with a book spread on her lap — one of those pop psychology things Sunaina hated. She told her daughter as much, but instead of responding agreeably as she usually did, the girl's face was gripped with resentment. "I like it," she snapped at her mother, "That's why I am reading it."

Sunaina was confused by her daughter's attitude of confrontation, her sullenness. Every time she talked it was on subjects Sunaina wished to hear nothing about. Her daughter went on and on about the freedom people enjoyed in America to be individuals, the great opportunities the

country provided — people weren't stunted by society or their families. They did whatever they felt like, developed themselves fully. It was a truly free country. Sunaina could not prevent a gush of rage from bursting forth, at what she considered to be an unfair attack. "I think they're terribly selfish, the Americans, the way they treat old people and even the Black population. How can you call the country free! The incidence of crime is so high. Even innocent children are victims. It's a completely warped society."

Her daughter's chin rose. "You think it's any better here! Women are still second class citizens. They are treated like dirt by society. Indian men are disgusting with their double standards. And it's not as if Indians are less racist than the Americans — far more so in fact, with their class consciousness. Harijans are treated worse than the Blacks are in America, that's for sure."

Sunaina kept absolutely mum during this outburst, too taken aback by her daughter's hostility to say anything. She did not know what she had done to incite such anger. She went over the events of the past few days, trying to put a finger down on its cause: was it because she made her eat an egg every day? Or maybe Sunaina thought, it was because she tidied the girl's room twice a day. She vowed to stop.

She thought about all the preparations she had made for her daughter's visit home — the dry cleaning and reupholstering sofas, the planting of her daughter's favourite flowers — carnations and poppies and gladioli. She had even bought a new carpet for the girl's room. But her daughter had cast a cursory look over everything and remained silent. This was the same girl who had always taken a great deal of interest in the house, Sunaina's work, encouraging her mother in every venture. When a shipment of garments was due, the girl would organise all the meals and run the house. When Sunaina's father was recovering in hospital from a gall bladder operation, her daughter adjusted her own routine so that she could be at her grandfather's bedside, leaving Sunaina free to pursue whatever she wanted to. Yes, her daughter had always been a comfort to have around in the past.

Sunaina picked up the girl's last letter and reread the lines she had spent days trying to decipher.

"Things have turned out very differently from what I expected. But it's wonderful here nevertheless, there are so many opportunities to do the things I have always wanted to. It is possible now to do what you've always told me to, get what I want for myself."

When she had first read these lines, Sunaina had been confused, but pacified herself with the knowledge that her daughter would be with her soon to provide the answers. Now, she frowned and crumpled up the letter. The news she had anticipated had not come. Sunaina did not know any more about her daughter's life in the New World. Not a single word had the girl uttered about her new friends, her classes, her professors, her apartment. Whenever Sunaina asked her anything, all she received were monosyllabic replies, her daughter's eyes shut against the onslaught of her mother's words. Sunaina wanted to shake her daughter, demand answers she deserved them after having worked so hard for this, her daughter's success. How dare the girl deprive her of the satisfaction that was partly hers?

They had shared so much in the past, Sunaina believed: she had confided in her daughter often enough about the agony and humiliation of her married life, the problems she faced at work. And her daughter told her about the problems she had handling mathematics, the times she scored the highest marks in an exam, or won a game of tennis. Now, her daughter's uncharacteristic moodiness confused Sunaina: it was strange and unsettling, an explosive sort of sullness.

Sunaina planned a party for her daughter. She worked out all the details, even called the caterers, but when the girl heard about it, she instantly squashed her mother's plans. "I don't have anything to say to these people you're inviting." In a way Sunaina was relieved: her daughter was in no state to be shown off. The smudges under her eyes had intensified, she was disinterested in people, refusing to take phone calls or indulge in idle conversation even with her mother. No, her daughter would not be dressed, would not control the lanky hair that swam on her cheeks. She refused even to allow the tailor to take her measurements for the silk outfits Sunaina had planned for her. Instead she slouched around in old track suits most of the time. While Sunaina would have nagged the girl about something about her daughter's expression stopped her: it was her inattentive, straying gaze. Although she tried to follow the direction of her

eyes, Sunaina's own only focused on a blank spot on the wall.

On the last day of her daughter's visit, Sunaina stood looking through the window at the girl's slumped post-gire. She was filled with a sudden terror: the young woman sleeping on the chair outside was someone she did not know or recognise, a stranger. What had happened, why had her daughter changed into this silent, withdrawn person? Flickering sunshine fell on her daughter, a hand stretched across the lower half of her body. Sunaina gazed at the girl's full mouth which was slightly parted, the pinched look it had assumed over the past few days was temporarily absent. Spidery eyelashes streaked her pale skin. Sunaina's eyes moved down to her daughter's softly rising chest, stopping suddenly at the new fullness that extended under her armpits. The shadow of a tree's limb fell diagonally across the girl's shoulders. From somewhere Sunaina could hear the drone of a bee, at her nostrils the cinnamon scent of the carnations wafted. These faded as she saw the way her daughter's hands were folded over her abdomen, palms downwards, in a protective manner. Sunaina's eyes jerked open in recognition: she saw herself in the same position two decades ago, just before her daughter was born — the same slackness of chin, the same defused energy.

She remembered, with clarity, certain events of the past week. Her daughter's sudden aversion to mango pickle. "It's too oily and smelly. I don't like it," she remembered her own feeling of bewilderment. "But it's always been like this darling. You've always liked it this way." Her daughter had shirked all contact with her, pushing her away whenever she had tried to put her arms around the girl, a strange gesture coming from such an affectionate person.

She stared at the purple shadows under her daughter's eyes, the hand that moved instinctively to flick a fly off her nose. Sunaina noticed the girl's blunt fingernails, the great big feet encased in patched sneakers. Her daughter, so different from her. She saw the girl's stomach: it distended in Sunaina's mind, rose and gathered force until it was full blown, its implications so overwhelming and hurtful.

And then it returned, the humiliation of the past, the weight of a body on top of hers, the rasping breath. Sunaina could feel the great waves of pain rippling through her body, making her gasp. This memory deviated her temporarily from the new knowledge that made her thrust her fingernails into her palms. She was aware suddenly of the brittle fragile bones of her feet. Feet that suddenly collapsed so she was falling, falling down several flight of steps. Tumbling down, down, down until her head hit a hard surface.

She saw she had to get rid of it, this betrayal. She could not let it happen. Stricken, she looked over the flaring borders, the light that skipped and danced across petals and disappeared into the shadows beyond. She saw the gardener's broom on the far side of the garden, its sharp spikes rigid in the air. Two strides and the weapon was in her hand. She stood facing her daughter, breathing hard. The sudden shade caused by the shadow of her body forced the girl's eyes open. She sat up in her chair, hands tightening over her belly. "You stuff," her mother hissed, "after everything I've done for you." Her daughter smiled, a silent secret smile. "You were the one who told me to go for what I wanted," she murmured.

It was the gardener who heard the screams and fetched the police. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: *① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY*

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	1030	[illegible]
			IC 742	1350	[illegible]
IC 743	[illegible]	daily	IC 744	[illegible]	daily
MI 327	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI 327	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI 325	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI 323	1535	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
SG 026/027	0850	[illegible]	SG 028/005	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0945	[illegible]	PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
BARODA					
IC 721	1150	[illegible]	IC 722	[illegible]	[illegible]
DZ 181	1330	[illegible]	DZ 181	[illegible]	[illegible]
DZ 183	[illegible]	[illegible]	DZ 183	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0830	daily	IC [illegible]	1130	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
DS 402	0700	4	DS 401	1030	
IC 744	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 543	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 761	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 770	1[illegible]	[illegible]
VF 106	[illegible]	[illegible]	VF 105	1730	1
BOMBAY					
IC 675	[illegible]	daily	IC 675	0830	daily
9W 202	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DZ 101	[illegible]	daily	DZ 101	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	AI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	9W 11	[illegible]	daily
AI 309	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 774	[illegible]	daily
MI 305	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI 307	[illegible]	daily	MI 306	[illegible]	daily
DELHI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	0810	[illegible]
SG 026	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
MI 304	[illegible]	daily	AI 6[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 40	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 40	[illegible]	daily
IC 80[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	SG 005	2005	[illegible]
			IC 511	1115	[illegible]
SG 006	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI 401	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI 402	[illegible]	daily	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 850	[illegible]	4	IC 855	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
4S-815	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 702	1030	[illegible]
4S 817	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S 815	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S 811	1645	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	1145	[illegible]	IC 257	[illegible]	[illegible]
PF 301/[illegible]	0615	[illegible]	PF 301/302	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
SG-026/021	0850	[illegible]	SG 2 005	2005	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
DS 601	0800	[illegible]	DS 605	0915	[illegible]
IC 703	0810	[illegible]	IC 709	1120	[illegible]
			IC 704	1270	[illegible]
9W 511	[illegible]	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	daily
MI 301	1130	daily	MI 302	[illegible]	daily

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
PF 301	0830	[illegible]	PF 302	1500	[illegible]
IC 703	0830	4 7	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 729	1310	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 811/811	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S 811/815	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI 327	1220	[illegible]	MI 327	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI 325	1220	[illegible]	MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC 777	1615	[illegible]	IC 778	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 765	1615	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VF 106	1740	1	VF 105	[illegible]	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0815	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1105	[illegible]
IC 213	1140	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
SG 026/027	0850	[illegible]	SG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
IC 252	1145	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
PF 301/303	0815	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
IC 81[illegible]	1515	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SG 026/027	1850	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
IC 42	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] 44	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
DZ 17[illegible]	1640	[illegible]	DZ [illegible]	[illegible]	
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
IC 760	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DS [illegible]	[illegible]	
IC 81[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
IC 78[illegible]	0510	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 81	1515	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
DS 601	0800	daily	DS [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
SILCHAR					
IC [illegible]	0915	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	0710	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1130	[illegible]
VARANASI					
DS 40[illegible]	1330	[illegible]	DS 40[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DS 402	0700	4	DS 403	1630	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ 195	1445	4	RJ 184	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0410	7	KL 875	0245	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0950	2 5	KB 106	1020	[illegible]
			KB [illegible]	1240	[illegible]
IC 731	0855	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1245	[illegible]
IC 855	[illegible]	4 7	IC 855	[illegible]	4 7
IC 814	1[illegible]	1 3 6	IC 732	1505	[illegible]
AI 306	1910	5	AI 307	[illegible]	5
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	0150	5 7	RO [illegible]	1430	5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 144	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
SU 538	1755	[illegible]	SU 537	1555	4
PARO					
KB 106	1105	[illegible]	KB 105	[illegible]	[illegible]
KB 106	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2000	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1650	4
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	4

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Himgiri (Jammu Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

CLUBBING TOGETHER

Left-handers, asthmatics, overweight people and supporters of euthanasia have organised themselves in support groups, reports ***Shameem Akthar***

Support groups were once an exclusively Western concept. The most famous of them all was, of course, the Old Bags Club, formed by Lady Moon, whose husband left her for a younger woman. She joined together with other abandoned, middle-aged wives, to get over the trauma of abandonment. But only after she had cut the left sleeve and left trouser leg of all her husband's Saville Row suits and given away his vintage wine collection to the neighbours.

We don't have an Indian counterpart to her as yet, but support groups are slowly sprouting in such cities as Bombay and Pune. The Indian Menopause Society, for instance, where middle-aged women can discuss the hormonal changes that ensue once they stop menstruating. Left-handers can get together to crow over the achievements of such other southpaws as Brian Lara and Amitabh Bachchan.

Asthmatic patients can prove that they are as fit as anyone else by climbing the 35 floors of the World Trade Centre in Bombay or tweak the craggy peak of Duke's Nose mountain. Overweight people, assaulted by the images of Twiggy-thin models, can now set up a charter of obese rights. And when age does wither and custom stales our infinite variety, we could choose a dignified death by joining the Euthanasia club.

Irritated by the right-handers' domination in this 'unmanual' world Bipinchandra Chougule, a television serial producer, set up the Left handers Association in Pune in 1992. The membership of over 4,000 disgruntled left-handers, who for long put up with even simple tools such as the scissors being designed only for the right handed, can gripe together now.

They can muse on how, for centuries every religion from Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, has made left-handedness out to be 'profane'. "For *puja*s and receiving *prasad* the left hand is forbidden. Not many, even educated adults, are rid of this superstition. They must realise that any hand, most convenient in day-to-day usage, should not be subjected to such prejudices," says Chougule.

He took the left-handers' point of view to schools and institutes. Teachers and parents, suffering from this hang-over of generations, need to be taught not to force left-handed children to use their right hand, says Chougule. Methods like tying the left-hand behind the back, extreme methods like burning the left-hand and other such punishments, should go. Stammering and other deep injury to a child's psyche, left-handers' pointed out, would be carried over to adulthood if this did not stop.

Chougule feels that they are beginning to make some headway with their Left-Hander bulletins (modelled on the lines of the American magazine for southpaws). They have started getting letters from converts, mainly teachers and parents, admitting their mistake.

Not all left-handers feel discriminated against. Asmita Hulayalkar dropped out of the club because the members "were making it out as if being left-handed made us all somehow different". Perhaps, she muses, it may have been a problem with the older generation.

Prince Charles, for instance, still appears in public with his left-hand held behind him in a weak attempt to hide his innate choice and Queen Elizabeth may not publicise her own left preference, but the West has set an example for the less royal by manufacturing gadgets and tools for the left-handed.

Having its pleas for similar items falling on the deaf right ears of Indian manufacturers, the club intends to import such gadgets to cater to the 35 per cent of the population which, a recent French survey established, are left-handed.

Icons in the left-handers' world are aplenty. Actors Sanjeev Kumar, Amitabh Bachchan, former and current US Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton, tennis superstar, Monica Seles, and umpteen Test cricketers.

The club preaches to its members (aged from two to 70-odd) that nature inexplicably makes the choice of one of the brain hemispheres. The right, which determines the actions of the left part of the body, is associated with skills related to the musical, pictorial,

Asthmatic patients of the You-Too-Can-Do-It movement

I BELIEVE BY

Yamini Zaveri of the XL club: Fat is fine

intuitive and the telepathic world. If this does not make left-handers special and talented, what could?

The choice also affects the rest of the body functions, like the left ear, the left heart etc. Left is Right, may well be the motto of the left handers' club.

'Fat is Right' is what members of the XL Club swear by. Yamini Zaveri, who herself comfortably fits into extra-large clothes, has decided that fat people should have the right to be, well, fat.

This grandniece of Tribovandas Bhimji Zaveri has by now trimmed the problems of being overweight in a world of weight-watchers. After feeling humiliated at visiting dress shops and being told "size *nahin hai*" by sneering shop-owners she started her own garments company that promises 'Extra Elegance for some figures only'. Her first exhibition, with sizes ranging from 42 to 56, was a '147' per cent' sell-out. She even modelled her garments having fun all along the way.

Her credo: I am fat, I am large and I don't have a problem. This has translated into the XL Club for fat people weighed down not by their obesity, but by the prejudices of the world against it. Zaveri says that her club would really take off in February this year. Her views on this subject have already attracted 30 members who intend to meet every month to discuss the lards of problems that go with being over weight. Slender spouses will be taught to accept their more generously endowed partners. Medical, emotional, psychological and sexual problems will be discussed frankly at their meetings.

According to Zaveri, this will not be a "weight watchers club. I am not advocating fat, but fat is fine with a healthy body and a healthy mind". Instead, the club will offer relief to those who reject the 'starvation-thin' models of today.

Dr Niphadkar (left) of the You-Too-Can-Do-It movement

The Indian Menopause Society was launched around end-1995 by a group of medical practitioners who are "committed to fostering the care and well-being of mature and elderly women". It intends to demystify the scientific, jargon-riddled explanation of menopause.

Anthropologist Jocelyn Scott Reed, University of California, explains: "(This) was the result of the escalating energetic cost of gestation, lactation and childcare – and the ensuing increase in infant helplessness and the concomitant prolongation of juvenile dependence. Natural selection favoured females who became prematurely infertile as the escalating cost of raising each offspring led to maternal depletion and made it more profitable in terms of lifetime reproductive success to continue investing in existing offspring rather than attempting late pregnancies".

The Indian Menopause Society, pioneered by Dr U P Jha of the Hinduja Hospital, invites menopausal women to 'check out' Reed's interesting concept.

This multi-disciplinary society which invites women over 40 to become members, puts through the shredder the different myths associated with this mid-life crisis.

It offers examples, courtesy Dr Kamal Hazari's well-researched article on the subject, on how post

menopausal women in certain [illegible] tribes 'graduate' to [illegible] African [illegible] tribal equality. And knock out certain politically incorrect misconceptions generated by types like Howard Jones who demolished 'menopausal women as a caricature of their younger selves at their emotional worst' and 19th century Europe which dubbed menopause as the Rubicon in women who 'decayed' after its onset.

More such articles in the coming months, are set to spread the light of reason and reassurance among millions of women who suffer this 'mid life event'.

Running along similar lines is the You Too-Can Do-It movement within the Asthmatic Society of India which smashes the fears of patients by setting up seemingly insurmountable targets. Age group — six to 60. Only criterion for membership: you have to be asthmatic and determined. Target: 2,000 ft above sea level.

Since 1985 a few hundreds of these patients have been regularly clambering up hillocks, mountains and multi storeyed buildings to show the world and more importantly themselves that they are not less physically fit than anyone else.

Dr P.V. Niphadkar, as a student in the US, was inspired by the American model to start an Indian society that would remove many fears in the hearts of asthmatic patients. But his You-Too movement was his own innovation. The West, scared by litigative patients, is not yet ready for this trial by-steps model that demolishes patients' fears.

Part of this demolition process were surveys which studied whether patients' incipient fears, such as eating bananas triggering off an attack, or that any attack is likely to be fatal were true. And educating the patients to use the many relief giving gadgets

The cover of an Indian Menopause Society journal

that even the medicos often didn't know how to use.

The strategy that worked best was, however, that of setting impossible targets, which many faint-hearted 'healthy' persons would also find difficult to meet. By scurrying up mountains such as the Duke's Nose, the slippery rockholds of Khandala and Kalsubai, scaling the tough fort of Shivaji Maharaj at Peth or the 35-storeyed World Trade Centre, asthmatics were told that they could do anything they set their minds to.

The last such target, the World Trade Centre, fell short of the standard 2,000-ft mark. But made up in difficulty by the 'acuteness of the steps' which, Dr Niphadkar notes, made climbing it as strenuous, if not more than the rocky peaks.

At You-Too, everyone is an achiever. There is 55-year-old Madhukar Desai, an old hand, who ran up the World Trade Centre in just eight minutes, 75-year-old Modi who has unfailingly attended every climb and 84-year-old V.P. Koppikar who walked five kms in 44 minutes.

There are spunky young ones like 12-year-old Deepti Karkhanis who did 1,145 rope skips in 15 minutes, tiny six-year-old Pallavi Kulkarni who kangaroo-like did 205 *Suryanamaskars* in just 20 minutes. The list of achievers at You-Too keeps increasing each year.

This year's target will be an improvement on previous ones. Enthused by the show of enthusiasm till now, Dr Niphadkar plans to make this target even more difficult. It will be a rocky peak at the height of the monsoons. The Alpino trekkers, volunteers who help if a patient cannot make it to the top and back and help in carrying him or her piggy-back, may have their hands full this season. But Dr Niphadkar is sure that his team will make it, as usual.

Here, too, icons are flaunted to keep the morale up. Members learn that if asthmatics like Bachchan, cricketer Ian Botham and sprinter Jackie Joyner can do it, so can they.

The atmosphere is not quite so upbeat in the euthanasia club or the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, founded by eminent social activist Minoo Masani in the Eighties. The Supreme Court ruling in 1994 striking down section 309 of the Indian Penal Code that made suicide an offence, has given this organisation more teeth.

The concept of Ichcha Maran, or the 'living will' through which people choose to die dignified deaths, has increased in popularity. And now, there is a demand for chapters of the society in Chandigarh and Patna as well.

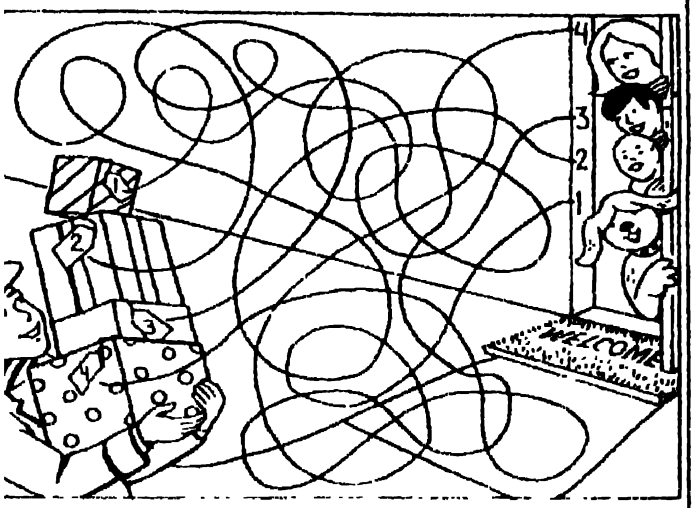
Nevertheless, the numbers are not high despite the fact that this concept is not alien to India. There are only 400 takers for it here as opposed to over two lakh members of the American chapter of the society.

Dr B.N. Colabawalla notes in one of his well-researched essays, "The choice to relinquish life is as basic as the one to live. Kunti, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra ended their lives in *vanaprasthu* when they felt that the purpose of their lives have been served. Bhisma prepared a bed of arrows and willed the day and time of his own death."

Members of the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity want the same right that Bhishma took for granted. And they are willing to wage a *Mahabharat* of their own. ■

You-Too-Can-Do-It: Asthmatic patients scale hillocks to prove their fitness

JUNIOR WHIRL · HALLAHAN



BOX SCORE! See if you can guess who gets which gift, then check through lines to see if you guessed right

DRAW STRING! Draw three circles. Place three circles. Place the numbers 3, 1 and 6 within them. Now arrange the circles to form a number that is divisible by 7. How is it done?

(Turn six upside-down to form 91)

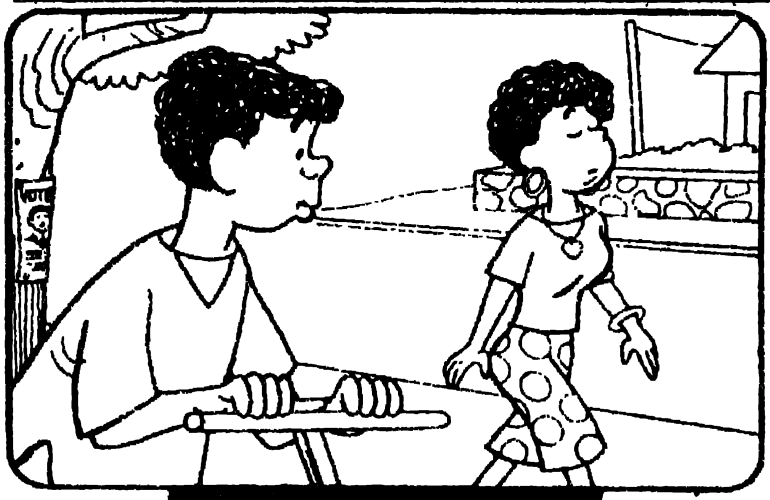
TRICKY NICKY!

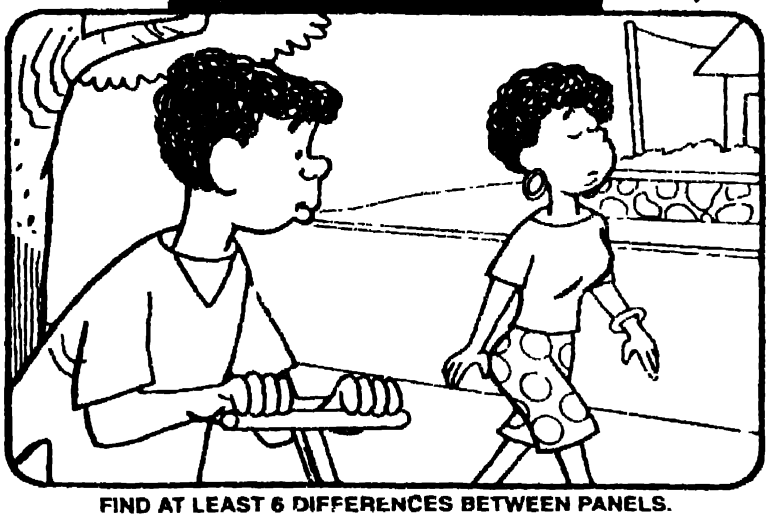
Leave it to old St. Nick to form through with an amusing party trick. It requires a sheet of paper cut part way through in two three pieces with a simultaneous tug at the two sides.

Alas, most times it will tear into two.

Is there a secret? Here's St Nick's answer: Simply chomp down on the middle piece with your teeth, then yank the sides. Alakazam, three pieces ensue. Ho!

HOCUS-FOCUS





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Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Poster is missing. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Handle is smaller. 4. Wall is shorter. 5. Locket is missing. 6. Slacks are shorter.

N	E	T						1
	N	E	T					2
		N	E	T				3
4			N	E	T			
5				N	E	T		
6					N	E	T	

CLUE-ING YOU IN ON NET RESULTS

LET'S SEE if you can identify all six stepped-off NET words in the diagram, in accord with the clues below.

Definitions:

1. ABC, CBS and NBC, for instance (pl.)

2. Mind with a single focus (hyph. word)

3. Marco Polo was one.

4. Thumbnail sketch.

5. Kitchen storage places.

6. Global info surfing place.

How quickly can you fill the blanks?

Time limit. Two min

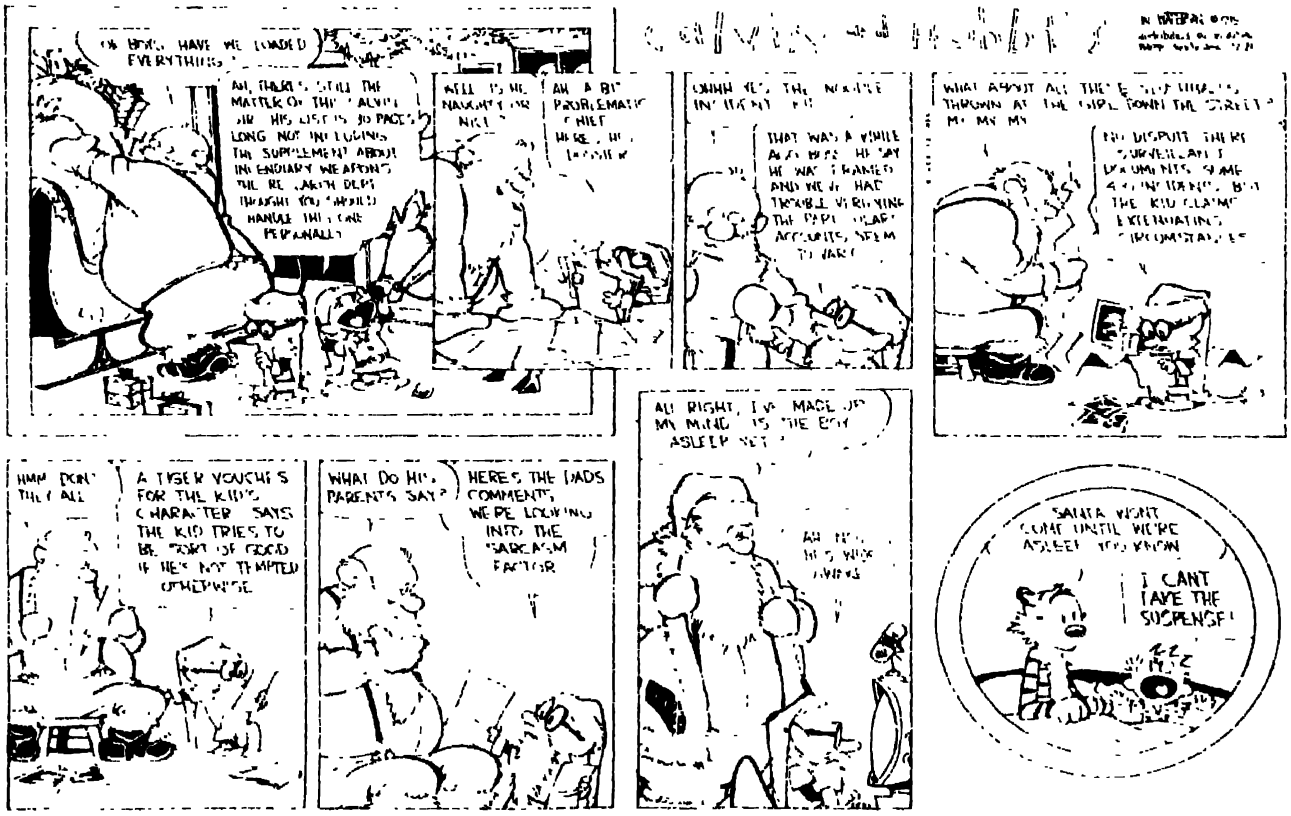
1. Networks 2. One-track 3. Venetian 4. Vignette 5. Cabinets 6. Internet

HAT STUFF! What bird is named for a hat? The fez-ant. What hat suits the queen? The reign-bonnet

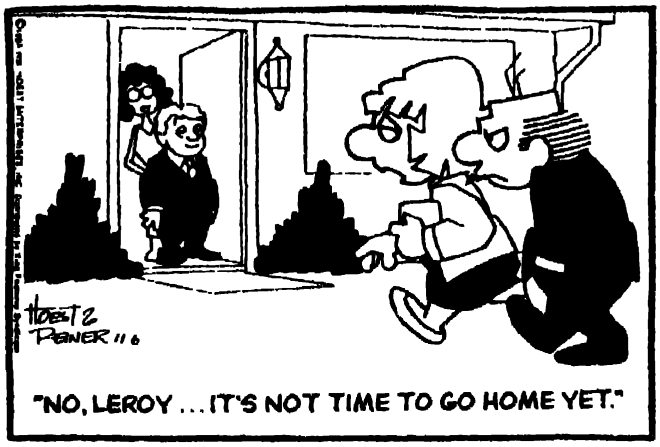
COMICS

ARCHIE

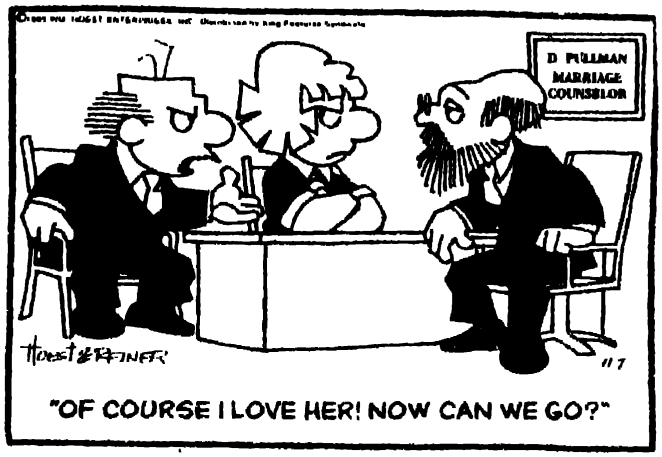
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



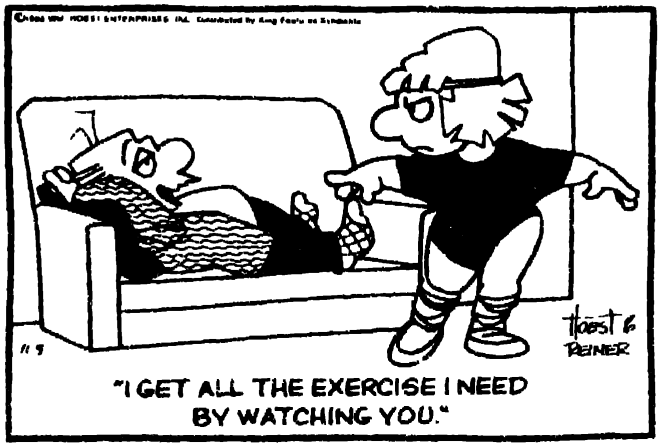
THE LOCKHORNS



"NO, LEROY ... IT'S NOT TIME TO GO HOME YET."



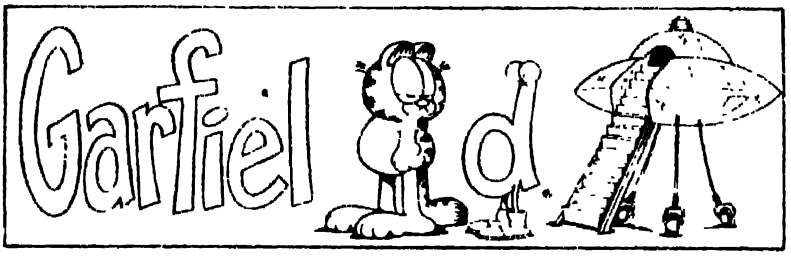
"OF COURSE I LOVE HER! NOW CAN WE GO?"

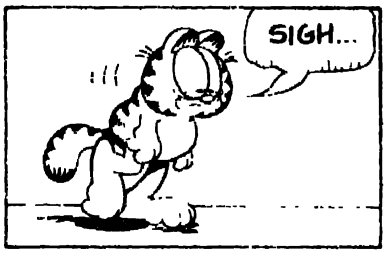


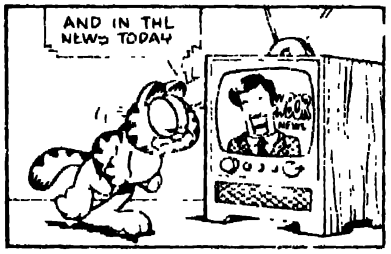
"I GET ALL THE EXERCISE I NEED BY WATCHING YOU."

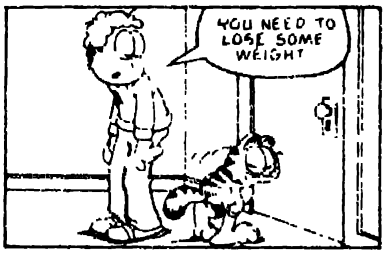
"CAN YOU LEND ME $100 UNTIL YOU'RE IN A BETTER MOOD?"

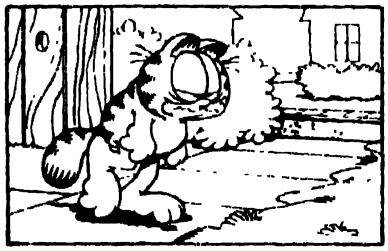
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

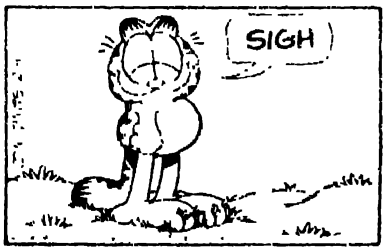




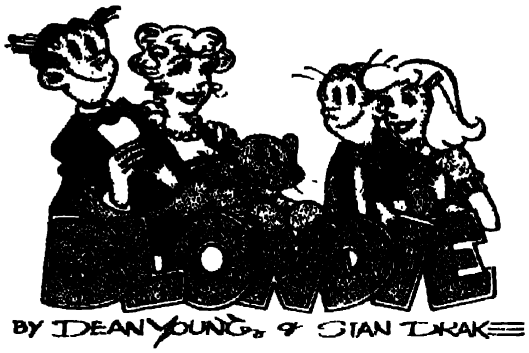


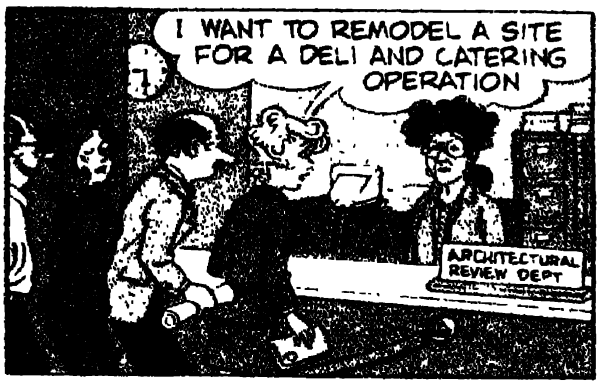






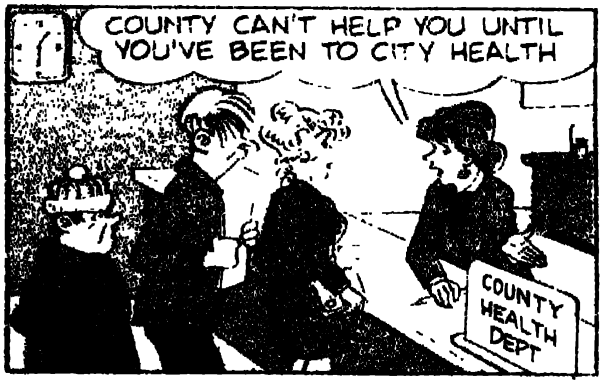
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

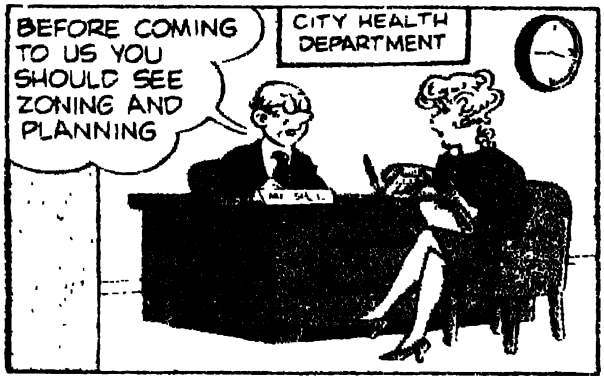

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

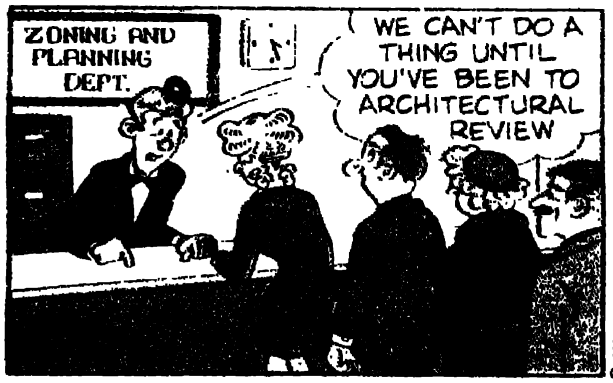

I WANT TO REMODEL A SITE FOR A DELI AND CATERING OPERATION
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW DEPT

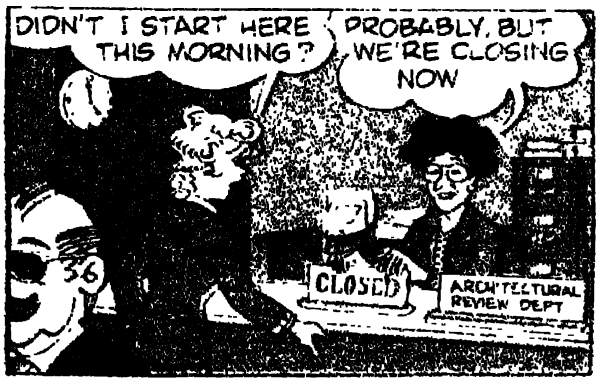
YOU NEED OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING AND PERMITS FIRST
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW DEPT.

YOU NEED TO GO TO COUNTY HEALTH FIRST
OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING AND PERMITS


COUNTY CAN'T HELP YOU UNTIL YOU'VE BEEN TO CITY HEALTH
COUNTY HEALTH DEPT


BEFORE COMING TO US YOU SHOULD SEE ZONING AND PLANNING
CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT


ZONING AND PLANNING DEPT.
WE CAN'T DO A THING UNTIL YOU'VE BEEN TO ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW


DIDN'T I START HERE THIS MORNING?
PROBABLY, BUT WE'RE CLOSING NOW
CLOSED
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW DEPT

FOCUS

PORNLINE TRAFFIC

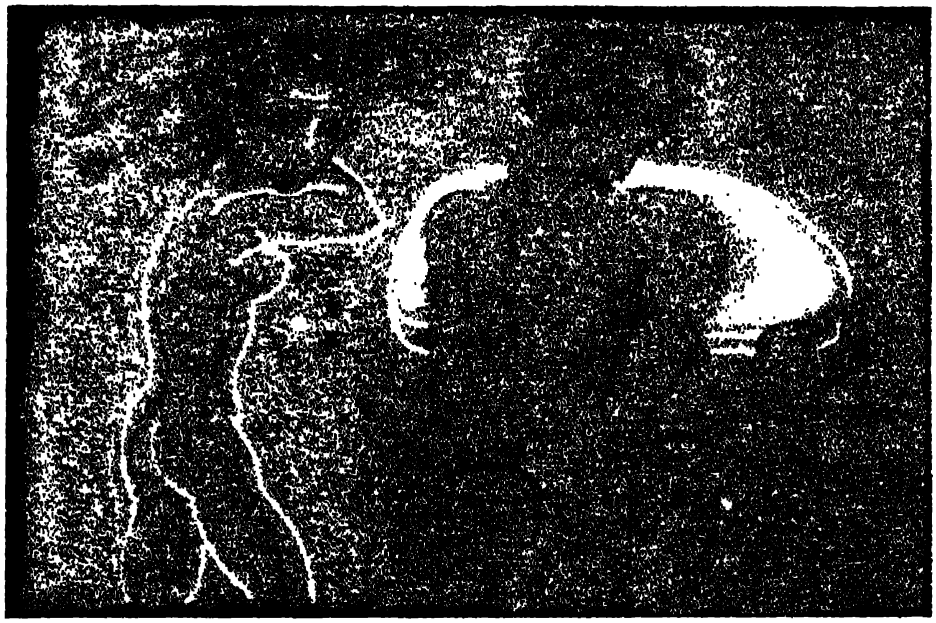
The debate over electronic erotica is dividing cyberspace, says ***Shameem Akthar***

Divisions is cyberworld run deep. The reason: electronic erotica, which is rapidly invading the blissful anarchy of cyberspace. While some want the freedom to watch, read and download porn if they want to, others are intent on throwing it off the Internet. Puritans, worried about the untrammeled porn availability here, are calling for international laws to prevent children from having access to it.

India, making its modest entry on Internet, does not want to be tripped by misguided conservatives calling for a blanket ban on cyber-surfing. Instead, urge Indian Net-addicts, there should be a movement against cyberporn.

A small start was made recently when computer guru Vijay Mukhi among those trying to popularise Internet in India, and his associate Kanakasabapathy Pandyan, launched the NOPORN campaign. NOPORN (Now Organised People Offering Resistance to NetPorn) has set itself an ambitious target. It hopes to accumulate a million signatures of people across the globe "who are determined to maintain the moral integrity of cyberspace".

As Mukhi's letter on the e-world, calling for cyber support, explains, "Internet offers great opportunities for nations like India, which are opening up to the world, and these opportunities must not be allowed to be strangled. Pornography and net crimes will encourage governments to intervene and that is exactly what must be prevented at any cost, to ensure free and independent communication."



A sample of cyber pornography

The million-signature memorandum, with flourishes by amateur surfers like actor Anupam Kher, cartoonist Mario Miranda, painter M.F. Husain, environmentalist Bittu Sehgal, will be presented to the secretary of the United Nations, pleading for cyberwatch over pornographic material. And e-messages have started seeping on Pandyan K@eWorld.com and at the anti-porn group's website.

But disaster struck the NOPORN site when installation of a new programme wiped out many of the support letters that had been stored at the surfers' HQ at Mukhi's office. But some letters, which have been salvaged, show the divergence of opinion over cyberporn's *raison d'etre*.

Some are outraged at the suggestion of moral fencing. Tony Toews, independent computer consultant and self-pointed 'Jack of a few computer-related trades and master (or certified) of none', questioned if there was any moral integrity in the first place on the net.

And as to the NOPORN declaration, which declares, "We are not here to restrain free speech or individual choice but we believe that the Internet, which has access to millions of homes worldwide, must not be subverted by peddlers of pornography and criminals out for a fast buck", Toews orders conservative signatories like Husain and Miranda not to visit those areas.

Toews, the irrepressible net liberal, suggests that if the Indian government intervenes against net crimes and cyberporn, it deserves to be 'thrown out'. And ends his e-mail note, saying, "I totally disagree with your message."

Another surfer, Don Marti from Indiana University, dashed off his curt order to NOPORN: "Please keep this kind of off-topic posting off the sci newsgroups."

Hopping in and out of this website is the surfer couple Prashanth and Meeta from Avon who alternate between giggly, partly juvenile queries on the NOPORN moralist attitude and abusive language that reeks of words like 'Packie'.

They write, "Let's see now ..public figures from the country that holds kissing in movies to be pornographic, but finds murdering new brides for having small dowries to be acceptable, is now presuming to judge what gets posted in the net. Woooo... sit back and watch the fun!"

The NOPORN backers, on the other hand, are shyly supportive and just obediently punch in 'I support NOPORN'. The colourful language

Dilip Banerjee

M.F. Husain

seems to be prerogative of the liberal group

John D Robertson a mechanical engineer and sheep farmer from Greenville for example, who writes "How do you propose to censor the Internet, since no single body is in fact in charge of it? I believe that your attempt to eliminate pornography and hustling on the Internet is as futile as filling the ocean by peeing into it Get a life"

American Michael Jones seems just as miffed by the NOPORN puritans He squashes their intent with "Your position that you should be free to express your opinions to the world in blatant disregard of established net use while trying to limit free expression in others is dishonest, hypocritical and repugnant In short, the pornographers who post only in established groups for that purpose have far better manners than you"

Whew! But never mind what the libertarians say, nations are waking up to the alarm bell of porn problems Cyber freedom will be trashed once legislation, evolving through such freewheeling debates, finally muzzles the electronic mouse and irrevocably locks the computer against misuse. Already most nations have given their policemen a new beat --- cyberspace.

This, it has to be conceded, is a very difficult beat, indeed. First, the keyboard seat offers criminals more anonymity than a packed train platform Second, the global nature of surfing covers up spoor of the criminal.

Pandyan says that the US senate has evaluated certain legislation now being subjected to public debates Once the dust kicked up over these settles down, the American law would set a trend. "But even this will create a problem since most countries resent the Big Brother attitude of America and see in these laws a subtle hint of its imperialism. But till then, porn sites will be freely available" observes the Net specialist

Those who visit these sites are posted with newsgroups through registration that require a surfer's credit card number. Some groups issue a warning that the surfer is entering the site at his own risk or responsibility Nations like Germany obviously do not believe that much heed is paid to the latter and in January censored the newsgroup Compuserve

Moral-keepers in Germany felt that the material downloaded by Compuserve's voyeurs violated the country's child pornography laws It also included material that is illegal for adults to see and pornography that is legal for adults but unsuitable for children

Compuserve, unable to just jam its surfers in Germany, has clamped down its worldwide access to 200 sex bulletins. But since it could not just clam up in Germany, it has temporarily blocked access to four million users Though company officials carped that they should be treated on par with phone companies which are not held responsible for what speakers mumble into receivers, it has buckled under German blockade and is creating a software that will bar its German users from such sex discussions declared illegal in Germany

Gay groups frothing over Germany's decision to channel off homosexual preferences online, protested by pouring beer in sewers in front of the Goethe Institute in San Francisco They called for a boycott of German goods Angry and uncharitable comparisons were made to Nazi censorship and book burning under Hitler

This debate over online liberty, linked irretrievably to cyberporn, is set to grip every computer-friendly nation Those, used to careering unshackled through the Net balk at the thought of new checks But that freedom, unfettered by national laws, enjoyed by 35 million net users over 10,000 news groups worldwide, may finally be reduced to a phantom

Accessibility has made cyberporn all-age pervasive Britain jailed a computer consultant recently for downloading netporn, while Oxford university blocked its student access to the Net after tracking 4,000 connections made to sexual video clips A survey in Central Lancashire revealed that one among ten schoolboys are glued to computer porn

Another American survey establish

Vijay Mukhi- Leading the anti-porn campaign

Gautam Patole

ed that at one university 13 out of the 16 most faithfully visited newsgroup had alarming names such as alt-sex-stories, rec.arts, erotica and alt-sex-bondage. Enough to set every right-thinking parent sweating, and waiting for laws to barricade routes to such sit-in sexual gratification.

However, such hysterical conservative reaction leads to ridiculous situations too. In December, America Online decided to purge four-letter and racial epithets. In its zeal, it axed 'breast' from its vocabulary till it was pointed out that the word was vital for discussion on mammarian cancer among women.

Panicking over other such repeats and the fear of rightist might gaining overnight, the Net consortium comprising Microsoft, International Business Machines, Apple Computer, Netscape Communications and other major online services have decided to form the Information Highway Parental Empowerment Group that will give parents, teachers or companies the software to clog smut on Net. Groups like SurfWatch, which offers online smut filters, will become part of the consortium.

Self-policing would ensure survival of the World Wide Web. multimedia lab at Cambridge in Massachusetts is working on such web technology to be released soon among panic-stricken Net-users.

Anupam Kher

Mano Miranda

This is in response to the two bills being debated hotly in America. The first one passed in June by the Senate, the Communications Decency Act, which would blanket all online profanity. The other bill, Internet Freedom and Family Empowerment, calls for self-watch instead of blacking out all sex from the screen.

All this is clearly no child's play. Though cyberporn, in its latest transformation has jumped into the cartoon bandwagon. An American site on the Web was switched off the screen because it offered 'Dirty Disney' by reworking the innocent antics of Aladin and Princess Jasmine into a torrid sexual clinch. Made in Japan erotica cartoons like the Manga, titillating with images of demon rape, are also all over the computer screen.

The prudes have enough reasons to scream themselves 'blue'. Radicals, in retaliation, ridicule the yellow in their jaundiced eyes. The debate over cyber freedom is set to become more colourful. As the world goes into paroxysms over this, India which is still on the fringes of the Net, can only watch the *tamasha* from the sidelines. ■

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This week: The Maharajas

How it all began: From the sun and the moon if you believe the Maharajas themselves. Actually, very few of them can trace their origins back to more than a couple of centuries with the possible exception of Udaipur/Mewar. (Remember what we learnt at school about Maharana Pratap?)

So, where did they come from then?: The vast majority were governors, viceroys, generals and the like who jumped up to the throne. The Nizam of Hyderabad was the Mughal Court's man in the south; Gwalior (Scindia), Baroda (Gaekwad) and Indore (Holkar) were Shivaji's generals. For instance, Scindia is merely a corruption of the familiar Maratha surname, Shinde. And the Holkars are not even Marathas. Others were created by the British.

Is there a pecking order?: It is a bit silly but it has to do with gun salutes. Top of the league are the houses with 21-gun salutes: Kashmir, Gwalior, Mysore, Baroda and Hyderabad. Then you have 19-gun salutes, 17-gun salutes, and so on.

Does anybody still care?: Well, the Maharajas certainly do. Over the last seven years, Kashmir, Gwalior and Baroda have all entered into marital alliances.

But isn't Gayatri Devi a big deal?: Oh dear! At last, the embarrassing question. Well, it all depends on how you define 'big deal'. The Maharajas don't reckon that Jaipur is a major house: the family first cosied up to the Mughals and then to the Brits, so there's lots of money in the family coffers. But no, nobody gives the Jaipur house a great deal of respect.

And Gayatri Devi?: She's a pleasant old dear, really. Her mother, a Baroda princess married to Cooch Behar (Ma Cooch was her nickname and not, as if often incorrectly reported, Cooch Nahin), was a great beauty and a jet-setter. When Ayesha (Gayatri Devi to you and me) married Jai (Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur to the rest of us), they made a glamorous couple and spent many evenings with the jet-set. That made them glamorous. But glamorous is not always the same as respected or influential.

Gayatri Devi: The grande dame of Jaipur

And is Bubbles like Daddy?: Nopes. He's not so keen on the jet-set. He made a good soldier (decorated for valour in 1971) and lacks his step-mother's ambition.

The Maharaja for the Gayatri Devi crowd in the Nineties is Bapji Jodhpur (or more properly, plain Mr Gaj Singh), an old Etonian, who loves playing the Maharaja for foreigners.

All of this can't really matter: Oh yes, it can. It doesn't matter politically — only Madhavrao Scindia could win a parliamentary seat on his own. And it doesn't matter financially — Dhirubhai Ambani could probably buy out the top ten Maharajas without having to sell a single duplicate share (though Jaipur would require a little extra digging into the pocket).

But it still matters to the Maharajas. Most live in worlds of their own where servants bow low and even friends are encouraged to address them as 'Maharaj'. For every Bubbles, Karan Singh or Madhavrao Scindia, are ten jokers in turbans and achkans who don't realise that times have changed.

And it matters socially. They still bow low for Bubbles when he enters Annabel's (the one owned by Mark Birley, not the Punjabi rip-off owned by Lalit Suri) and Delhi hostesses regard Bapji Jodhpur as a great catch. Even Gayatri Devi can stop all conversation at a party simply by entering the room.

Is this because they are so elegant?: Alas, no. The Maharajas have the worst taste of all Indians. The women wear flowery chiffon saris (georgettes when they can get away with it); and the men look like refrigerators draped in ill-fitting jodhpuris; and their homes are design nightmares.

But there must be some people with style?: Well, Tiger Pataudi, definitely. Karan Singh has his own elegance if you forgive the safari suits. Scindia has started dressing better over the last few years and his sister, Vasundhara Raje, has taste. But the rest look like Wodeyar of Mysore who, in turn, looks like a cross between Satish Shah and Oliver Hardy.

How does one address a Maharaja: "You" if he's well-behaved. "Hey, you" if he's not. Don't even attempt "Your Highness". Most will never let you call them anything else. Karan Singh and Pataudi will protest at the use of the title though, and Scindia will mumble "Come off it" while looking secretly pleased. The rest will wonder why you've forgotten to bow.

What shouldn't you say to the Maharaja?: Say what you like. But remember that most disasters in the Chamber of Princes begin with the words: "Feel like another drink?" ■

FIRST PERSON

SHWETA SHETTY, *the dusky and sensuous pop singer, has shot into the limelight with her chartbusting number* Rukmini, Rukmini *from the film* Roja *and her album* Johnny Joker. *She has been nominated for the Filmfare award for Best Female Singer for the* Rangeela *number,* Mangta Hai Kya

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Peace of mind, being content.
What is your greatest fear?
Having a car accident; cockroaches.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My mother.
What do you dislike most in others?
Dishonesty, disloyalty.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
I am very brutally honest and that sometimes leads me to trouble.
What is your most precious possession?
My soul.
What objects do you always carry?
Chocolates, lipstick and a couple of photographs.
What makes you most depressed?
Poverty — specially children begging on streets.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My nose — it's a bit too big.
What is your favourite word?
Shit.
What is your favourite journey?
From Bangkok to Samui in Thailand. And hopefully, the journey to heaven.
What is your favourite dream?
To win a Grammy.
What is your nightmare?
That I am marrying a frog.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
I am loveless right now and am learning to love myself. But my greatest loves are my niece, nephew and my friends.
What is your source of sustenance?
Music, love, my songs, chocolates and food.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I really have to — if it will help me.

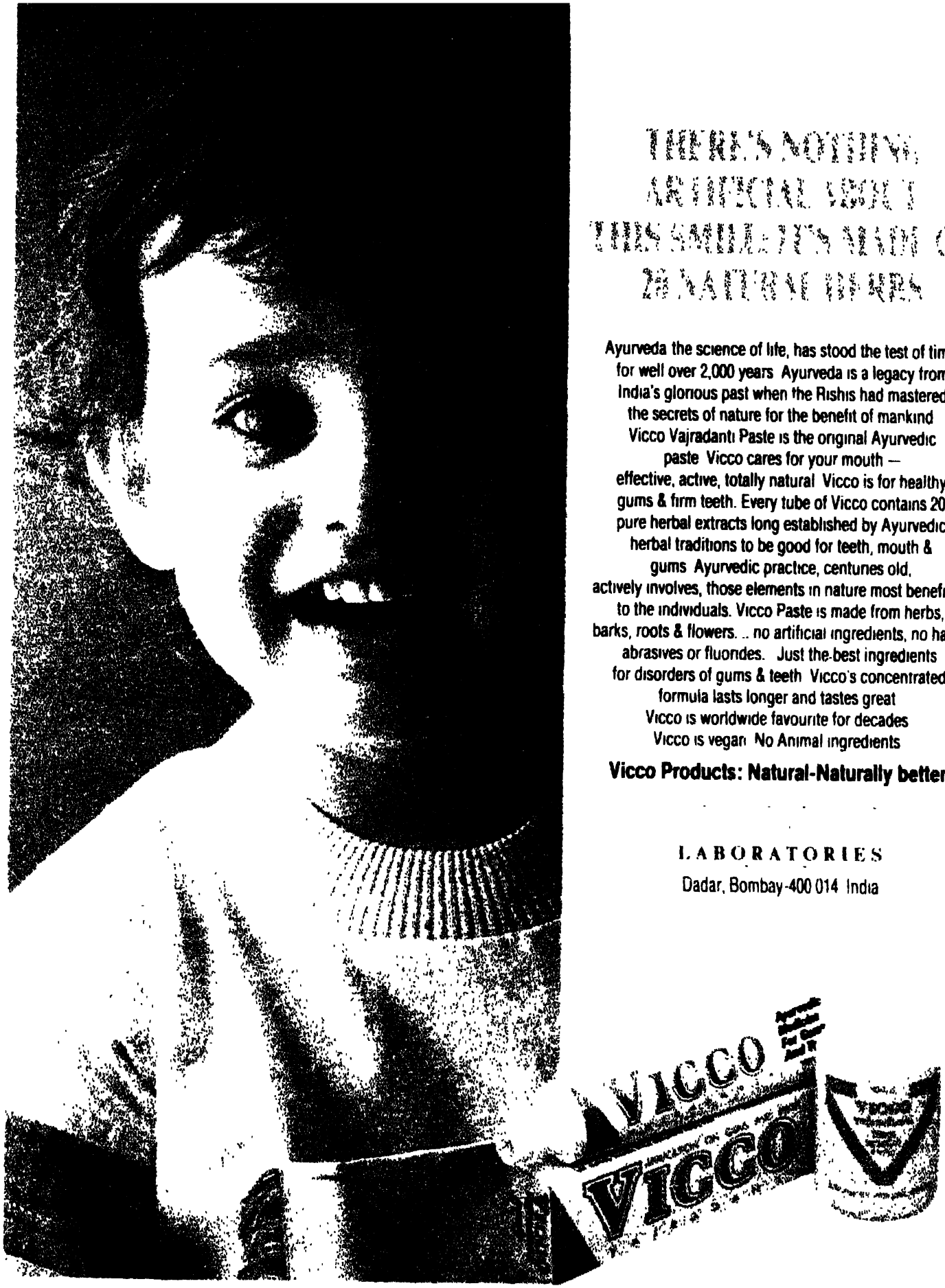
What is your nightmare?

That I am marrying a frog

What is your greatest regret?
I started my singing career too late.
What has been your happiest moment?
It's yet to come. I have never had either any wonderful highs or depressing lows.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Sad movies, love songs. I once saw a beggar on a cold winter night and that brought tears to my eyes. I wished I had a coat or a shawl to give him.
How do you relax?
By working out, with music and on the phone.
What do you envy most in others?
Nothing. I am a very confident person and I always look at the good side of things, in others and myself.
How would you like to be remembered?
As the greatest singer who ever lived.
How would you like to die?
On stage, in my husband's arms, with my children around me.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My nose — it's a bit too big



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25 FEBRUARY 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Made in India

■ Perhaps, to the list of the new breed of Indians another three types could be added ('Discovery of Indians' December 31). The yuppie intellectual, for instance.

This type likes to go about the world sporting a dishevelled look, his nose buried in Milan Kundera paperbacks. He flirts with girls like those models in colourful commercials and watches *Superhit Muquabla* on TV.

The other type is a group of ladies, inspired by the queen of sleaze, Shobha De, who have discarded all convention and have adopted an I-don't care attitude that is quite puzzling.

The third type, may be influenced by Diana and Prince Charles, is out to destroy the myth that marriage is a noble institution.

Do you agree?

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ The neo-Indians may look a class apart from the masses but they are a part of this composite culture called India and may well be accepted.

Another prominent breed of Indians is the new-look politicians. They enjoy tremendous media hype and if they are well conversant in the queen's tongue they will be lapped by all glossies and TV newsmagazines to give their views on anything from Ayodhya to hawala.

They have a suave, erudite look about them and are generally more popular because of their classy outfits, good looks and Western mannerisms

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

The new-breed Indians

■ There was a time when a politician was identified by the Gandhi cap he wore. There were very few Congress leaders of the pre-Independent period who did not sport a Gandhi cap.

Later, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made the cap a permanent fixture of his attire. Morarji Desai and Lal Bahadur Shastri, veteran Congressmen that they were, were never seen without the white accessory.

But curiously enough, the present Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, is always seen with his head uncovered.

Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia

■ Anurag Mathur should have named a new Indians who fitted the various sections of new Indians he talks about.

Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

Only Fashion

■ Since the Magazine cannot give up its fascination for fashion, it might as well rename itself as *The Telegraph Fashion Magazine*.

Surendra Rathi,
Calcutta

How About Heritage?

■ I would request the Magazine to re-introduce the Heritage column by Rathin Mitra.

Partha Pratim Modak,
Howrah

Identity Crisis

■ The First Person of Ashish Vidyarthi (January 28) contained wrong information in the introduction. Lankesh is a character in Zee TV's *Dastaan* and not *Kurukshetra* as stated.

Dipali Sarangi,
Calcutta

INSIDE

PAGE 4

AS INDIA prepares to hold its next presidential elections the coming year, the [illegible] that is being murmured in the circles of power is [illegible] Karan Singh. What kind of a President would this [illegible] make?

PAGE 26

THE SEVEN [illegible] Mike Fay, is back in India?

Mike Fay

SECTIONS

16 [illegible]
21 [illegible]
22 [illegible]
26 [illegible]
29 [illegible]
30 [illegible]

Vijay Pa

COVER STORY

HIGHNESS TO Excellency?

*Should Dr Karan Singh be our next President? **Seema Goswami** profiles the best candidate yet*

BUT FIRST, THE OBVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF PRESIDENT should India have?

The answer, of course, is equally obvious. He should be intelligent, compassionate, secular, and a man of stature. And, in addition to all this, he should have the ability to inspire the loyalty and trust of the nation which he leads, albeit as a titular head.

So much for how things should be. How they really are is, in fact, another matter.

In recent times, Indian Presidents have more often than not been political hacks, who have been rewarded for a lifetime of service to the Congress (read the Gandhi family) by being elevated to the highest post in the land. Giani Zail Singh is, of course, the best example of this breed

Looking back it is difficult to find more than three Presidents who were men of consequence. There was Dr Rajendra Prasad, who participated in the freedom struggle; there was Dr Radhakrishnan, who was a philosopher and academician of note; and then there was Dr Zakir Hussain, a giant in the Muslim community. Leave these three aside, and all you have is a list of mediocrities, who found themselves in the top job by some twist of fate.

Next year's presidential election promises to be no different. There are the usual suspects lined up. Atal Behari Vaj-

payee, Narasimha Rao, K.R Narayanan, etc. (see box), but not one person who could hold out hope to a nation that seems to have succumbed to a soul numbing cynicism.

But if the whispers in Delhi are to be believed, there is a wild card in the offing. No, it's not the King of Spades; it is the former Maharaja of Kashmir, Dr Karan Singh.

But why Dr Karan Singh? He has been out of the political arena since the Eighties, if you discount a short stint as the Indian ambassador in Washington. By all accounts, he has spent this period travelling the world, delivering lectures on behalf of the Virat Hindu Samaj that he founded, and the inter-faith movement of which he is a leading member.

So, what makes him an ideal candidate for the presidency of India?

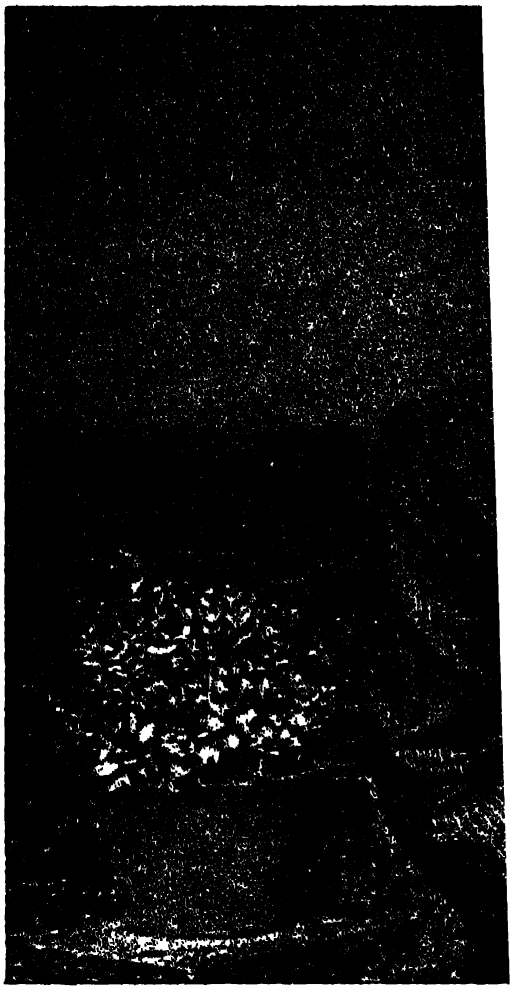
For one thing, there is no denying that Dr Singh is a man of stature. His intellectual achievements are beyond dispute, his philosophic treatise on Sri Aurobindo is still regarded as a masterpiece. And while he is a deeply religious man, nobody doubts his secular credentials.

In fact, they were reinforced in the most positive way possible when Dr Singh and his wife, Yasho Rajya Lakshmi, visited Kashmir in the aftermath of the Hazratbal crisis. Despite the strong anti-Indian and even stronger anti-Hindu feelings in the Valley, the Kashmiris greeted Dr Karan Singh, the Dogra Maharaja, with cries of, *"Hamare baadshah aa gaye."*

Dr Singh was even asked by the militants to mediate in their negotiations with the government. But when the former Maharaja offered his services, he was fobbed off by the Governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao. The government of India, it was made clear to him, did not want him to interfere in the situation in the Valley.

The main reason for this rebuff was Dr Singh's position on Kashmir. While he has never come out in support of the militants' call for *azaadi*, he is at pains to point out that there have been atrocities on both sides in the Valley. While it is true that the militants have taken recourse to violence, the security forces too have violated the human rights of the Kashmiris. "These stories are too well documented for us to ignore them," Dr Singh said in an interview. "I think we should send our human rights commission to the Valley to investigate these violations."

Given this position, Dr Karan Singh is one man even the Kashmiris (including those in the Valley) would be happy to see as President of India. And who knows, it may help tone down the cries of *"Azaadi"* that rend the air in the Valley these days.



With wife Yasho Rajya Lakshmi

THE OTHER CONTENDERS

Those in the race for India's presidency:

ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE

The current position within the BJP is that Vajpayee is its prime ministerial candidate. The party intends to fight the general election under his stewardship; not that it has much choice, now that L.K. Advani has fallen victim to the hawala scandal.

But what if the BJP fails to secure a majority, and has to form a coalition with the Congress to come to power? There is already talk in Delhi of a secret deal between Narasimha Rao and Vajpayee, according to which one of them would become Prime Minister and the other President in such a scenario.

And the betting is that Rao will take the better job, leaving Atalji with the presidency.

NARASIMHA RAO

Becoming President of India is not what Rao really wants; he'd much rather be Prime Minister for another term.

But Rao knows as well as anybody else that politics is the art of the possible. And that if the BJP is the senior partner in the coalition government outlined above, then he may be forced to give up his claim to the top job.

Instead, we may well be treated to Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, President of India.

SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA

The President of India wants ano-

Kashmir was where it all began. Karan Singh was born to Maharaja Hari Singh and Maharani Tara Devi on 9 March 1931. The Maharaja had remained childless, despite having married twice. Karan Singh was born of his third wife.

The birth took place in Cannes, in the south of France, where the Maharaja's entourage had taken over the entire third floor of the Majestic Hotel. There was much rejoicing when the heir to the Kashmir throne was born, and celebrations continued till the party returned to India.

But Karan Singh's childhood was not a particularly happy one. By his own account, his parents were too different as people to get along for extended periods of time. For the most part, they maintained separate residences, and the young *Yuvraj* would see his mother for one hour every day, and his father once every three days.

This was by no means an ideal childhood environment, but it prepared Karan Singh for the rigours that lay ahead. The first major crisis of his life came with the Independence of India. His father, Maharaja Hari Singh, was asked to sign the Instrument of Accession in accordance with which Kashmir would become part of India.

Hari Singh dithered over this decision, and with good reason. If he agreed to join the Union of India, the Muslim majority Valley would be

ther term, but unfortunately nobody seems to agree with him. The general consensus is that Sharma is too old and in very indifferent health. Hence, he couldn't possibly do justice to his duties as head of state were he re-elected. The argument doesn't appear to wash Sharma,

though, and he is constantly lobbying for another stint in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

K.R. NARAYANAN

A strong section within the Congress is very keen that the man next in line, Vice-President Narayanan, be elevated to the presidency. The reason that Narayanan is an erudite man, has served in the foreign service with distinction, conducts the Rajya Sabha with rare elan, and is in every way qualified to be the next President.

What's more, his would be a very politically correct choice, indeed. Narayanan is a Harijan, and if he succeeds Sharma, a Brahmin, the Congress would have proved that it has no caste bias.

L.M. SINGHVI

Currently serving as India's high commissioner to the Court of St James, Singhvi is very keen to come back to India. And as the President of the country, no less.

Singhvi, who has never been closely identified with any party, hopes that he may become a consensus candidate in case no party has a majority in the electoral college at the time of the next presidential poll.

NAJMA HEPTULLAH

Until now, nobody is taking her candidature too seriously, but Najma has a lot going for her. She is a Muslim, a woman, and has been in active politics all her life.

Of course, these very factors may work against her candidacy, Indian politics being what it is

unhappy with his choice. And if he went over to Pakistan on the grounds that his was a Muslim-dominated state, he would anger the Hindus of Jammu.

But even as the Maharaja wrestled with this problem, the Indian army marched into Kashmir to help make up his mind. Kashmir became part of India, but Hari Singh himself — who was not Sheikh Abdullah's favourite person — was sent into exile in Bombay on June 20, 1949.

At the age of 18, Karan Singh became the Regent of the State, with Sheikh Abdullah as Prime Minister. Singh was not in the best of health at this time, either. He had had a recurrent hip problem, which had kept him in bed for the better part of two years, and for which he had undergone surgery in New York. But despite these constraints, Singh tried to fulfil the duties that should, in the natural course of events, have been his father's.

In 1951, Sheikh Abdullah called for an abolition of monarchy in Kashmir, and decreed that the state would have an elected head of state, who would be called Sadar-e-Riyasat. Karan Singh was made the first Sadar-e-Riyasat to make the transition simpler and easier for all concerned.

Maharaja Hari Singh was outraged at this move, but Karan Singh himself was quite philosophical about it. He knew in his heart that the feudal order was on its last legs, and that the Maharajas would soon be history.

In the midst of all this, Singh took time off for what was, perhaps, the most important event in his personal life: his wedding to Yasho Rajya Lakshmi, a Nepali princess on March 5, 1950. Karan Singh was 19 years old, and his wife was just 13, a gauche teenager, who had led a very sheltered life in Nepal, but was now expected to entertain heads of state and government in a style to which they were accustomed.

That early training — not to mention being thrown into the deep end — paid off. Today, Dr Singh and Yasho Rajya are counted among the best hosts in Delhi. Their large airy home in Chanakyapuri, surrounded by a beautifully-kept garden, is the venue of some of the most exclusive parties in Delhi. It is the first port of call for most visiting dignitaries and celebrities, and Karan Singh and his wife organise the most wonderful lunches for them in their elegant and low-key style.

Not for the Singhs, the ostentatious display of wealth that most industrialists and businessmen revel in. They would much rather pay attention to the guest list and the menu, than bother with Rosenthal glasses and gold-edged plates — though they have more of that stuff than any of the *nouveau riche* types, who hope to give them a run for their money.

Lunch at Dr Karan Singh's. The guest of honour is Nadine Gordimer, the Nobel Laureate, who is in Delhi to deliver the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Trust lecture. She had first met Karan Singh in South Africa, when he had gone to deliver a speech at the celebrations in Durban to mark the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in South Africa. Gordimer had been utterly charmed by him, and his speech, which she rated as among the best that she had ever heard.

Now in Delhi, Gordimer is the star attraction at the lunch hosted by Dr Singh. And that takes some doing, when you realise that among the other guests — which include Justice Leila Seth, Kunwar Natwar Singh and the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi — is Sonia Gandhi.

At any other Delhi social event, Sonia would be the centre of attention, with all the other guests crowding around to have a word with her, or even just catch

With Farooq Abdullah

Karan Singh with Indira Gandhi

in rev. But such is the ambience that Dr Singh creates at his lunches that Sonia is treated as just another guest -- though, to be fair, Sonia's natural modesty helps.

Karan Singh himself is the perfect host, flitting from guest to guest, introducing people to one another, keeping the conversation and the drinks flowing. His wife, Yasho Rajya, supervises the food, which is laid out on the large dining table in a room dominated by paintings of the couple's children.

It's not a sit-down lunch, but it's very elegant for all that. The guests are handed a silver *thali*, which is divided into compartments (a nice touch to prevent the gravies from running into one another) and asked to help themselves.

There is usually one Kashmiri and one Nepali dish on offer (representing the culinary traditions of the Maharaja and the Maharani), and dinner is followed by coffee -- and *paan*, for those with an Indian palate.

Liveried servants dash around offering drinks and second helpings. But the interesting thing is not how well they're trained, but that they don't call Karan Singh "Maharaj" or even "Your Highness", which is the way most royals in India are addressed by their household staff. Instead, they refer to him as "Doctor Saab". But this is how Karan Singh prefers it. According to him, he would much rather be called by a name that he has earned -- Doctor -- than a name that he inherited. Maharaj.

While this makes for an interesting anecdote in itself, there is quite a story behind Karan Singh's doctorate. As Regent, the young Singh was both Chancellor of and a student at Kashmir University. "And when I got my doctorate," he laughs, "it was the first case in history of a chancellor graduating from his own university."

The Maharaja of Kashmir

There's more to Karan Singh than academics, though. Despite the senior statesman air that surrounds him, he quite enjoys an evening of rock music. His favourite group: the Pet Shop Boys. When it's not music (few people know that the former Maharaja has a fine singing voice), it's poetry, of which Karan Singh has published a few volumes.

But is all of this enough? Dr Karan Singh may well be the best man for the job, but will he be able to convince everyone to choose him? And more importantly, does he want to? If the past decade has proved anything, it is that Dr Singh has no taste for political lobbying. The last thing he wants to do is hang around in Central Hall or in various party conclaves, telling people that he should be the next President of the Republic of India. He would much rather sit in his India International Centre (of which he has been chairman for the last three years)

The Chrar-e-Sharif

office, entertaining men and women of consequence

The Congress has little time for him, under Narasimha Rao. The official line, of course, is that Singh cannot be forgiven his betrayal of Mrs Gandhi in the post-Emergency period. But this is hard to believe, when you consider that it was Indira's son, Rajiv, who appointed him ambassador to Washington

The truth of the matter is that Narasimha Rao is a bit wary of Dr Singh. The Prime Minister is quite willing to come over to Karan Singh's house for lunch, but as for anything beyond that forget it

The government has made it clear from the beginning that Dr Singh has no role to play in the Kashmir crisis. This, despite the fact that the former Maharaja got a tumultuous reception in the Valley on the last two occasions when he visited after the Hazratbal and Chrar-e-Sharif crises

Congress support for the presidential polls is, therefore, out of the question -- though the way things are going the party may be out in the cold when it's time to choose a new President

So, what about the BJP? After all, what more could that party want than a man who is a *Shiv Bhakt* and the founder of the Virat Hindu Samaj? But no, even the Hindu right is not keen on Dr Singh. It is not comfortable with his version of religiosity, which comprises a deep faith in Hinduism along with an abiding belief in the concept that all religions are fundamentally alike. This line of thought is not likely to go down well with the Ashok Singhals and Uma Bhartis of the world

So, what does Dr Karan Singh have going for him? Strangely enough, it is the fact that he has a growing constituency in the Indian middle-class, which sees him as one of their own

The former Maharaja of Kashmir an honorary member of the Indian middle-class! Yes, the mind boggles. But there is some truth to this perception

For starters, Dr Karan Singh has all along played down his royal lineage. He is very uncomfortable about being referred to as the Maharaja, and makes it a point of asking people to call him Dr Singh. He is far more proud of his achievements than he is of his parentage. And the middle-class can identify with a man who values education above money, even though he had loads of it

Then, there is Dr Singh's intellectual constituency at the India International Centre, which he has run with distinction over the last several years. When Karan Singh took over at the IIC, it was with the intention of revamping and carrying out major changes

The first thing he did was try and change the composition of the IIC membership. While IIC was still at the centre of intellectual life in Delhi the younger lot of people were slowly moving away from it. And there was some danger that by the end of the century, the centre would become just another hang out for retired academics

It is to Dr Singh's credit that he has brought the movers and shakers back to IIC and ensured that it will continue to count until well into the next decade

The truth of the matter is that if a poll was held to choose the next President of India, with everyone with a college degree being allowed one vote, Dr Karan Singh would win hands down

But, unfortunately that's not how the President of India is elected. He is choosen by an electoral college, comprising MPs and MLAs. And to win, you've got to have the support of at least one major political party. And that's something that Dr Karan Singh doesn't have

Dr Singh may be the perfect candidate. But it may well turn out that the system fails to accept him because he is too right for the job ■

EXTRACT

Sex, Violence and DEATH

Extracts from the first ever spy-thriller written by an Indian woman

BY ANJOO MOHAN

Extracted from Shangrila by Anjoo Mohan; Published by Har-Anand Publications, Price Rs 95

Halfway across the globe things were not going so smoothly. In the elegant Park Avenue penthouse apartment of the Reeds in New York, the Samuelsons were impatiently awaited. It had been a week since there had been any news of Andrew and Terry. Philip Reed had been against the madcap scheme from the very beginning and had insisted on constant communication from his son and daughter-in-law.

As long as they had remained in cities, he had spoken to Andrew everyday. But once they had gone on their godforsaken trek, there had been absolute silence. On top of that Iris had been driving him up the wall to do something. Not that he wasn't worried himself.

The doorbell interrupted his thoughts as his butler came in to announce the Samuelsons. Johann Samuelson had come to America as an impoverished German youth and had stayed with relatives in Chicago, showing an uncanny acumen for his uncle's second-hand furniture business.

It was largely due to his hard work and foresight that his uncle today was one of the largest furniture dealers in Chicago. As for himself, he had done really well even though it had been hard work and twice as difficult for he was an immigrant but he had made it to the big time and a partnership in Wall Street's premium investment firm was something not to be ignored.

A truly self-made man, nearly everybody in the business world knew that he had come up the hard way and had always crooked his nose at the inheritors, who had everything laid out on a plate.

His partnership with Reed had raised quite a few eyebrows for Reed was nothing if not a Boston Brahmin and his family had been in the banking business for generations.

But both had recognised in each other a hunger for power which had brought them together. Samuelson's only regret was that he had no son to carry on after him, but Terry more than made up for the lapse.

Ever since the children got married, Samuelson had been at peace with himself. Now was the time to look forward to grandchildren. His wife Therese agreed wholeheartedly and they planned to shift to Long Island permanently and hand over the reins.

But where the hell were Andrew and Terry?

"Maybe they could not get through," said Iris, "Communications in third world countries are abominable."

"No, they would have reached back New Delhi by now, they would have got in touch," said Reed, "Even if they extended their programme, both are responsible enough to let us know. I can feel it, something is wrong."

Hearing the pessimism in Reed's voice, Therese burst into tears. "Do something Johann. I can't bear it," she whispered between sobs.

Johann Samuelson who had remained quiet uptil now said, "Yes, we can't sit here and wait for something to happen. Andrew and Terry are not adolescents upto some silly prank. Let me speak to Richard Davenport and see what he can do."

Richard Davenport was a senator whom India counted amongst her friends in the US. On more than one occasion he had stalled anti-India bills in the Senate and had raised a big hue and cry over repeated military assistance to Pakistan, India's sworn enemy. He could even ring up South Block, the office of the Prime Minister

of India if he wanted

Johann rang up Richard's Georgetown residence in Washington and relaxed automatically on hearing the deep baritone

"Relax Johann, the kids are on their honeymoon for God's sake, stop breathing down their neck," Richard said good naturedly. 'Still I'll speak to Nick at the embassy and see what I can do, if you are so worried.'

Nicholas Lang was the American ambassador to India and quite enjoyed the oriental ambience of his assignment He got along well with the MEA and there was less headache associated with a third world posting ever since the Russians got friendly and the cloak and dagger games had come to an end

Richard's call came just before he was to go for a reception at the Chinese embassy in honour of the visiting Chinese premier

"I'm in a hurry, Dicky, could you call back, can't be late for these diplomatic do's," he spoke into the phone while his wife struggled with his cuff links

"I do not think anything is amiss, since there has been nothing about White tourists in the papers These things get reported very quickly you know But I will keep an eye open and ask the home ministry to look into the matter if they do not get in touch over the weekend," he said and disconnected

"What is it?" asked Jenny Lang

"Oh some New York big shots uptight over their children who came trekking Seem to have gone underground Probably holed up in Hanuman Dhoka in Kathmandu, drugging their veins out Let's go"

But the Reeds and the Samuelsons waited in vain over the weekend There was no news of Andrew and Terry

Calls were placed on both sides of the globe, some angry, some fervent and a hunt was launched for the missing tourists They were traced uptill hotel Norkhill in Gangtok but after that there had been no clue It was as if they had been swallowed up by the earth

The superintendent of police was feeling the heat and was beside himself to find out something but to no avail They had not been booked with any trekking organisations and none had come forward with any information except that they had been seen shopping in the Sunday Bazaar at Lal Qorket

After that, nothing, absolute silence

A local stringer of the *The Telegraph* newspaper spied all the activity and frayed tempers in the central *thana* and asked around till the whole story was revealed to him Not that the hunt had been secretive Soon all the national dailies were ablaze with the news All sorts of theories were propounded

Kidnapped for ransom, some said, others said that they had gone rock climbing and could have died in some fatal accident but as the weeks went by, the story shifted to the inside pages of the newspapers Nobody knew what had happened to the newly married couple

At the American embassy on the beautiful Shanti Path in New Delhi Nicholas Lang was speaking to Richard Davenport

"No Dicky, they are definitely missing "

'The police has no clue, the Home ministry has promised to leave no ground uncovered we can only wait "

"I know it is tough on the parents but it is silly of them to go there alone Atleast they could have checked with us first "

"The Northeast is constantly in turmoil in India Although Sikkim is relatively peaceful, the people are of Mongoloid origin and have rarely felt an affinity with India They always insist on a separate identity "

As he was concluding his call, Lang, noticed Neil Kant come into the room Ostensibly the trade and economic attache at the embassy, he was a CIA agent and Lang often had little to do with him He was CIA s station master and was more often out of the embassy than in it.

Lang had probably never noticed, but Kant's name sounded more Indian than American Only its spelling was anglicised Few knew about his background Looking at his deep blue eyes and fair complexion, nobody could even guess that he was in reality half Indian and had been at pains all his life to disguise his third world background

His father Surinder Kant had migrated to the States in the early Fifties India was not yet equipped to put his abilities to use. He was perhaps the first physicist who was interested in nuclear technology and in those days when India was considerably closer to the Soviets than to the Americans, he had been quickly noticed by the CIA and offered a comfortable berth at NASA. The elder Kant jumped at the chance simply because he was a scien-

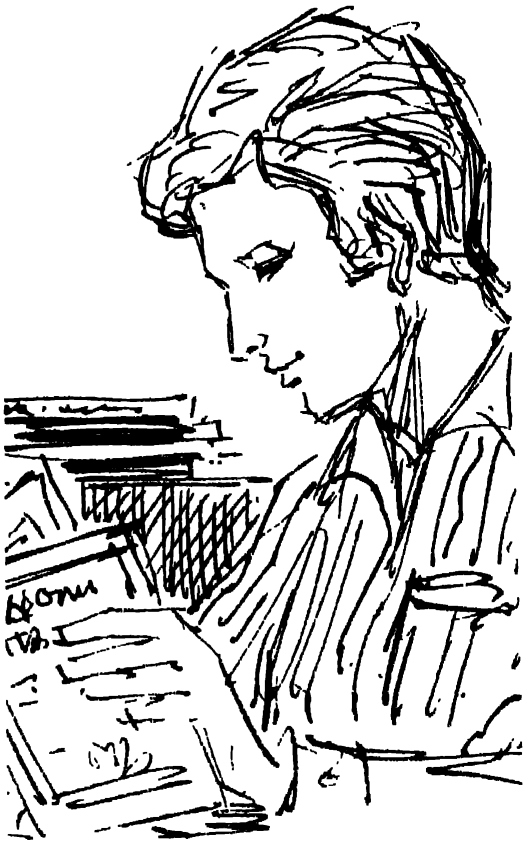
tist first and he knew that India could never afford the facilities which he craved for his research At least not in his lifetime

He did not think for a minute that his migration was part of a detrimental flow out of the nation, which soon came to be known as brain drain

What's more, the physicist had to break all ties with his mother country and never came back once he left his native shores Simply because he was a security risk and worked on sensitive military experiments It would not do if he went home one fine day and never came back The CIA was pleased with its find, he was a major asset

Surinder Kant missed home but drowned himself in his work and would often be seen at the heart of arguments trying to prove that India had more to it than snake charmers, elephants and impoverished maharajas

He married a Polish woman Anna and had one son and two daughters None of his children looked like him. His Indian blood called out in him to name his son Neil, which could be accepted in both communities, White and Brown. He agreed to his wife's request to baptise his children. But his bedtime stories to his son would be



from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata

So Neil grew up with a racial handicap. Even though he looked more Anglo Saxon than Brown, his father's background always hampered him from being accepted completely by fellow students. He did not know whether he was Indian or American. He felt inferior.

Noticing his son's confusion Surinder Kant got him books, Arnold Toynbee's *The Glory that was India*, translation of ancient Sanskrit manuscripts, a copy of the Geeta, works by Western historians on the ancient Indus valley civilisation and also Gandhi's tome, *My Experiments with Truth*.

It was this book which changed the course of Neil's life. He suddenly understood young Mohandas' dilemma when he was studying law in England and the subsequent rage that he felt when he was thrown out of the first class compartment of a train in South Africa. He was suddenly filled with pride for India.

He took a year off after he finished studying modern languages at Yale University and spent roaming around India. He even went looking for long forgotten relatives, staying with them, trying to converse and ridge the gap between the two worlds. He was pained by the obvious effort on the part of his cousins to please him so that they could be invited to the States. They did not understand at all that it was a tough life out there and the White man allowed nobody in his cushioned world.

He also realised America's folly in assuming that all third world countries were tilting towards communism due to Soviet influence. The time was momentous, the heady Seventies when several colonies across the world were gaining independence and wanted a share in international decision making.

In fact, all they wanted was money and materials for development and newly born African and Asian nations were not averse to playing one super power against the other in an attempt to gain the maximum benefits.

Neil Kant was recruited into the CIA from his Yale campus. It was in the aftermath of the Pokhran blast by which India had announced to the world that she was a threshold nuclear power and there was suddenly a need for agents who could understand the engine that was India.

He had proved to be an exceptional field worker with an ability to melt into any background. His dossier was several inches thick with a triple X security clearance required to go through it. He had broken more rules than CIA made and had been tolerated because he had delivered what was required and more. He had also come to terms with his dual identity knowing that he would always be an American first.

Kant was CIA's maverick, a person who preferred the bylanes of third world cities like Calcutta, Khartoum and Cairo to the slick cities of Western Europe. Although few superiors paid much attention to him for he was not a desk man and had little time to lick the a---s of the WASPish officials, he had seen the signs on the walls.

***

Sudip stepped out of the dirty railway station at Jalpaiguri and was immediately surrounded by taxi drivers.

"Where to sir? Where? Gangtok? Only 600 rupees. Maruti car sir..." As one of them attempted to pull his Adidas bag out of hand, he brushed him aside and spoke in rapidfire Nepali.

"I know my way around here and the rate to Gangtok is only Rs 450. I only want a ride till the Tenzing Norgay bus terminal."

Immediately, he sensed a new respect for him. The drivers began joking with him curious to establish his antecedents. After all there were quite a few Sikkimese and Nepalis settled abroad. He could be one of them. Maybe, they could wangle a few dollars out of him. But he did not look like a Nepali at all.

One of them had already found tourists going to Darjeeling and he magnanimously offered to drop Sudip at the bus terminal from where he would get SNT buses for Gangtok every half an hour.

But first he would stop for a typical Nepali meal at Lama's *dhaba*. His mouth watered at the thought of pork curry, sour cheese pickle, fried fish and fragrant rice.

At the bus terminal Sudip was lucky to get a seat in a bus which was leaving soon and as the bus started to move he dozzed off.

He came awake suddenly near Teesta town as the bus braked sharply to make way for an imported jeep speeding down from Kalimpong. A blonde head turned and looked grimly at the bus, before the jeep speeded ahead of them towards the Mall.

Sudip was immediately intrigued. Imported vehicles were few and far between and he looked appreciatively at the broad tyres, wheel caps, tinted glass and the smooth swift motion of the jeep. Cars and jeeps were a passion with Sudip and he was suddenly envious of the driver.

Maybe he would keep his pride aside and take a loan from his dad and buy a Mahindra jeep this time. Imported four-wheel-drive vehicles were just too expensive. He noticed the jeep parked at the check point but paid scant attention to it. He was yearning for home as the bus began its climb into the mountains.

Far below him the Teesta snaked sensuously in the opposite direction, its roar filling his ears, like a newly born cub on its first hunt. Soon it would become pregnant with mud and silt and waddle to its tryst with the Bay of Bengal. But here high in the hills, it enchanted Sudip, with its youthfulness.

His reverie was broken as the bus streamed into Gangtok chased by *coolies* and taxi drivers. He alighted amidst the hubbub of voices and breathed in the familiar smells and felt immediately at home. A hand clasped on his shoulder and he turned it into a bear hug. His father grinned at him and silently kissed his forehead.

Jatt ner Bua" he immediately lapsed into Nepali. "Are you well, father?"

Still he could not erase that invisible

wall between them

"Fit as a fiddle," he replied. Man Bahadur Adhikari was a short stocky man, a *tuladhar* Brahmin who came from one of the richest families of Sikkim. His mother had belonged to the Lepcha tribe from who he had inherited his tiny eyes along with vast tracts of land which were the basis of his wealth.

Man Bahadur's father had been Nepali and the trans tribal marriage between Sudip's grandparents in the early Twenties had caused a furore in the close knit Nepali community so that his father had been ostracised for his marriagge to a tribal girl. However, the birth of a son had changed all that but Sydip's grandmother had never felt at home in Gangtok's upper crust and after the death of her beloved husband she had gone back to Lachun, where her father's family still lived and she had made herself comfortable amongst her own people.

Although she rarely travelled to Gangtok any more, she expected her only grandchild to visit her regularly everytime he came home. Sudip too was fond his grandmother, remembering the musky smell of her clothes and her mouth constantly chewing *churpy*, a hardy cheese made from goat's and Yak's milk.

As father and son made their way to the car, one of the few Maruti 1000s in the area, Man Bahadur saw the local girls surreptitiously looking at his son. He felt his chest swell with pride but he could never understand Suddip's lack of interest in women. Maybe that woman still ruled his heart, God forbid.

As the car rolled homewards, they began exchanging gossip.

"Boju as usual expects you to visit her. This time I will not be able to accompany you."

"Why?" asked Sudip.

Their annual trip to Lachun was somethingg which his parents looked forward to as well. They would even polish their rifles and go hunting deep into the Himalayan forest looking for boar and deer, always coming back with something. There would be an open barbecue with the Lepcha men and women dancing and stomping into the hard ground, with snow flakes crackling under their yak skin shoes and the coins stitched on their caps glinting in the light of the fire.

"Something is in the air. I can't put my finger on it. The people seem to be restless. There have been too many political clashes. Even at Dussehra there had been stebbings. It was never like this before. Young men, who were nobody before, are strutting around drunk with power. It is as if somebody is financing *goondaism*."

"Relax dad, it is always like this before an election. Gurung has been in power for years and he is known to be corrupt, maybe his adversaries are pinning to unseat him."

But Man Bahadur knew what he was talking about. He was politically aware without being a politician and was respected for his wisdom and political acumen. He had been actively involved in the Nepali language issue and was proud that it was now included in the Constitution. He had often been asked to stand for elections but did not desire political office. On the other hand he had been often consulted by chief ministers. He was also respected in New Delhi because of the positive role he had played when Sikkim merged with the Union of India in 1975.

In short he was one of the most influential men in Gangtok and his riches had nothing to do with it. He felt slightly irritated at his son's simplistic explanation. Gurung was his personal friend.

"No, you have not been home for years, this is not plain politicking, but a lot of violence seems to be taking place and surprisingly none of the politicians seem to be involved. Everybody is beeing targeted. And the first casualty is trust. Nobody knows whom to believe. I am expecting my buyers to come and take a look at the produce anytime. Can't move this time. You will have to go alone."

He felt silent as the car climbed into the broad driveway of his beautiful home, a two-storied house made in the Tibetan style like a monastery complet with carved posts, cupolas and pagodas.

His mother waited on the porch and she ran down lightly as the car came to a stop. Again Sudip was enveloped into a hug and his mother's French perfume wafted upto him. Her erect Western bearing seemed incongruous in the traditionally Nepali surroundings. He looked down at the diminutive woman and suddenly felt like a little boy. His mother was a beauty, sultry looks combined with large luminous Bengali eyes shaped like a Hindu Goddess.

She was the toast of Sikkimese society known for her tasteful dinner parties where Bengali and Nepali cuisine was served in a tasteful mix. But sadly she had not been able to arrange her only son's wedding reception. Maybe this time he will agree, she thought.

Sudip kissed her cheeks and joked "So how many girls have you got lined up this time."

His mother reddened but laughed anyway. "I am an old woman, I long for the patter of small feet in the

house"

"Old, hah, you are timeless, Amma," Sudip replied

He had often heard of his father's love affair

In a family where a marriage by choice seemed to be the norm than an exception, love stories were retold at the slightest insistence.

After completing school in Gangtok, Man Bahadur had gone to Calcutta's St Xavier's College for graduation, resplendent in his Daura Surwal and Nepali topi. All the students had joked about his unusual attire which included a churidar like apparel with a kurta which closely resembled an Angarkha tied sideways, tipped with a coat. He was at pains to explain to his fashionable classmates that he was wearing the traditional attire of the Nepali men

Unable to bear the jokes, one day he had succumbed and had gone and got himself a three-piece suit from an Anglo Indian dressmaker on Park Street

Several pairs of eyes followed him curiously in college and there were sniggers but thankfully the jokes and laughter had stopped. He heaved a silent sigh of relief till one Bengali girl walked up to him

Eyes blazing, she raged, "Have you no self respect? Where is your pride? Just because a few fools make fun of you, you will give up your traditional ways and become a clone, next they will laugh at the way you eat so you will stop eating!"

Man Bahadur Adhikari, the leading scion of the Tuladhar family where even his mother spoke to him with respect and used a formal title and never his name had never been given such a tongue lashing. He was rendered speechless, slowly he raised his head to look into the most beautiful pair of eyes he had ever seen and was hooked for life

Years later he would still tease Sushmita that her eyes had watered with her anger, and Sush would blush deeply.

Of course after that day, Man Bahadur never wore anything but his traditional Nepali clothes but now he had an other problem to agonise over

How to tell Sushmita that he wanted to marry her?

She belonged to the cream of Bengali society, a *Bhadralok*, whose father, a leading lawyer was in some way connected to the Tagore family

Her father was progressive enough to send his only daughter to college but certainly not modern enough to marry her off to an ape from the hills who ate beef in his mother's Lepcha kitchen

Wooing Sushmita had been easy, it seemed she had always been aware of his presence, only he had been too embarrassed to notice girls, but to tackle her parents was a tough job

Sush felt that living in *Gangtok would* be an adventure, she could not visualise herself as a *bouma* (daughter-in-law) in a traditional Bengali household overseeing the preparation of *hilsa machh*. There was no guarantee that her husband would also allow her to step out of society. She could be under house arrest for ever. A life with Man Bahadur seemed exciting

In the end, the only way out for them was to elope

One bright morning, Sushmita dressed herself up in her bright red *ramtami* sari and climbed into her father's imported car to go to college but never to return. Her father and brothers closed her out of their life. Although Man Bahadur tried several times for a compromise, it was fruitless. Since then Sushmita had gone to Calcutta several times and had cruised past her Rashbehari Avenue house on quite a few occasions, she could never muster up the courage to knock on the severely closed gates ever. Finally after the birth of Sudip she had made Gangtok her home and felt at peace with her husband and his family, she had not even been informed about the death of her parents, reading their obituaries in *The Telegraph*. She knew she would never be welcome in Calcutta anymore

Instead she had concentrated in turning her home into paradise, putting her training to good use, there was a lot of jostling to get into her good books and an invitation to her table was always a matter to boast about. Today she was the the chairperson of several women organisations. As Man Bahadur had gone on to pile riches upon riches, they had become an indispensable part of society

But in a sharp contrast Sudip showed no signs of settling down in Gangtok

They had indulged him when he wanted to go to the States but when he went to study further in China and had settled down to an academic career in Delhi, Sushmita and Man Bahadur had been mortified

Sudip had turned out like other Nepali boys who go to big cities to study, never to return, feeling themselves to be too good for their native place. But in solitude Sushmita knew that it was the affair over Sonam that had taken Sudip away

She had thought that time would heal him, but looking at him, his tired eyes creased with loneliness, she knew that he had never forgotten her

She knew these things, after all she was his mother ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4 THURSDAY 5 FRIDAY 6 SATURDAY 7 SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
BOMBAY					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GOA					
GUWAHATI					
HYDERABAD					
IMPHAL					
JAIPUR					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SHILLONG					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
AMSTERDAM					
BANGKOK					
BUCHAREST					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA-14[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 14[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PARO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Hatigirl (Jammu-Tawi) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Farbandhi (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Tootan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chorjan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kalhar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	6-55	6084
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail	8-20	8001
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	2850
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	[illegible]	2022
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	8033
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express	[illegible]	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express	[illegible]	2842
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulakhuma (Secunderabad) Express	[illegible]	7004
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	13-15	631[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tillagarh Express	[illegible]	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express	[illegible]	8008
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	8-30	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	2822
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	15-10	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible]	8015
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express	[illegible]	10[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express	16-1[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	[illegible]	632[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays) In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiries at Sealdah 3503535-37.

The prize-winning Shitzu of the Rawa's

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

Bangalore is fast turning into a dog's paradise, reports ***Dipti Dave***

If you walk down the tonier streets of Bangalore the first things you notice are the signs outside each bungalow "Beware of dog," they warn unwary passers-by, and in case you miss the point, there are ghastly drawings of the most ferocious beasts accompanying the text Clearly, in the garden city of India, dogs spell security from intruders and prospective burglers

Not everyone, though, keeps dogs just so they can guard their property, and scare away trespassers Increasingly, people in Bangalore are keeping dogs just because they like to. The Amarnaths, for instance, who refer to their two dogs, Rocky and Jackie, as "our children", and pamper them just as they would their progeny Rocky and Jackie love to eat out, go on long drives, have their birthdays celebrated every year, and lie in their warm beds late into the morning during the winter

The Amarnaths 'adopted' Rocky, a German Spitz, around four years ago Even though the dog slept with his adoptive parents, he was given a room to himself in the Amarnath abode "I love collecting stuffed toys, bone china miniatures of dogs and cats and other knick-knacks," says Mrs Amarnath. "I keep them in his room and tell Rocky that everything is his And clearly, he understands this, because when my nephews are visiting and they happen to enter Rocky's room, he keeps a close watch on their movements in case they slip out with some of his stuff."

Jackie, a miniature Spitz, who joined the family a year ago, initially caused Rocky a lot of heartburn. But over time, the two have grown close and are now virtually inseparable Every evening, they create a ruckus about going out, and says Mrs Amarnath, "If they happen to hear the names of their favourite restaurants all hell breaks loose." And since they appear to understand, Tamil, Telugu and English, it is difficult to keep such information from them.

Since most restaurants refuse to serve dogs, the Amarnaths take their 'children' to drive-in joints, where the waiters know them. "Once they see our car," she says, "they themselves place the order for Jackie and Rocky: *roomali roti* and chicken without *masala*."

At the Rawa household, the quiet atmosphere belies the fact that there are 13 dogs and one Siamese cat under one roof. Amelia Rawa is a breeder and her Shitzus, a rare breed of Chinese palace dogs, have won numerous prizes at shows throughout the country. She has six Shitzus and three pups of the same breed, and seven Golden Retrievers, of which Buddy seems to be the favourite of her husband, Ron Rawa. "I got him around three-and-a-half years ago," says Ron, an American heading a multinational company in the city, "and since then he has been an obedient dog though he loves parties. If our guests do not mind, we make sure that he is there to enjoy himself."

The Rawas came to Bangalore from the Philippines around four years ago. Amelia, a Filipino, had a kennel in her own country and imported the Shitzus from there. "Taking care of these dogs," she says, "is a lot of hard work. I have to groom them everyday to keep their long fur coat knot-free."

Home to such rare breeds as Great Danes, Ugly Queen, Bull-mastiffs, poodles, West Highland White Terriers, Welsh Coorgis and Belgian Shepherds, Bangalore is soon becoming the centre for dog breeders in the country. And with eight out of every 10 households boasting a pet dog, there has been an increase in the demand for better-equipped veterinary clinics, shops selling animal care products and graveyards to bury dogs and cats.

Dr Jagannath, who runs a pet care clinic in one of the posh areas of the city, and says he has modelled his services on the Western system, gives first priority to cleanliness. "People," says Dr Jagannath, "avoid taking their pets to government-run veterinary hospitals because these, they complain, are dirty and ill-equipped." His own clinic is open only to members, which he says is the only way to keep the premises germ-free. There are around 2,000 members of his clinic, of which 70 per cent have become permanent.

In around two months' time, Dr Jagannath plans to introduce an insurance policy with Oriental Insurance

Paws and Claws: Bangalore's exclusive shop for pets

Mrs Amarnath with Rockie (junior) and Jackie at Rocky's birthday

Buddy, the Golden Retriever, playing with Shitzu pups

covering accidents, litter deaths and missing dogs, with owners paying him Rs 100 per month, for instance, if their pet costs them Rs 1,000. His clinic also offers burial service in a small plot that was donated by a friend. Dr Jagannath charges Rs 100 for every burial, and has buried five or six dogs over the last five years. There are, however, some families, which insist on cremating their pets and taking their ashes for immersion in the Cauvery.

Dr Jagannath's clinic also offers boarding and delivery facilities for dogs that are left behind by families which go away on holiday or are having pups. The dogs are accommodated in a room, which is fitted with spartex tiles (which are easy to clean), and are divided into four cubicles, one cubicle to every dog. Apart from fans — which are switched off only at night — the dogs are also provided with a mosquito repellent. There is a bathroom provided for bathing and grooming, with the best of shampoos and soaps on offer. There are two attendants who come in for two hours each every morning and evening and are paid a salary of Rs 2,000, for duties that include walking the dogs daily. "They take good care of the animals," says Dr Jagannath, "and there have been no complaints so far."

However, this "while-you-are-away" care centre eschews all responsibility if your pet dies when you are away. And before the owners leave they have to sign an agreement, providing details like the animal's diet chart, the telephone numbers of friends who can be contacted if there is an emergency, and when they will be back. The daily charge is Rs 50, which includes food. "We give them the same food that they are used to," says Dr Jagannath. "But even then, there are times when I have to coax them into eating by bribing them with chocolates and ice creams."

The Rawas use imported soaps, shampoos and deodorants for their dogs, but the Amarnaths make do with the products available in local shops, which have a mind-boggling variety. Most petowners patronise Paws and Claws, one of the most exclusive shops for pets in Bangalore. Says its owner, Indra, "We have lots of things for dogs, but there's not much available for cats as there is not enough demand. But we will soon start selling cat food."

As of now, Paws and Claws is a dog lovers' paradise, selling such merchandise as chewing sticks (available in chocolate and plain flavours), lollipops, musical balls, wooden balls, dumbells, deodorants, talcs, tonics, sleeping cots and baskets made from Kashmiri bamboo with a foam-lined mattress, which are machine washable. There are also stainless steel pots in all sizes and colour co-ordinated bathing tubs.

The shop also has a special range of Shahnaz Hussain products called Shapet. So, if your dog is allergic to ordinary talcs and soaps, you can switch over to Avurvedic lotions, including anti scabies skin oil to anti-tick hair cleanser. The price range is quite reasonable, going from Rs 16 to Rs 85, while talcum powder sells from Rs 25 to 50.

The store also sells greeting cards which one dog-owner can send to another, posters and dog care books. Recently, Paws and Claws has also started selling dry meals, containing minerals and vitamins for growing pups. Clearly, a dog's life is not what it's often made out to be ■

 Owing to pressure on space, 'Junior Whirl', could not be carried this week — Editor

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, the sun changes signs, ushering in opportunities for rapid advancements, hectic socialising and a bit of romancing, too. Pay careful attention to practical matters, because the better organised you are, the more you will accomplish. News, views and messages figure.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Time to put your shoulder to the wheel and heave. But it would not be wise to neglect the home, because trouble could come from that direction. Don't bury disturbing emotions. Work through them. That's the astro way to be happy. A bit of renovation and decoration is to be expected.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

This is a week of movement and gains but it will need a little help from your side. You will have to take the initiative and build enthusiasm and that should be quite easy. It would be wonderful to concentrate on partnerships and relationships, as these will mean the world to you. Publicity and ceremony are foretold.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Clearly, a week of joint-finances, loans, funds, trusts, legacy and it should spread out in the next 23 days to sizeable proportions. Expert visitors and foreigners to descend upon you. That should prove very stimulating. You do score in your work, thanks to Mercury-Venus fine placing.

Leo
July 21 --- August 21

Now is the time for partnerships, be they personal or strictly business, or both. Attachments and ties will have a whole new meaning for you. Loans and funds will be required for a project and you should get it too. Birth of children, anengagement, a marriage, are the other eventualities for Leons.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

This week the focus will be on work, be it job, business or profession. It is also a time when changes in the home/office/shop will start. Buying/selling is a salient feature of it. Many Virgoans will know or at least feel the transformation and changes in their attitude. A touch of compassion will be there.

Libra
September 23 -- October 22

You will experience the power to be your own master, if you work to a plan, negotiate skilfully and do not shirk from responsibilities. Children will play a major part in your life. 1996 is for studies/communications. Also for improving the mind by education, books, visual aids and travel.

Scorpio
October 23 -- November 22

A week of gains and contentment though the two seldom go together. Ganesha says, many of you will be involved in some way or other, with buying/selling and also renovation/decoration of the house or office. You will be concentrating on personal affairs and that will naturally include health and property.

Sagittarius
November 23 - December 20

Jupiter Venus in your sign, according to Western astrology gives you just the rocket thrust you need to turn your life around, be it in sports, finance, marriage and so on. Perhaps, the greatest change will be in your attitude towards life. This week, a trip is possible and you communicate effectively.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

Rest assured that despite pressures on time, friends and supporters will help you a great deal. There will be an occasion to socialise or hold a meet, a conference shortly. You will be up to your ears in family and financial matters and here pay attention very particularly to behind-the-scene activities.

Aquarius
January 20 February 18

Slowly but surely, you will be introspective and soul searching. Expenses will be high for a worthy cause. You will certainly extend a helping hand to others. In your work, expect to go places, anticipate invitations and parties. Do socialise. A trip or a house move is indicated for some of you.

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

The sun in your sign helps you to get things done and motivates you into action. This week you will be working your heart out in job, profession or business. Success is definitely indicated. You will have the knowledge and the skills to make a real go of it. Try to take a broad and humane view of men and matters.

BIRTHDAYS

February 25: Moon trine Neptune makes you at ease with princes and paupers and assures influx of money. Romance and promotion complete the scene for you.

February 26: Moon's first quarter gives you the options, so make the most of it. Those in teaching and writing do extremely well.

February 27: Moon-Venus sextile will result in luxuries, comforts and more importantly, new opportunities for romance, kids and marriage.

February28: Moon trine sun leads to excellent placing for those in business and profession. Happiness in the homefront is also assured. You can look forward to an upward swing in your life.

February 29: Moon trine Mars favours engineers, executives, explorers, hunters and those in defence services. This a good time also for poets and writers.

March 1: Mars sextile Jupiter will compel you to work hard and long. There will be obstacles on the way. But you will win the game.

March 2: Sun-Jupiter sextile shows given imagination and labour, this particular placing will work best. Money, fame, children and romance are on the cards.

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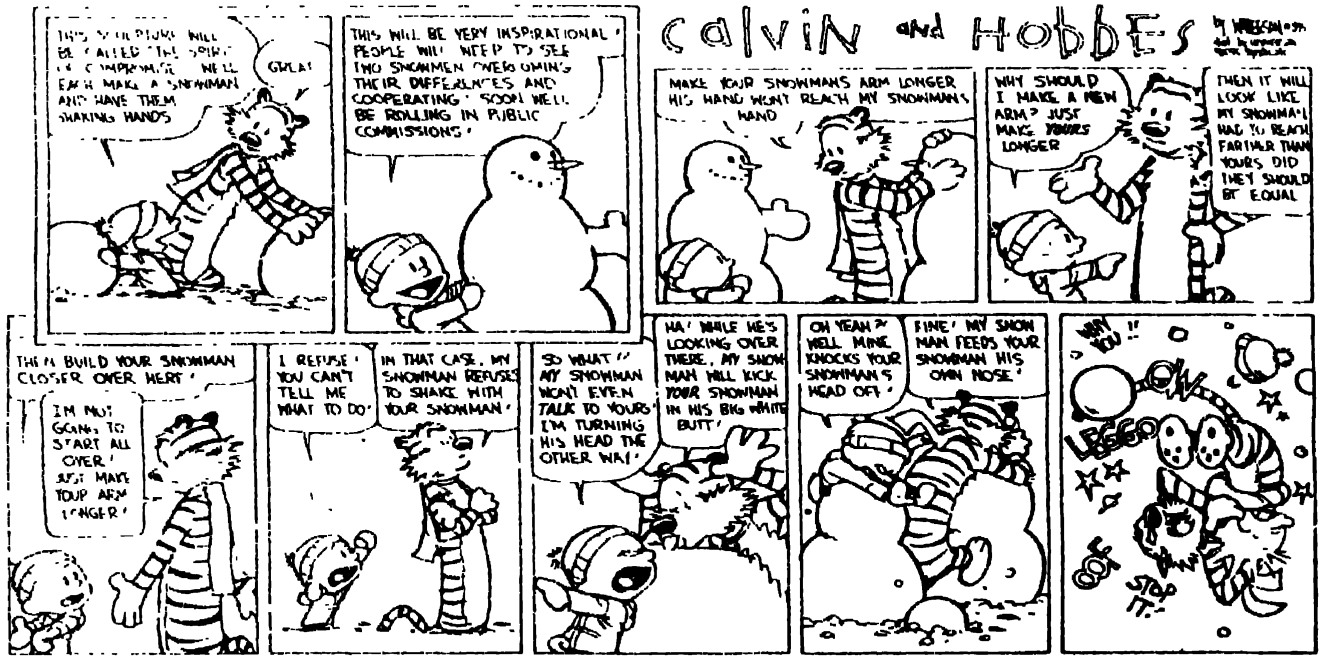
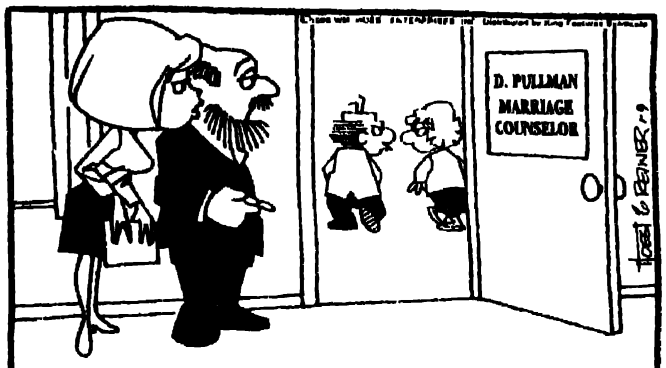
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES WATTERSON

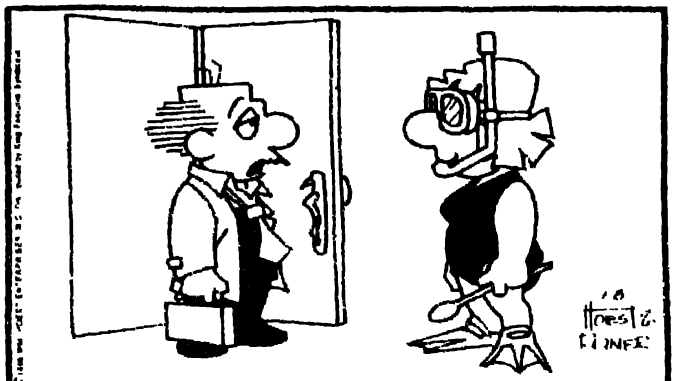


THE LOCKHORNS

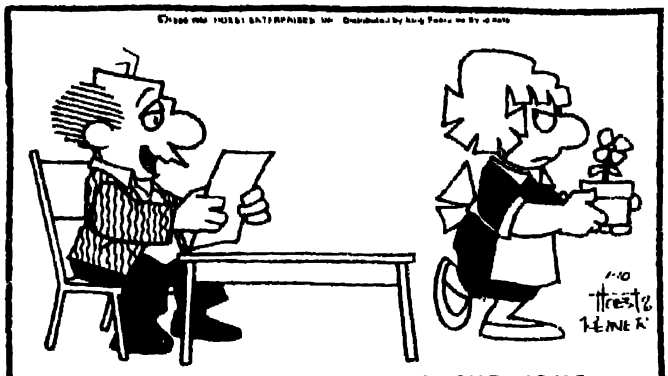


"WHAT A COLORFUL COUPLE . . . SHE'S GREEN WITH ENVY AND HE'S PURPLE WITH RAGE."

"LEROY LOVES THAT COUCH . . . HE SPENDS EVERY WAKING MINUTE ON IT."

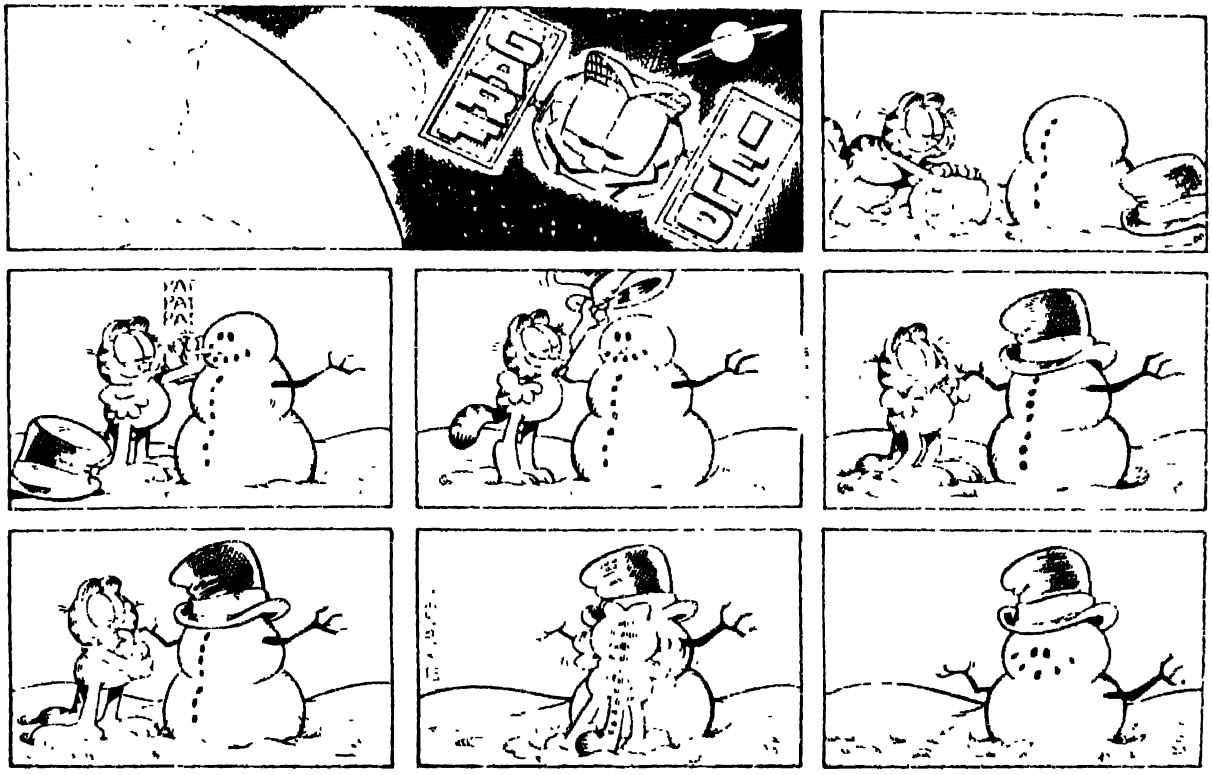


"SUBMARINE SANDWICHES FOR DINNER?"

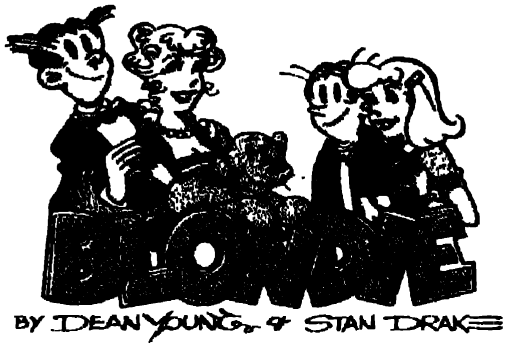


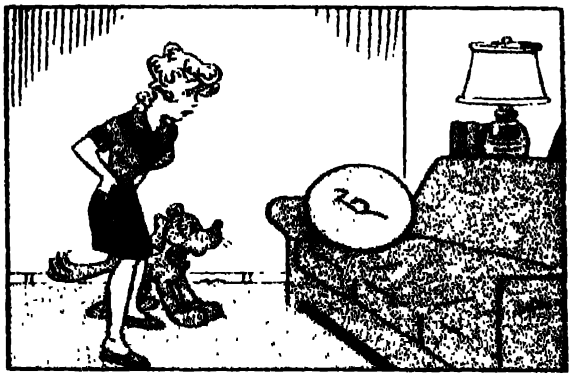
"WELL, LORETTA . . I'VE TRACED YOUR MOTHER'S FAMILY BACK TO SALEM, MASS."

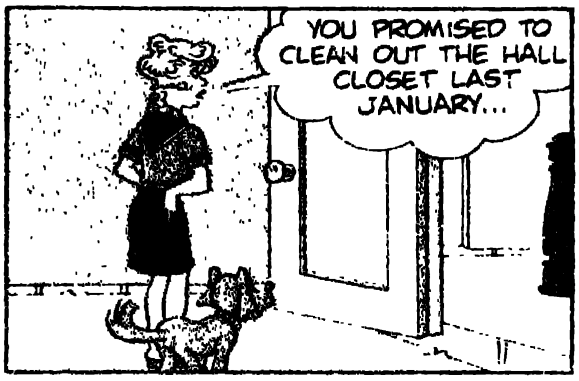
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

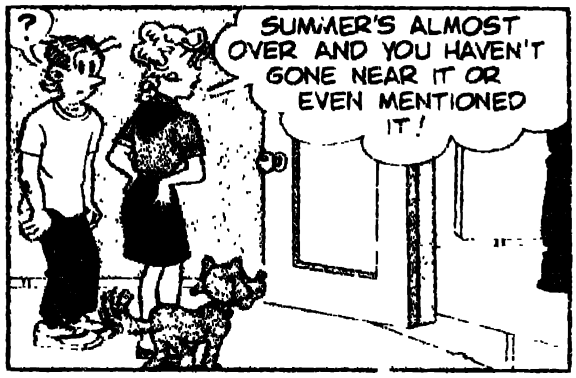


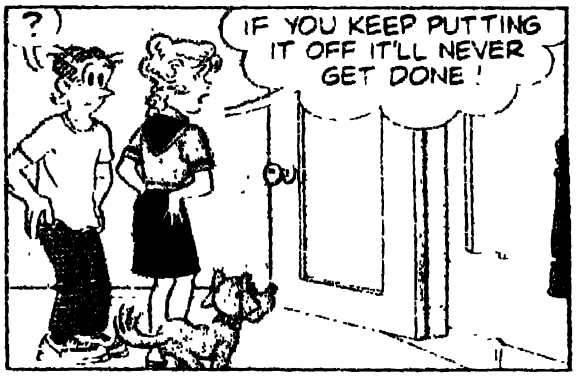
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP


BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

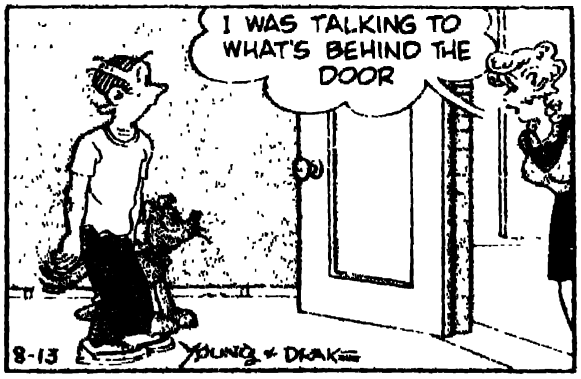


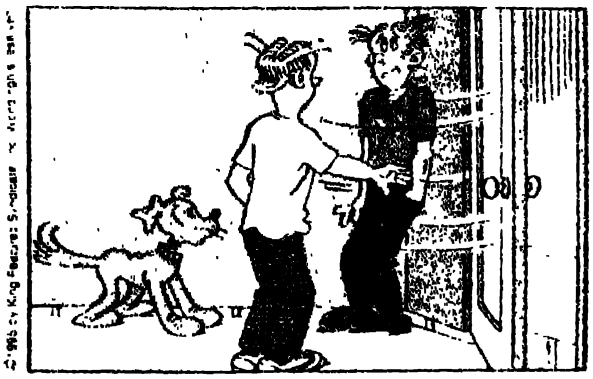

YOU PROMISED TO CLEAN OUT THE HALL CLOSET LAST JANUARY...


?
SUMMER'S ALMOST OVER AND YOU HAVEN'T GONE NEAR IT OR EVEN MENTIONED IT!


?
IF YOU KEEP PUTTING IT OFF IT'LL NEVER GET DONE!

WHY WERE YOU TALKING TO THE DOOR, MOM?
I WASN'T...


I WAS TALKING TO WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR
8-13
YOUNG & DRAKE



Mike Fay

LIMELIGHT

HE'S PLAYING OUR SONG

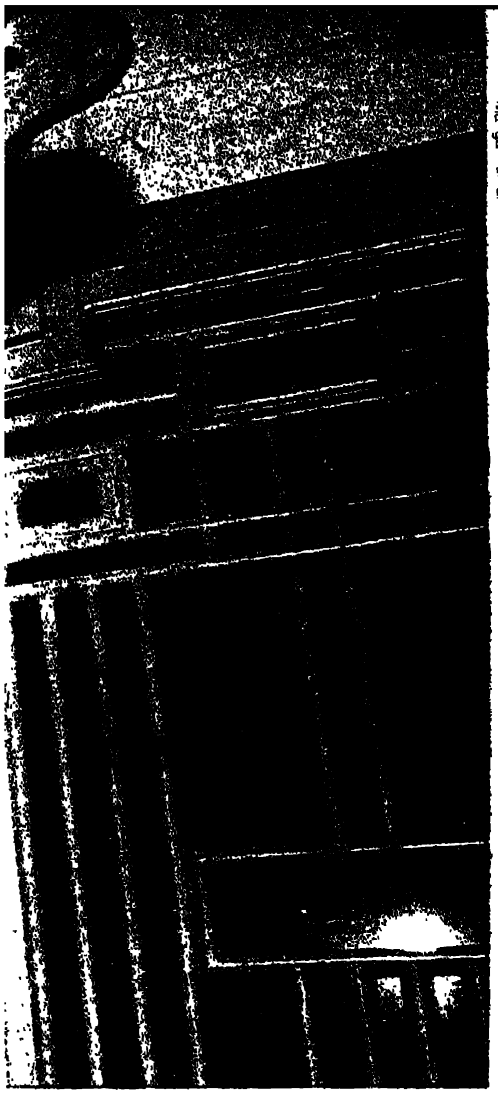
Mike Fay, the singing legend of the Seventies, is back in Delhi and in good voice, reports ***Samita Bhatia***

"It's spelt T-r-i-n-c-a-s — you've got it wrong." Rarely will the interviewee [illegible] into your quickly scribbled not rection. But Mike Fay does. "Our band was called Mystik [illegible] spelt M-y-s-t-i-k-s. That was in Calcutta way back in 1969 when we played to this packed restaurant on Park Street."

If you're wondering who Mike Fay is, why just ask anyone who frequented the Oberoi or the Maurya in Delhi during the Seventies. Says one fan, "Fay was the one who almost single handedly orchestrated the concept of 'night life' into the non-existent entertainment scene in the capital."

If Cafe Chin ois at the Oberoi and Bali Hi at the Maurya had reverberated to the strains of his music then, today it's the Silk Orchid at the New Delhi Hilton that's swaying to the strains of his guitar. Great news for the old timers — Mike Fay is back for an encore. It took this country 14 long years to lure the musician back — but it has finally happened.

Of course, by now Fay's not your standard rocker. He's close to 50, though he looks much younger. He



sports a necklace of tiny red, black and white beads which he is convinced is his good luck charm. He holds an Indian passport, speaks very comfortably in Hindi, knows a smattering of Punjabi. English (of course), Italian and German and when his voice acquires a raspy tone, many even liken him to John Lennon.

He always plays live — no pre-recorded sequences will do for him ("what if the power trips?"). Born of a Pakistani father and British mother and having travelled through the world, Fay is still very Indian at heart.

The journey back 'home' has been long and traversed three continents — Africa, Europe and of course, America. "Africa was a great mix of music and wildlife safaris; In America I spent a long time managing a music store and playing on weekends at exclusive country clubs and private parties for which we charged an arm and a leg," recalls Fay.

It was last June that Fay made a tentative and somewhat low-key Indian comeback. That was when Bali Hai at The Maurya had dragged him away from his proposed two-week vacation to a month long "working holiday".

"It worked out well, as the short comeback helped me get over a difficult period in my life — the death of my mother, a ragged divorce and hard times without a regular job. Besides, it gave me the opportunity of visiting my girl friend, Priya, in Pune (who is going to be his wife next month). It was then that I decided to return to India after tying up all the loose ends in the States. And then it was a kind of 'musical hotels' after I returned to Delhi." The Hyatt Regency bagged him for eight weeks before Fay decided to move onto greener pastures.

Armed with the Mike Fay legacy of the Seventies he found Delhi very receptive to his music, and the offers came swiftly. Though he lived a better part of his childhood in Bombay but Delhi — that still remembers him well and fondly — was always the first choice for him.

What was meant to be just a one night stand to usher in 1996 at the Thai restaurant, The Silk Orchid, turned out to be a three month contract with the Hilton management. Just as the gourmet meal — 'Tom Yum Koong' soup, 'Pla Koong' and 'Kaeng Keow Waan Kai' — tingles your palate, Fay and his three-member band, Impulse (and the drum machine), will belt out some popular oldies and current hits, *Free as a Bird* and even *Nights in White Satin*.

"It surprised me no end that despite a whole generation having passed by in the 14 years of absence, people still remembered me and were bringing their children — the new generation — to listen to me play" says Fay. He's nostalgic about the times before 1982 when he left town. "We really did take Delhi by surprise with our high powered music and dance sequences that lasted from 11 pm to one am. On weekends, the band didn't take a break." Delhi loved Fay and gave him the recognition and appreciation that he cherishes till today.

Today, 50 per cent of what Fay plays comprises hits of two decades back. "We rehash them, add some new beats and our diners really relish this music." But Fay is disappointed with his Delhi audiences. "Doesn't Delhi listen to the radio or watch TV? Eight out of the 10 requests that I get from the diners are the same and for the really old, old songs. I don't even

remember all the words for some of them!"

Ask him to play *Evergreen Love* and Fay might just whisper over the mike "I thought you could do better than this." So, be prepared to be sorely disappointed.

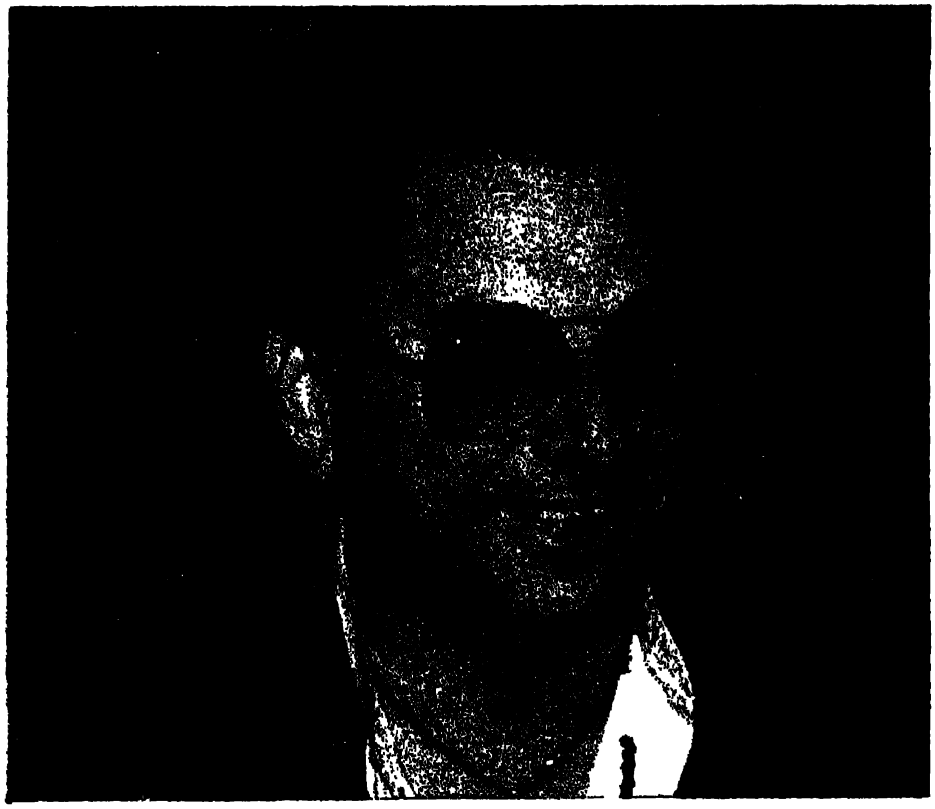
However, the Impulse and Fay combine adds at least two new songs to their repertoire each week. He recalls, "While disco was really big in those days, it seems just as popular today though it has been peppered heavily with the *bhangra*. We play that too."

But it's not just the preferences that have largely remained unchanged over the years. Fay observes a little sadly that it's also the local bands that have stagnated. Which is why he has some lofty plans for them up his sleeve.

If Fay was the first one to wake Delhi with the beat of his music, he might just also be the first one to streamline the manner in which the local bands function (which at the moment is quite haphazard).

Top on his list of priorities is setting up a booking agency which will be geared towards bringing the worthy bands under one umbrella. The agency will not only help the musicians get good placements, but will be targeted to raising the quality of their music, even providing them with quality equipment of international standard. "I can visualise a professionally run office, a kind of one stop shop for the maybe 20 or more bands in the city," he muses with a far away look in his eyes.

In case you had any doubts on the score Mike Fay is back for good and he promises to get better with each gig. ■



SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This week: Gauri Shah Rukh Khan

Claim to fame: She is the woman whom Shah Rukh Khan, the heart-throb of millions, wed, despite objections from her family — and the lady herself.

She wasn't willing?: Not really. She broke off with Khan on the grounds that they couldn't continue seeing each other in the face of parental opposition and refused to meet him for months.

Was Shah Rukh crushed?: You've got to be joking. The man wouldn't recognise a brush-off if it bit him on the nose. He just followed Gauri home one day, ambushed her on the street and threatened to sing, dance and generally create enough of a nuisance unless she relented.

Did the ploy work?: Like a charm. The couple wed shortly afterwards, with the blessings of Gauri's family (Shah Rukh only had one surviving sister.)

Early days: Gauri followed her husband to Bombay, where the couple lived with a friend — the producer of *Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa* — for a while before they moved into their own flat.

Happy days?: Oh yes, very much so. Gauri and Shah Rukh appeared to be surgically attached at the hip, and made joint appearances at most filmi functions, quite the perfect couple. Shah Rukh even refused to pose with his heroines for the benefit of the photographers; Gauri, he said, was the only woman for him.

So did he pose with her?: Are you kidding? Don't you know that men like Khan protect their wives from the menacing media, not expose them to its wily ways? Well okay, maybe they do, but only when they want some positive publicity.

She remained in the background, did she?: Ah, not quite. It was difficult to find a film party shot which didn't have a minidress-clad Gauri lurking in the foreground.

Shah Rukh's reaction: Why shouldn't my wife wear minis if she wants to? After all, she's worn them all her life, she's comfortable in them, and what's more, she has the figure for them. And anyway, she's not in the movies, I am. So, if you have to criticise someone, it should be me, not her. Gauri is not a public person.

Isn't she?: Well, she's given interviews to film magazines about how much she loves her husband, and how she trusts him implicitly. She's veejayed the *BPL Oye* show, and she is part of the Shiamak Davar dance troupe, with which she performs on stage.

But what does any of this have to do with Shah Rukh?: Nothing at all, if you discount the fact that Khan appeared with her on the *BPL Oye* show, ostensibly to give her moral support, and held her in a deathless embrace before each commercial break. And that when she performed a solo number

was *Yeh kali kali aankhen*, which Shah Rukh had danced to in *Baazigar*.

So, what's wrong with that?: It would have been quite all right if both Gauri and Shah Rukh hadn't made such a song and dance about how she was more than just an extension of her husband; she was her own woman.

Her own woman?: Well, as they say, go figure. ■

DEV BENEGAL *is basking in the media accolades that have followed the all-India release of his award-winning film,* English August. *Born, as Benegal never fails to point out, on the same day as the Lumiere brothers screened the first film 65 years earlier, Benegal has grown up on a diet of American and English cinema. He has filmed several documentaries, including* Anantapuram *or the* Infinite Forms, *on handlooms and the* Field of Shadows *(for BBC's Channel Four). He is already working on his next mega venture* — Ravan & Eddie.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A holiday in Madna with Anuradha and Ishan
What is your greatest fear?
Being asked to spend that holiday in Goa instead
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
Mahatma Gandhi

What is your nightmare?

To have Indian Airlines passengers smile at one another

What do you dislike most in others?
That they don't appreciate the Mahatma today but freak out on Bill Clinton
What do you dislike most in yourself?
No comments
What is your most precious possession?
My wife — Anuradha
What objects do you always carry?
Anuradha, Ishan and my Powerbook
What makes you most depressed?
The fall in Apple Computer Stock
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
That I don't look like Pierce Brosnan.
What is your favourite word?
Any four letter word
What is your favourite journey?
From Bombay to Madna — it puts life in perspective
What is your favourite dream?
To be featured in a column like this.
What is your nightmare?
To have Indian Airlines passengers smile at one another.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
The woman I'm presently having an affair with — Anuradha
What is your source of sustenance?
That Pierce Brosnan has signed a three movie deal as James Bond. I still have two more shots at making the ultimate Bond
On what occasions do you lie?
When I meet my producers
What is you greatest regret?
That I didn't direct *Rangeela*. I loved the line about Julia Roberts' mother harassing Steven Spielberg.
What has been your happiest moment?
Directing the song sequence in *English August* which appeared in the international version.

What makes you most depressed?

The fall in Apple Computer Stock

What brings tears to your eyes?
Agastya's performance in *English August*
How do you relax?
Hang out on the Bombay Stock exchange floor
What do you envy most in others?
That they don't need to wear a baseball cap
How would you like to be remembered?
As the person vaporised by Bruce and Arnie
How would you like to die?
I'd like to be "terminated with extreme prejudice" by Bruce Willis and Arnie in a Sam Peckinpah film directed by Shekhar Kapur

At the shooting site: Dev Benegal (right) with actor Rahul Bose

ACIDITY ? ANOREXIA ? CONSTIPATION ?

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Different drivers put their cars through different kinds of torture. That's why there are different kinds of Helix. Which make your car's engine relax in different ways. With the same confidence, trust and technology of Shell. So choose for your car its own blessing. Choose your own Helix.

THE FORMULA TO FIGHT CAR STRESS

3 MARCH 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Pleasing the Palate

■ 'Food for Thought' (January 7) was educative as well as entertaining. *Rasa* or sensuousness is the soul of Indian cooking. It is this *rasa* which has popularised Indian cuisine abroad.

Many exclusive Indian restaurants are doing fabulously well in America and Britain. Spicy Indian food is a big hit there.

Can any Western dish match the taste of our *desi bhupa ilish*? India offers the most varied fare, each state and region boasting of its distinct culinary. For an Indian to make a choice between home and Western food is difficult.

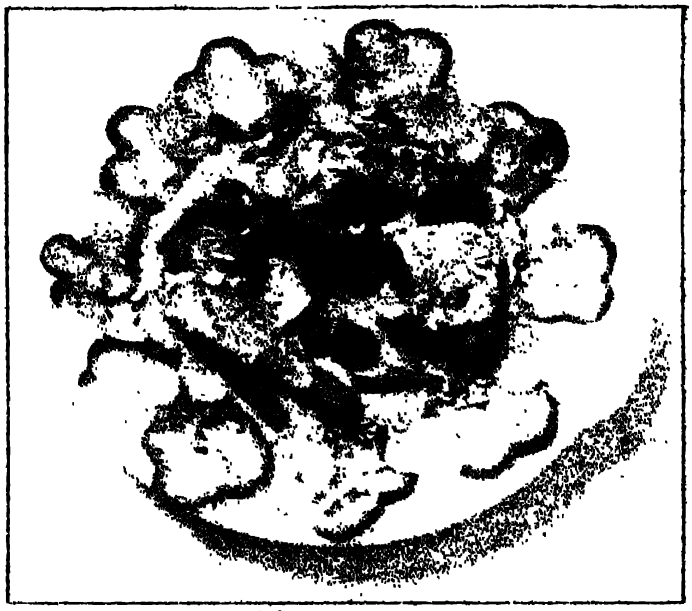
Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ There is nothing like good Indian food. I am a man of 77 and still going strong, reading, writing and exercising. My food habits are *saatvik*, pure vegetarian, which have helped me to maintain perfect health all through my 77 years.

P.C. Dasgupta,
Calcutta

■ Cooking is also an art and needs the right blending of ingredients to achieve the right taste. Both the Unani and Ayurvedic systems believe that different fruits and vegetables have different seasonal effects on the mind and health.

M.S. Quraishy,
Calcutta



Nothing like Indian cuisine

■ Jiggs Kalra, for a change, talks about the numerical significance of Indian cuisine. His exotic dishes, the recipes of which appeared in the Magazine earlier, may make colourful copy but considering the soaring market prices it is not that easy to purchase those quaint ingredients of his recipes.

Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia

■ The entire process of cooking should have an aesthetic appeal: right from purchasing the ingredients for *pakwan* to its cooking and finally serving it on a platter.

Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

Unbreakable Bond

■ Whatever happened to Ruskin Bond's column? I, for one, enjoyed reading his essays. In a world full of complications the childlike simplicity of his writings was endearing.

I am sure the slot will now be taken over by fashion and five-star living.

Mayajit Mazumdar,
Kharagpur

■ The Ruskin Bond column was the major attraction of the Magazine. I am disheartened that you have chosen to discontinue with it.

Bikram Saha,
Rahara (W.B.)

Honeymoon Special

■ I was taken aback that the Magazine had to publish an extract from a book like *How to Arrange a Wedding* which gives a long list of articles that would be needed during a honeymoon. Articles which have more cerebral appeal would be more appreciated.

Tania Chakrabarty,
Kharagpur

■ How convenient it is to be presented with a list of necessary items one needs for a honeymoon. The Magazine would be of great help to those embarking on a honeymoon or planning to get married.

Prabal Guha,
Patna

INSIDE

Shashi Tharoor

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SHASHI THAROOR'S impressions of India after globalisation

PAGE 26

MANEKA GANDHI raises her fingers yet again. This time to stop Goa's favourite sport bull fighting

16 TIME TABLE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
26 FOCUS
30 FIRST PERSON

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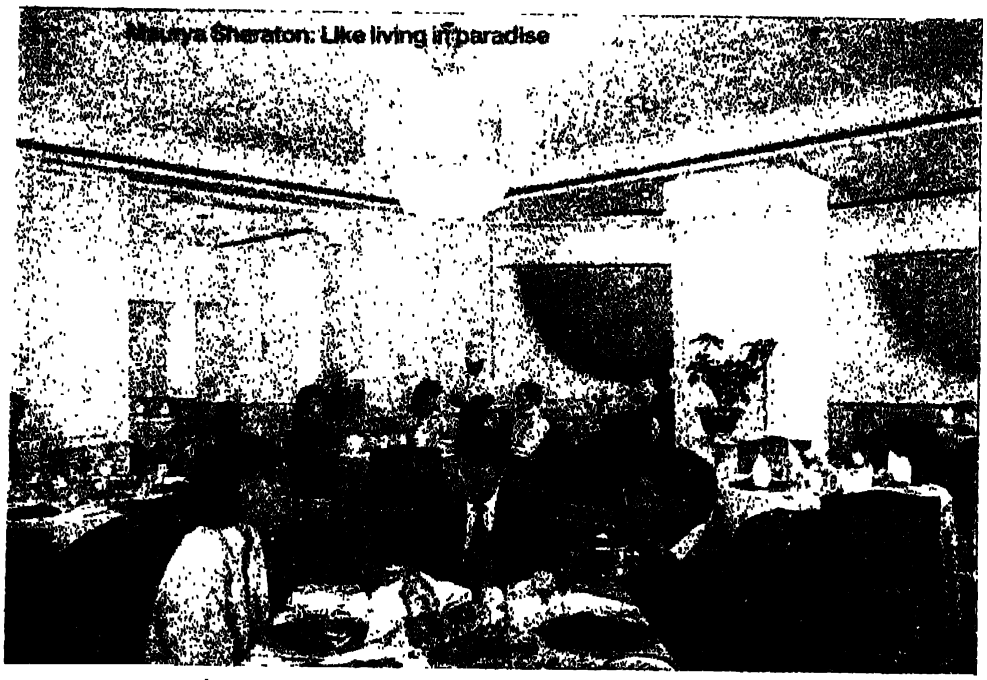
COVER STORY

THAROOR'S INDIA

If this is globalisation, give him swadeshi *any day*


Maurya Sheraton: Like living in paradise

ON MY FIRST NIGHT IN DELHI, the lift at the Maurya Sheraton took us up to the 12th floor in a breathtaking six or seven seconds. "Remarkable," I commented admiringly to the friendly hotel employee in a maroon sari and businesslike page-boy haircut, who had draped a three kg marigold garland around my neck as I stepped across the threshold. "Must be among the fastest lifts in the world."

She took my praise in stride, as well she should have. Jetlagged after an 18-hour journey from New York, I had failed to notice that this was not some super-speedy new elevator technology that the Maurya had brought into Delhi, but rather some highly creative labelling. When I finally woke and looked out of my window, I realised that what the lift buttons had called the 12th floor was in fact the second. The gleaming Maurya elevator had merely taken me for a ride — and a shorter ride than I'd imagined.

I couldn't keep the accusatory tone out of my voice the next time I ran into the maroon sari. "Twelfth floor, hanh?" I said pointedly. "I didn't think liberalisation meant being liberal with facts."

She was surprised that I had taken offence. "Our foreign visitors much prefer to think of themselves as being on the 11th and 12th floors rather than the first or second," she [illegible] wide-eyed innocence. "And they don't look out of the windows that much." [illegible] the new India. An India I was discovering from the outside, an India of five-[illegible] welcoming garlands and smooth-talking hotel staff, where nothing is quite

Shashi Tharoor

what it seems (not even the elevator buttons), where windows are not meant to be opened and appearances are the only reality.

[There you go again. You're doing just what you criticised the Naipauls for, drawing generalised conclusions from one irrelevant example. "Nothing is what it seems?" That's true of any place, not just five-star hotels.]

I had averaged a visit home each year since leaving India for post-graduate studies in the US more than 20 years ago, but I had always stayed with family and friends, of whom thankfully I still have several across the country. This time, however, I was in India not on holiday but for work, to address a United Nations peace-keeping seminar and to accompany UN Under Secretary-General Kofi Annan on a series of official meetings. As a result, I was seeing another India the India we present to foreigners. It was a curiously disorienting experience.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not complaining. It's difficult to complain about a standard of honeymoon I have

rarely come across in four continents in the course of a peripatetic professional life: overwhelmingly attentive staff who were far more numerous than their counterparts in the developed world and far more capable than their counterparts in the developing, startlingly efficient housekeeping, and food of a deliciousness and variety that Western cuisines would be hard put to imagine. One could gladly exchange a week in paradise for a week in the Maurya Sheraton, and not notice the difference.

Provided somebody else is paying the bill.

What should an Indian make of a room rent that costs more, in one night, than any of the hotel's diligent staff make in a month? Of a telephone system that charges Rs 7 a pulse for local calls? Of an efficient laundry that will wash and return your socks the same day, for ten times the price you paid to buy them? Of a hospitable lounge where bowing waiters will ply your guests' children with three-inch-high glasses of Fanta at Rs 90 each, plus taxes?

[Enough already. You think this is news to your Indian readers? If you are astonished, that's your problem. Indians have taken such prices in stride for a long time — if they patronise five-star hotels. Didn't you notice the crowds of Indians in the hotel lobby, thronging the restaurants, helping themselves to Rs 85 rupee mini dosas at the buffet? India is large, it contains multitudes. It has room for Maurya, Sheratons and dhabas.]

I had come to India and found a foreign country, one where the charges seemed to have been calculated in dollars and then converted to rupees. And yet, this India is patronised by as many Indians as Westerners. So if anyone was out of touch, it was me.

It certainly wasn't the beggar woman, apathetic infant at her breast, who approached my hired Contessa at an intersection. I offered her my largest coin, and she practically thrust it back at me. "Babuji, *do rupee se kuch hoga*." If two rupees aren't enough for a beggar in today's New Delhi, one wonders why the government bothers to mint any of the smaller coins. As hotel doormen expect Rs 10 tips for letting you into your car and railway porters start their tariffs at three figures, I imagine the rupee going the way of the lira or yen, becoming the indivisible base monetary unit as the paisa ceases to have any value at all.

[Who are you to talk? A ten-rupee tip is just 30 cents for the likes of you. Are you going to begrudge a hotel karamchari *an amount that wouldn't get you a cup of coffee in New York? If we have a sector of our economy dedicated to making foreigners feel comfortable, what's wrong with expecting them to respond in kind? An official making a dollar salary is the last person who should be noticing how much things cost in India. Ask my mother, who never passes a beggar without handing over a coin, how she feels about the rising cost of charity.]*

The sums one routinely hears about in the capital certainly tend to confirm my prediction. Lakhs are discussed as if they were small change: the new Indian entrepreneurs are *corrupt*. A United Nations colleague has just signed her lease in the appropriately named New Friends' Colony. She is paying Rs 1,50,000 a month, with two years' rent in advance. The landlord will probably make in six months what he spent in total to build his house 10 years ago.

Outside the international five-star circuit, of course, the talk was all of Hawala, of sprawling multi-crore farmhouses and the diaries kept in them, and of the dramatic change the latest scandal was going to bring about in the nation's political fortunes. Much of the excitement seemed, however, to be confined to journalists, who as a tribe tend to hear earthquakes when others merely slam doors. "This is terrific," a media man said to me about the Hawala affair shortly after interviewing me on the more prosaic questions of United Nations peace-keeping. "It's the biggest story since Independence!"

[Since whose independence — the Seychelles'? What about Gandhiji's assassination, the China War, the three Pak wars, the Emergency, the nuclear explosion, Operation Bluestar, Mrs Gandhi's killing, the Delhi and Bombay riots...? Why is this that much more earth-shaking than 50 other stories one could name?]

Ordinary Indians were more blase; I did not meet a single person who *didn't* think all politicians were corrupt anyway. Their attitude to the Hawala scandal was a combination of "what's new?" and "So what?" For the newspapers to wax indignant about the names in Jain's list is rather like finding a "P" page at the telephone directory and concluding that only Patels have phones. The few politicia-

Steve Kapoor. The new generation singer

ns on whom the press and the CBI are focusing represent those who received money from one, rather small-scale, operator during one particular year. It is a safe assumption that there are other politicians who have taken money from other operations in different years, quite probably in amounts that would dwarf those dispensed by the meticulous Mr Jain, but they have been lucky enough to have been suborned by people less diligently devoted to the art of double-entry book-keeping.

[The truth is that whereas Americans demand of their politicians standards that don't exist in their society at large (ask Gary Hart), most Indians accept conduct from politicians that we wouldn't tolerate in our neighbours. As a people we tend to be open, hospitable, generous, truthful, faithful and generally honest, and we expect our friends and relations to be the same. Two classes of people are, however, exempt from these norms, politicians and movie stars. These larger-than-life figures enjoy a social carte blanche to lie, cheat, dissemble, and to commit large-scale larceny, adultery and tax fraud, only murder is a little more difficult as Sanjay Singh (and, indirectly, Sunjay Dutt) are learning. So what the media mavens will discover is that their journalistic enthusiasm isn't entirely mirrored on the street. Indians expect their politicians to be dishonest and duplicitous, and are not surprised to have their assumptions confirmed. To Prema Pubtic, all the talk of Hawala is a lot of hawa, la].

The only truly outrageous comment that emerged from the Hawala business while I was in India was Biju Patnaik's proposal that the Army

The Wills World Cup inauguration. Indian culture needs an Italian, Gianfranco Lunetta (inset), to make Sushmita Sen 'look Indian'

should take over the country. As it happens, because of my UN peace-keeping-related business, I spent a lot of my time in India in the company of army officers. They were unanimous in their embarrassed rejection of the suggestion made by the Grand Old Man of Orissa politics. It was not surprising that they disclaimed any interest in taking on the running of the country. Like all true professionals, they only wish to do what they are trained to do well. But equally important, getting involved in governance would only ruin one of the few institutions in the country that has not yet been besmirched by the prevailing mores.

The Army is still a splendid advertisement for India. The qualities it prizes and the ones it instills in its men from their earliest days as cadets in the Indian Military Academy are those that are increasingly rare in our country: high standards of performance, honesty, hard work, self-sacrifice, incorruptibility, respect for tradition, discipline, team spirit. The Army has no place for bigotry in its ranks; prejudice or discrimination on account of caste or religion are completely unknown. I spoke to the young cadets at the IMA and marvelled at the values and aspirations they were proudly taking into adulthood ("The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and everytime. The honour, welfare and safety of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and everytime," says the IMA motto, and it was clear

Sunjay Dutt: Enjoying social *carte blanche*

Republic day parade in Delhi

that everyone there, from the Commandant to the youngest cadet, takes this credo very seriously.)

But the best of India can only be preserved by insulating the Army from the pressures of the worst of India — from the unceasing contention of region and religion, from the national habit of cutting corners, from the selfishness and the indiscipline of the prevailing public ethos, and from the politician's practice of pandering, from the power to permit. Mr Patnaik appears to forget that the very qualities he wants the Army to bring to government are the ones the Army would lose if it stayed in government.

[As I watched the massed bands of the armed forces 'beating the retreat' outside Rashtrapati Bhavan, with the skirl of bagpipes incongruously rising over the turbaned riders of the camel corps silhouetted against the Delhi twilight, I was filled with admiration. No one knows how to put on a splendid show better than our armed forces, a point underscored a few days earlier at the Republic Day parade. The precision marching of our soldiers, the colourful variety of the states' floats, the pluralism of India on display in the uniforms, headgear, visible ethnicities and even the heights of the different military units, the moving sight of the widowed mother receiving the medal so heroically earned by her

officer son, all suffused me with pride and gratitude. Pride and gratitude, too, for the fact that the beribboned uniforms were on the marchers, not on the reviewing stand. The Indian Army knows its place — and takes it with honour.]

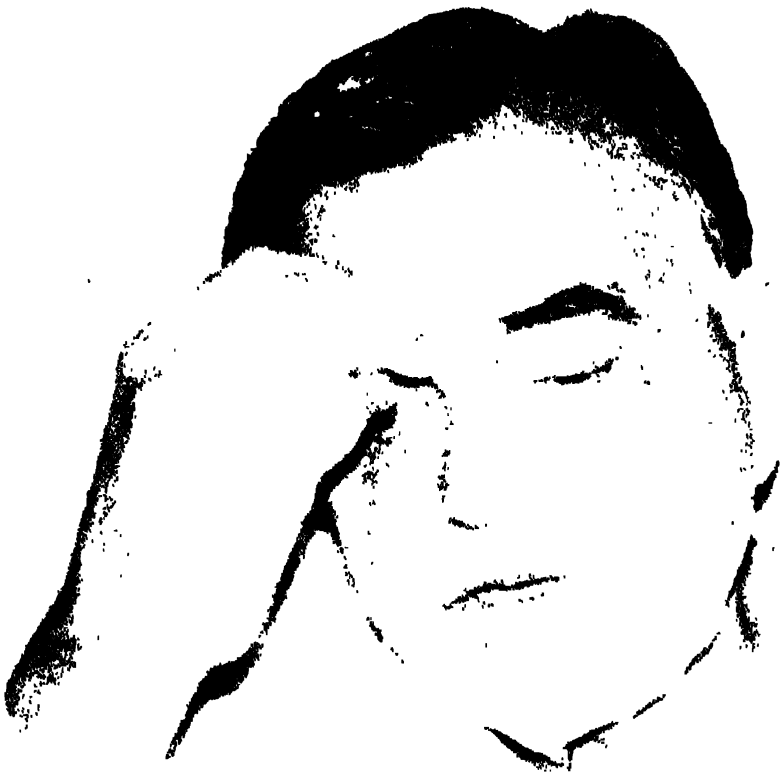
The Army has resolutely refused to let down its standards, but in the new India it's hurting. In a land where there are usually a 100 viable candidates for every job, the Army is suffering from a shortage of officers. A colonel in the Paratroop Brigade told me that instead of the 22 officers he should have had to run his battalion, he had only 10. One of his majors, a bright and self-confident flier, freely confessed his intention to soon take his skills into the burgeoning private sector. There was a time when service to the nation was rewarding in every sense, including the material, but as our economy has opened and grown, our soldiers, diplomats and administrators are finding themselves the poor cousins of the businessmen, bankers and the television talk show hosts of the new India.

Today's India offers its residents more choices than ever — on where to work, but also on what to buy, what to drive and what to listen to.

I was struck, after a gap of just 18 months, by the 'globalisation' of Indian life — the profusion of hoardings, advertising, Western brand names, the multiplicity of vehicles on the roads that were *not* ambassadors and fiats, the advent of a new pop music that owes more to trends in London and in New York than to anything out of Bollywood. Surfing audio channels in Air India, I had to listen attentively to realise that the lyrics I was hearing were in fact in Hindi, or at least primarily so — so American was their sound, their accent, their very intonation.

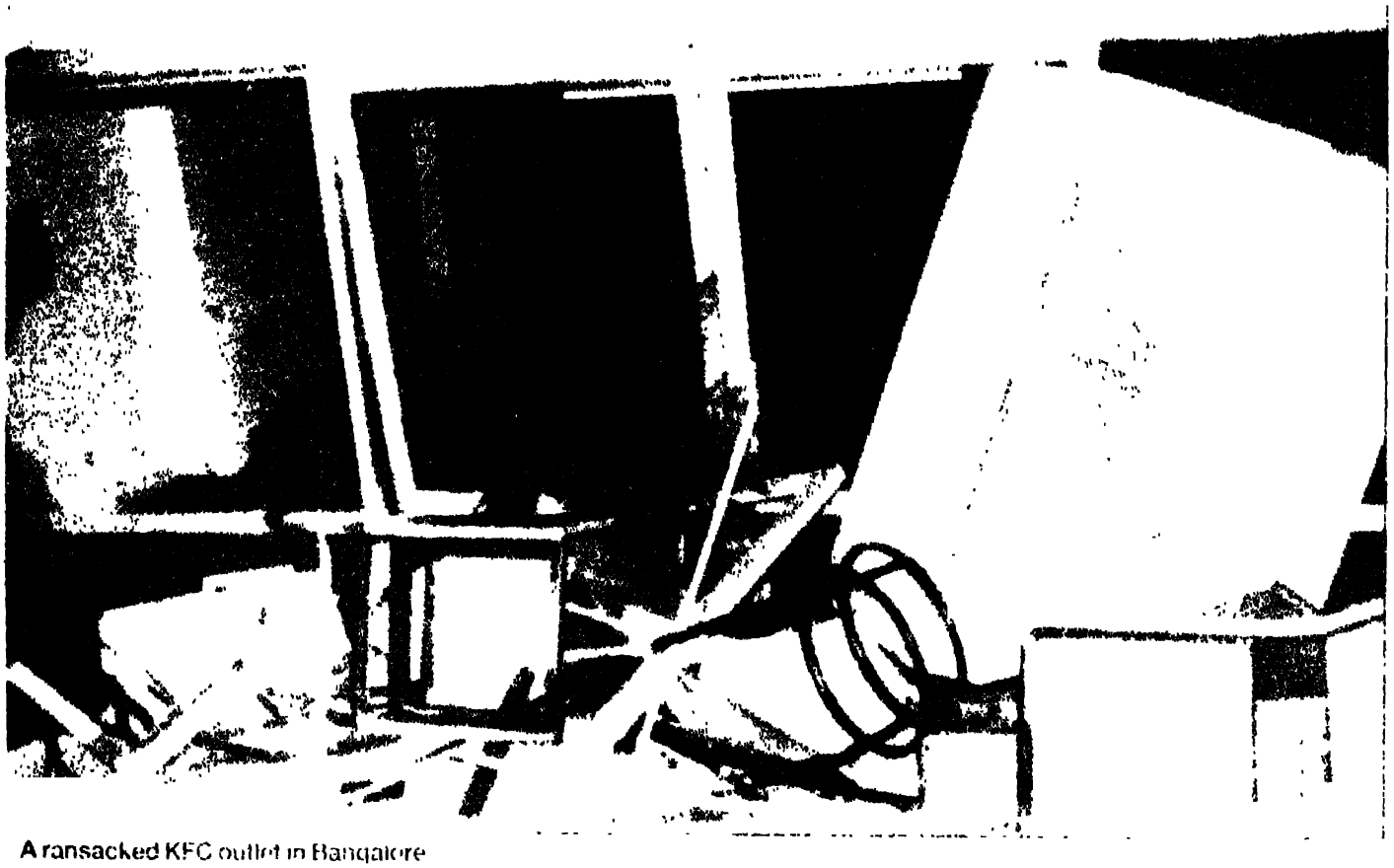
[That shows how long you have been away. Alisha, Sunidhi, Shaan have been around for ages. Indians sing pop, rock, rap and combinations of all three. But they also sing filmi geet, ghazals, *and classical vocal. What's different about today is that there's more of everything and it's done with greater sophistication.]*

I grew up in an India that was obsessed with *swadeshi*. National self-respect seemed to require that we made them everything we needed here, however badly — from outmoded cars to outstanding colas. Today we seemed to have lost our paranoia about foreign goods, and our even greater paranoia about foreign investors. One of



Balram Jakhar: One of the accused in the hawala scam

Biju Patnaik: The grand old man of Orissa politics



A ransacked KFC outlet in Bangalore

the lessons of history is that you can learn the wrong lessons from history ever since the East India Company [illegible] rade and stayed on to rule, our rulers have seen the shadow of the imperialist behind every [illegible] with a briefcase. Now at last we seem to have outgrown [illegible] except for the luddites and [illegible] who smashed Kentucky Fried Chicken premises in Bangalore and the politicians who are still trying to close KFC down in Delhi.

[I am a vegetarian [illegible] for the life of [illegible] handful of fastfood [illegible] fat Indian chicken [illegible] Indians and foreign tourists [illegible] an chicken [illegible] ing their poultry [illegible] KFC. [illegible] lihoods or their [illegible] ed by the presence of a foreign food shop have neither a worthwhile livelihood nor a worthwhile identity to protect. They are no better than the buggy-whip manufacturers who protested the invention of the motor car because it would deprive them of their work. Time and the [illegible] passed them by. A similar fate [illegible] behaved politicised peasantry of Bangalore.]

One change I could't help noticing was that practically everyone I knew in the print media has now gone into television. The new India seems to have more TV production companies than fast food restaurants, though I am inclined to predict that the radio will reverse itself in the coming years. But I couldn't turn on the TV or return a phone call from a journalist friend without seeing yet another familiar face on the box, earnestly discussing the Fate of the Nation in sound-bites rather than column inches.

[What does this all mean? Either that [illegible] read and write as much as we used to, or that the audio-visual media pays better than print, or that sounding off before a camera takes less time and effort than writing an article, or all of the above. India, or at least the lettered half of it, used to pride itself on its literacy, now it seems we are joining the book-tube culture of the Western world.]

One more proof of this came on my last day in India, when *Asian Age* ran a front page headline screaming "Sushmita to (un)dress up for Cup." The story went on to announce that the former Miss Universe, Sushmita Sen, would be the "major attraction" at the World Cup opening at the Eden Gardens. It quoted an Italian, of all people, the chairman of something called Half Moon Image Consultants, as declaring that Sushmita would project "the true beauty of Indian womanhood" while "taking off her clothes". (How this would sit with the ceremony's chief guest, chief minister Jyoti Basu, the man who had banned Samantha Fox from Calcutta for fear that she might take off her clothes, was not mentioned.) "I am going to make her look an Indian like never before," the Half Moon Signor added.

So it has come to this. The world's most knowledgeable cricket audience needs a firm of "image consultants" (from a land where the only crickets they've heard of are insects or cigarette lighters) to manufacture a 75-minute "laser show" before it can launch a cricketing event. The erstwhile capital of Indian culture needs an Italian to make one of its citizens "look Indian". And the organisers' notion of advance public relations is to drop teasers about the readiness of a symbol of contemporary Indian womanhood to undress. I thought such things only happened with the full moon, not under a Half Moon.

If this is globalisation, give me *swadeshi* any day. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

[illegible] lots of [illegible] and [illegible] teaching, out to provide and protect [illegible] but both will create pieces in your life. Indeed, and mental make up. [illegible] March [illegible] your [illegible] work [illegible] health may cause concern.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21

[illegible] will be pressures on the [illegible] and the [illegible] be able to [illegible]

Gemini
May [illegible]

[illegible]

Cancer
June 21 - July 20

You will have to move fast, very fast to get the goodies as competition will be tremendous. Two things are evident. The first includes finances inclusive of loans, funds, investment and capital formation all of which play a vital part. Foreign ties and respirational moves constitute the second.

Leo
July 21 - August 21

The sun Jupiter aspect could make life a bit difficult healthwise otherwise your success in getting your messages across will be simply phenomenal. Many Leos must have made [illegible] in the last six months or so, and now is the time to renew that pledge. Finances are foreto[illegible]

Virgo
August 22 - September 22

While there could be opposition to plans, and even a fallout, it could be [illegible] and a balcony up [illegible] implacement and [illegible] house or property development schemes keep you [illegible]. Pay particular heed to your attire and personal appearance. March 8-10 is best for work.

Libra
September 23 - October 22

Once again, changes and overhauling in the job sector are indicated. Health could call for special care and attention. In matters relating to children, research, creative pursuits, filmmaking, writing, teaching, sculpting, music, architecture, painting and publicity, your luck hold well!

Scorpio
October 23 - November 22

It would be best to restrict yourself a little bit and not be totally involved, announces Ganesha. Renovation, decoration and alteration of house, office shop are foretold. For funding, loaning and investment, Tuesday through Thursday will be of vital importance. Meditation will help.

Sagittarius
November 23 - December 20

The health and well being of elders and family members is suspect. It could cause tensions. Many Sagittarians will be communicating at literally weeks-end speed. Contracts could be on the anvil. Visits, interviews and tests seem ordained for you. Prepare for a trip.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

You have a chance to really grow and be praised for it. The going may be tough but it will be well worth it, and that is important. Letters, calls, posters, flyers, ads and other media of communication will entice you. Read all contracts and letters twice. Horrible errors could creep in for you.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

Keep a leash on family and finance, as both could get out of hand. The trick is to know when and where to draw the line. Despite the difficulties, you will have the nerve and verve to do what you have to. It would be best to put your ideas across clearly and briefly, without overdoing it.

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

Avoid depression and melancholia and be sure your mood will change for the better shortly. Help from strange places, secret powers and God will be there for you. The best policy would be to be diplomatic about the things you don't like or approve. Later on, you could start voicing your disapproval.

BIRTHDAYS

March 3: [illegible] love, money, and job have a direct and [illegible] Stay away from the world of make believe.

March 4: Sun Mars conjunction helps you to put your house in order, get things done, but there is also a possibility of ill health.

March 5: The full moon in fine placing with Jupiter makes you daring and tightly organised. Marriage, trips and collaborations are foretold.

March 6: Moon Neptune trines is excellent for writers, teachers, astrologers, statisticians, historians, painters, musicians and film stars. You will be tested and come out a winner.

March 7: Moon square Jupiter suggests you will have to work with a will, use your skill and imagination fully if you want to make the most of this year.

March 8: Uranus sextiles Pluto causing you to have or rather cultivate leadership qualities, which should stand you in excellent stead in years to come.

March 9: Moon sextiles Jupiter giving you the opportunity and the wherewithal to make good in life. A new world could open out for you.

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LIMELIGHT

LIGHTS, CAMERA ACTION!

Madhabi Mukherjee, Satyajit Ray's favourite actress, turns director, reports
Susmita Banerjee

The blue-black iron gate of the National Film Develpment Corporation opens with a groan to allow the Ambassador in. A fragile form in white and black steps out of the car, her hair pushed back and gathered at the top with a scarf, her visage, despite a light brush of makeup, betraying her age. She flashes a smile at the gatekeeper and is ushered inside the building.

Madhabi direct - Indrani Halder

The Sixties' queen of the Bengali silver screen, Madhabi Mukherjee has decided to regain the spotlight in middle age, this time, not as an actress facing the arc lights and camera but as a director. She has just completed shooting her maiden film, *Atmaja*, a story based on a novel by Chittaranjan Ghosh, and is now busy editing and dubbing the film.

"Could you please repeat that sentence," Madhabi requests actor Indrajit Deb. Deb who plays a police officer in *Atmaja*, clears his throat, moistens his lips and obliges. "*Chhere debo ektu korke*." "Excellent!" Madhabi claps her hands in appreciation and the lights come up in the dubbing theatre.

Madhabi has long nurtured the dream of making a film; through which she would be able to address certain socio-human problems. Suppression of women, their rights, marital maladjustment and its consequent fallout: separation and the breaking up of the home, uncared for offspring who shuttle between the father and the mother, are some of the themes which have long haunted this actress, a one-time Satyajit Ray favourite.

"In our society adjustment means sacrifice on the part of the woman," says Madhabi forcefully. "If she walks out on her husband, she is held responsible and her children suffer the most." Why should the mother, she wonders aloud, be forced to "relinquish her hold on her child whom she has nourished in her womb for nine long months", just because the court orders so after the snapping of marital ties?

Does the film then mirror her own

life which has had more than its fair share of pain and agony? For Madhabi has long played the lonely and neglected princess, unhappy in matrimony and looking for solace in motherhood and social work. Last year the release of her autobiography, *Ami Madhabi*, created a furore where she revealed her conjugal unhappiness. She described her husband Nirmal Kumar as a self-centred person who had married her to "revive his sagging career".

She came out in the book as a dejected, defeated and disillusioned person in whose life there was "no end of pain, (for whom) life and pain are complementary". She also dwelled on the love she felt for someone she immensely respected but added in a rather plaintive vein that "despite desire and attraction on both sides, social impediments come in the way. I never wished to build my home by destroying someone else's." But the implication was clear: the actress and her director, Satyajit Ray, had been romantically involved.

But Madhabi or Madhuri (her original name before she joined films) denies the suggestion that her maiden film as director could be based on the story of her life: she shakes her head vigorously and says, "Why should the film be autobiographical? It deals with a social problem which many couples encounter."

Ghosh's novel focuses on the importance of good parental relations so that the child does not suffer any mental trauma because of the breakdown of relations between the father and mother. The couple in *Atmaja* (played by Madhabi herself and her husband) cannot adjust to each other's needs. The result: tension at home, breakdown of communication and finally, separation. The daughter (Indrani Haldar) harbours intense hatred against both her parents and grows up into a rebellious, confused person experimenting with relationships (she has a string of men friends played by Shaswata Chatterjee, Ashok Vishwanathan, Arjun Chakraborty and Sunil Mukherjee).

"It is the mother, anywhere in the world, who grooms her child, inculcates values in him. It's never the father," Madhabi asserts. So, does the girl in her film go back to her mother? Madhabi is not willing to entertain such queries. "My film says everything."

So, how close is Madhabi to her two daughters? Her eyes mist over with emotion. "They are all grown up, leading their own lives. They live with their father," she says, bitterness tinging her voice.

Nearly 25 years ago, Madhabi looked through an opera glass in *Charulata*. She hummed "Phule, phule" moving back and forth on a swing in the garden of a large palatial 19th century house while Amal, her husband's cousin, lay on the grass penning poetry. The bored, melancholic wife of Bhupati craved for love and attention. But her husband was too busy with his printing press and publication. The entry of Amal into her household changed her life and she felt the first stirrings of emotion.

Perhaps the same was true when Madhabi first encountered Satyajit Ray. Mrinal Sen's *Baishey Shravan* had just been released when Manik*babu* — as Ray was popularly known — asked Madhabi to see him for a role in the new film he was conceptualising, *Mahanagar*. Madhabi was then struggling for a foothold in the industry, she needed money to support her family. Her mother, after being abandoned by her husband, had left her home in East Bengal and settled with her two daughters in Calcutta. And from the age of five Madhabi had to contend with the responsibility of providing for herself and her family.

The thought of meeting a personality as towering and as famous as Satyajit Ray excited the young Madhabi but she had a very strong feeling that he would reject her. Ray didn't. The rest is history.

"I learnt that acting can be very simple from Manik*babu*," Madhabi recalls. While he was shooting *Mahanagar* where Madhabi played the role of an urban working woman, Ray told Madhabi she should not act but just "feel" the character.

"I did just that and ever since I have been doing that. I am told that I have a terrific screen presence," says Madhabi today. "I really don't know why people say it because I don't do anything consciously to attain it. It just happens."

Three films from Ray in a row and Madhabi became a star. She found herself paired with matinee idols of that period like Uttam Kumar, Anil Chatterjee, Soumitra Chatterjee. A chorus of praise and a clutch of awards followed. She is the only actress from Bengal who won the

Madhabi in the Sixties.

ROLES MADHABI PLAYED

She was strong, unconventional and very, very good

Madhabi plays Arati in *Mahanagar*

Mahanagar (1963): Madhabi plays the middle-class wife, Arati, who takes up the job of a salesgirl to supplement her husband's (Anil Chatterjee's) income. Her father-in-law does not like the idea of the daughter-in-law going out to work. An exciting new world opens up before Arati and she finds a friend in her Anglo-Indian colleague, Edith.

Her husband asks her to give up her job when he gets jealous of her transformation from a housewife to an independent, confident career woman who talks much about her boss, one Mr Mukherjee. When Madhabi hands in her resignation letter, her husband also loses his job. Now that they are both unemployed, they see each other in a new light and understand each other better.

Charulata (1964): Based on Rabindranath Tagore's famous novel, *Nashta Nir*, here Madhabi is the listless, unhappy wife of Bhupati, an aristocratic wealthy young intellectual who edits and publishes a political weekly, *Sentinel*. His cousin, Amal, comes to stay in their house and for the first time the young Charu finds a friendly companion in Amal and gets drawn to him. This film has that famous shot showing Madhabi peeping from behind the shutters of her window at the road below, lorgenette in hand: one of the most memorable scenes etched in the mind of Indian cinegoers. Bhupati is unaware of the developments between his wife and cousin and discovers it only in the tag end of the film.

Madhabi in *Charulata*

The sophisticated Karuna (Madhabi) in *Kapurush o Mahapurush*

Kapurush O Mahapurush (1965) Madhabi (Karuna), the sophisticated wife of Haradhan Banerjee (Bimal Gupta), a tea estate owner, chances upon her old love Soumitra Chatterjee (Amitabh Roy) when he spends a night at the Gupta household as his car breakes down. The old fire is rekindled and Soumitra gets drawn to her once again. He asks her to elope with him and even promises her that he will not let her down this time, but Madhabi spurns his offer.

Tarapada banerjee

With Satyajit Ray

coveted Urvashi award (for *Dibaratrir Kabya*). Madhabi's days of struggle were over and now she was a celebrity.

She may have come across as a striking personality on screen, Ray's idea of "intellectual beauty" and poise, her sharp well-defined features adding to her persona, but she was never the conventional good-looker. In fact she had such bad teeth (worsened by her addiction to *paan*), that Ray had real difficulty in filming her. Ray admitted as much to Andrew Robinson in *Inner Eye*: "I had to put the camera at a lowish angle so that when she spoke the lower set of teeth wouldn't show. In fact, my wife had serious objections to using Madhabi at all for her teeth but I knew the camera could manage that."

Right from her first film, *Dui Beyai*, Madhabi had the good fortune of working with the best directors of Bengal save, of course, Rajen Taratdar. There was Ritwik Ghatak (*Subarnarekha*), Mrinal Sen (*Bashey Shravan*), Satyajit Ray (*Mahanagar*, *Charulata* and *Kapurush O Mahapurush*), Tapan Sinha, Tarun Majumdar... the list continues. And each time she faced the camera she studied her mentors diligently, their individual ways of handling the script and shooting.

"I cannot say I have been influenced by any particular director. Satyajit Ray was very meticulous about his work, he had a great eye for details. May be I have learnt a few things from him. Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak and others had a different style of shooting and I have picked up a few things from them, too."

Though Madhabi is identified with the new-wave films of the Fifties and Sixties, and as the fiery, intelligent and graceful Ray heroine, she refuses to be dubbed a "feminist". "I feel for women, all right," she says, but adds that she is not willing to take her battle to the streets. Neither does she support the overt feminism of films like *Paroma* which directly challenge male sovereignty. She admires Aparna Sen nevertheless and is fascinated by her many-splendoured personality: actress (stage and films), director, wife, mother, editor... all in one mould.

Madhabi is not the first actress from Tollywood to take up the director's baton, there was Manju De, Arundhuti Devi and Aparna Sen before her. But what has surprised everyone is her decision to chart a new course for herself at a time in life when most people decide to call it a day.

Diehard Ray loyalist, Dulal Dutta, who has worked with the master since his *Panther Panchali* days to *Agantuk*, is amazed how this ageing actress could come out with such a brilliant script without any experience. "Her work is so advanced! Her film can compare with any of the works of the great masters," he says and then adds, "Aparna is good, too, but she had the grooming and the support of the best names in the industry. It is not so with Madhabi."

Hers could be the rags to riches story but here the princess did not live happily ever after. She cried more often than she laughed. Life may not have been kind to Madhabi, but she has had her moments of glory and ecstasy too. As a staunch believer in causes, Madhabi would now like to drown herself in social work providing relief to geriatrics and destitute children.

"I like to be on the move," murmers the actress, and she has proved it with this latest move to turn director. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	1030	1 3
			IC 742	1250	4 7
IC 744	[illegible]	daily	IC 744	1150	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	1610	3 5 7
M9 [illegible]	1220	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	1555	[illegible] 6
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 4 5 7
AIZAWL					
PF 501	0615	[illegible]	PF [illegible]	1555	2 4 5
			PF [illegible]	1655	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1525	1 3 4 5 7
D2 161	[illegible]	[illegible]	D2 161	1000	1 2 3 4 5 7
D2 133	[illegible]	[illegible]	D2 [illegible]	1140	6
BANGALORE					
IC [illegible]	0600	daily	IC [illegible]	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W [illegible]	2150	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	4	D5 401	1630	3
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 511	1035	[illegible] 7
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1740	2 4 6
VF 106	[illegible]	[illegible]	VF 105	1700	1
BOMBAY					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	0820	daily
9W 302	[illegible]	1 3 4 5 [illegible]	9W [illegible]	0920	1 3 4 5 6 [illegible]
D2 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D2 [illegible]	0830	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1730	[illegible]
9W 312	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 211	1400	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 4	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 4 5 6
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	0810	1 2 3 4 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	A [illegible]	0905	1
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1130	1 2 3 4 5 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1115	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2005	1 2 3 4 5 7
			IC 811	1715	1 3 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	1530	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 294	2210	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
4S 816	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1640	1 3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S [illegible]	1635	1 [illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S 811	[illegible]	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1550	4 7
PF 301/303	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 304/302	[illegible]	2 4 5
GOA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
GUWAHATI					
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	1915	2 3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	1 3 5
			IC 204	[illegible]	2 6
9W 611	[illegible]	daily	9W 612	1310	daily
M9-321	1230	daily	M9-322	1510	daily
PF 301	0830	1 3 5	PF-302	1500	1, 3, 5
IC-703	0830	4 7	IC-230	1620	daily
IC-229	1310	daily	4S-811	1635	2, 4, 6
4S-816/811	1205	2, 4 6	4S-812/815	1635	1, 3, 5
M9-327	1220	3 5, 7	M9-327	1610	3, 5, 7
M9-325	1220	1, 4	M9-325	1610	1, 4
HYDERABAD					
IC 777	1615	3, 5, 7	IC-778	2015	3, 5, 7
IC 769	1615	2, 4 6	IC-770	1745	2 4, 6
VF 106	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3, 5, 7
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
JAIPUR					
S2 026/027	0850	1, 2, 4 5	S2-028/005	2005	1, 2 4, 5, 7
JORHAT					
IC-257	1145	4, 7	IC 257	1550	4, 7
KHARAGPUR					
PF-301/303	0645	1, 3, 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 3, 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1515	1, 3, 5	IC 811	1715	1, 3, 5
S2 026/011	0850	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	S2-012/005	2005	1 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
MADRAS					
D5 402	0700	4	D5 401	1630	3
IC 542	1115	1 4, 6	IC 541	1030	1 4, 6
IC 544	1115	2, 7	IC-543	1035	2 7
D2 172	1130	daily	D2 173	1130	6
			D2 171	1155	1, 2 3 4, 5 7
IC 765	1720	daily	IC-766	2220	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	1745	2 4, 6
PATNA					
D5-406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	3, 5
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC-811	1715	1, 3, 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC-285	0540	1, 3 5	IC-286	1100	2, 4, 6
RANCHI					
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC-811	1715	1, 3, 5
SHILLONG					
D5 601	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
SILCHAR					
IC 255	0915	3 5, 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC-253	0745	2 4 6	IC-254	1025	2 4 6
M9 325	1220	1, 4	M9-325	1610	1, 4
M9 323	1220	2 6	M9-323	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC 213	1140	2, 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3, 5	D5 406	1835	3, 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 4 6	IC-541	1030	1 4, 6
D5 402	0700	4	D5 401	1630	3

FLIGHTS

AMMAN					
KB 106	[illegible]	1	KB 104	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL [illegible]	0145		KL 875	0245	7
BANGKOK					
KB 105	[illegible]		KB 10[illegible]	1620	1
			KB-106	1240	5
IC 731	0855	2 5	TG-313	1240	1 3 6
IC 855	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6	IC-732	1505	2, 5
AI 306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2150	5 7	RO-075	1200	5, 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC-225	0800	1	IC 226	1020	1
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6 7	BG 091	1110	1 2, 3, 6 7
IC-723	1250	1 2, 3, 5 6	IC 724	1520	1, 2 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3 5, 6 7	BG-093	1825	1 2 3, 5 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1245	3	Q7-060	1300	2
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
RA-214	1215	2 4 6	RA-213	1130	2 4 6
IC-747	1115	1 2 4, 6	IC-746	1435	1 2, 4 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	3 7
MOSCOW					
SU-538	1755	4	SU 537	1555	4
PARIS					
KB 106	1105	3	KB 105	0810	2 6
KB 106	1325	5			
SINGAPORE					
SQ-415	2345	2 5	SQ 416	2230	2 5
BI-108	0840	7	BI 107	2000	6
SOFIA					
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	5	AI 305	1820	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1530	4 7	IC-226	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● BA British Airways ● BG Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● BI Royal Brunei Airlines ● D2 Skyline NEPC ● D5 NEPC Airlines ● IC Indian Airlines ● KB Druk-Air ● KLM Royal Dutch Airlines ● LZ Balkan Airlines ● M9 Modiluft ● PF Vayudoot ● RA Royal Nepal Airlines ● RJ Royal Jordanian Airlines ● RO Tarom Air Transport ● S2 Sahara India Airlines ● SQ Singapore Airlines ● SU Aeroflot ● 4S East West Airlines ● TG Thai Airways International ● 9W Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
3003	20-00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13 00	3004
2381	9-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	9-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	16 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12 50	2306
2307	23-30	**Jodhpur Express**	4 40	2308
2019	6 20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
3073	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tue Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11 35	3074
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	12 25	4046
5049	23 00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
5047	13-00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18-15	3008
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
5659	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6-10	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7-55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun, Wed & Sat	7-55	1172
3327	14-30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18 20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues, Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	12 30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 25	2859
2021	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmadabad Express**	5-15	8033
8030	11 20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14 05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 10	2842
7003	8 10	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	19 40	7004
6311	21 15	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	11 45	6312
801	17 40	**Tata Steel Express**	19-20	8014
8111	6 00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 25	8112
8005	20 55	**Tilagarh Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21 40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 10	8016
8007	22 15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8409	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-30	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	10 40	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	21 10	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11 35	8018
1030	15 50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16-40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16 10	
	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10 45	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22 15	
	14-05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13 45	6321
-	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	--
6316	22 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	13-45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22 15	
--	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

MY BRILLIANT CARRIER

*They buy goods from Bangkok, sell them in Calcutta, and vice versa; **Gargee Bhattacharjee** reports on those behind this flourishing trade*

Chaotic scenes at airports are not unusual. But even those who are accustomed to them are often taken aback when they arrive to board the early morning Indian Airlines flight to Bangkok from Calcutta's international terminal.

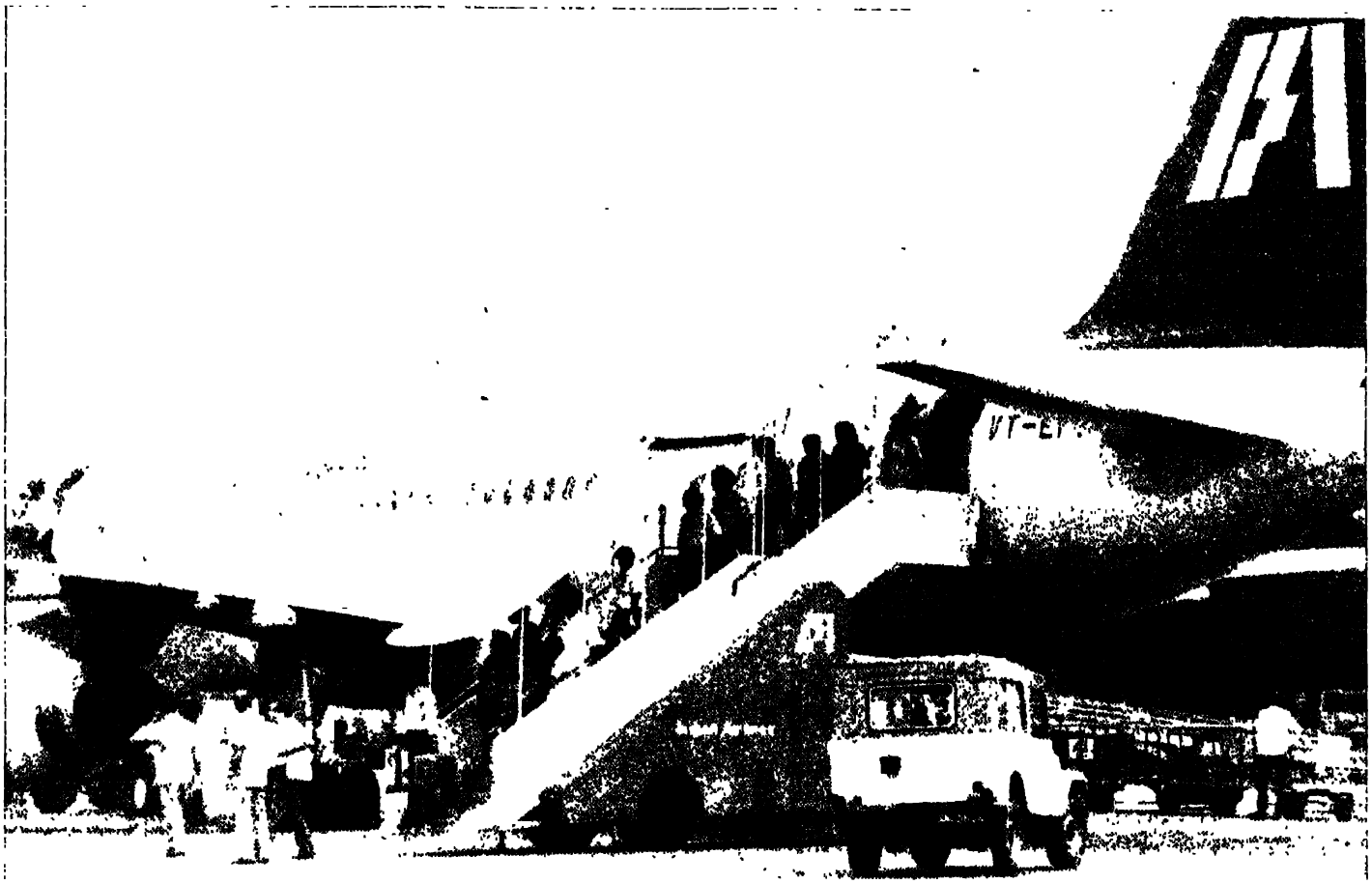
Passengers jostle each other as they queue up to check in, trolleys by their side. The trolleys are a sight in themselves, overflowing with luggage that will never come within the 20 kg allowance that most economy class passengers have. But then, most of it is not going to be checked in, anyway. The passengers intend to carry these huge packages, for want of a better word—tightly wrapped in plastic, on board.

Never mind if there is no space in the overhead lockers to accommodate it. Never mind if they have to stuff it in the little space before their seats and sit perched uncomfortably on top of it. Their comfort is not a priority, the bags are. After all, they aren't going to Bangkok for a holiday; they are only travelling because of the luggage.

Welcome to the little-known world of the 'carrier'. These are the people who make weekly trips to the Thai capital, loaded with goods that they sell in Bangkok. And then, make the return journey with things that sell for a premium in India.

From Calcutta—and on occasion, from Delhi—they carry items like incense, mustard oil, spices and pulses that are in great demand among the Indian community in Bangkok. Costume jewellery, bangles, cheap ready-made garments, tea and coffee also have a ready market here. And handicrafts, such as the handbags typical of Santiniketan, are also hugely

Customs official checking a passenger's luggage



Passengers alighting from an Indian Airlines aircraft at Dum Dum airport

popular.

The items that are brought in from Bangkok are also varied. First on the list are clothes: dresses, ties, and bundles and bundles of dress material. Perfumes and cosmetics form a large part of the trade, and recently, carriers have started bringing in integrated circuits and computer parts. Foreign sports goods also have a good market here, specially badminton and tennis rackets.

But how can this be a lucrative business? After all, these people have to pay duty on the goods they bring in, don't they?

Well yes, they d But more often than not, say insiders, they have an informal 'understanding' with the customs department, which lets them get away by paying the absolute minimum. After all, the argument goes, they have a living to make, don't they?

Not that the customs are dishonest. The goods brought in are valued according to a book which has not been updated for years, even though inflation has been rampant over this period. So, the duty paid is vastly disproportionate to the actual value of the goods.

Then, of course, there is ignorance. Customs officers don't always recognise the things that the carriers bring in, and are unable to charge the right amount of duty. Some years ago, for instance, when cable television was still a novelty in Calcutta, the carriers brought in Low Noise Boosters (LNB), a vital component of the cable antenna. But at the customs counter, they were described as "rubber stamps" which cost around Rs 20 to Rs 80. The officers, who knew no better, valued them accordingly.

It was only after a couple of weeks, when enormous quantities of "rubber stamps" were coming in with every flight, that it occurred to somebody to enquire as to why so many people were bringing in such an item. A sample was sent off for evaluation and it was found that each LNB cost no less than Rs 2,500.

Then, there was the case of billiard table cloth, which costs around Rs 40,000 per metre. The carriers described it as ordinary curtain material to the customs officers and got away with paying minimal duty before the department got wise to their tricks. Carriers often also bring such medicinal powder as tetracycline, and pass it off as cosmetic herbal powder.

Their method of bringing in gold is almost fool-proof. They include a number of women in their party, who arrive back in Calcutta laden with gold jewellery. Since most Indian women usually wear such items as gold bangles, necklaces, bracelets, earrings and the like, it is virtually impossible to prove that this stuff has been bought in Thailand, and is being smuggled into India.

Bangkok is not the only destination of these carriers, though it does appear to be the most popular. They also travel to Singapore and Hong Kong, sometimes flying there via Bangladesh. The 'Gorakhpuris' settled in Bangkok first started this trade, but these days most of the carriers are Punjabis from Calcutta, though Delhi is fast catching up.

The main men behind this operation remain behind the scene, providing the carriers with tickets, passports and money, and then wait for them to do their stuff. Once the goods arrive in Calcutta, they find their way to such shopping centres as Fancy Market, the Five-Star

Market, New Market, Vardaan Market, Air-Conditioned Market and even Burra Bazaar

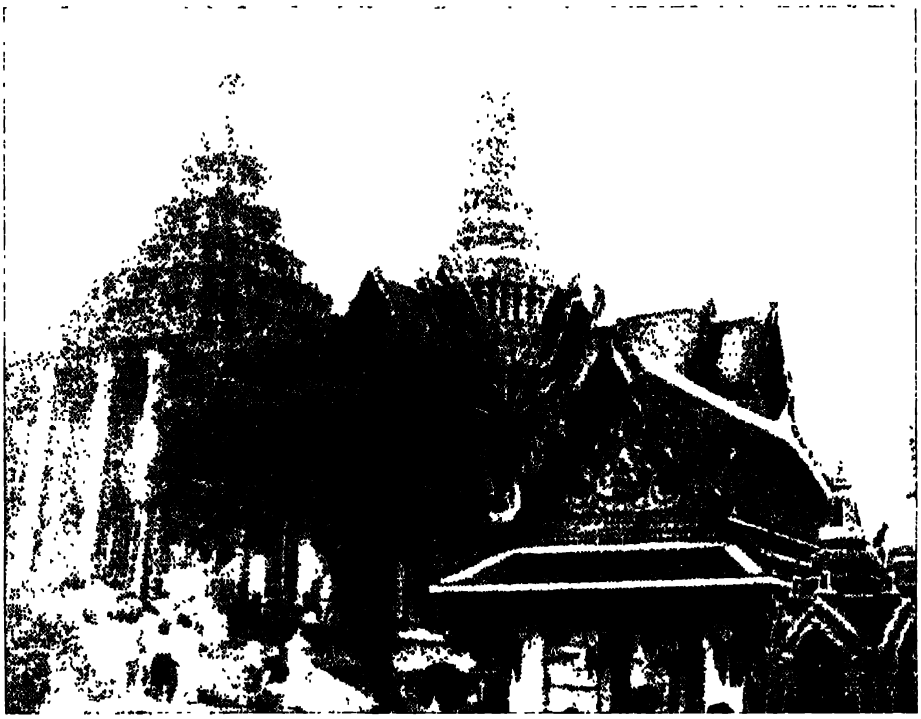
The operations that are carried out from Calcutta airport are relatively simple compared to those conducted via Dhaka. Here, the modus operandi is to form a group of 20 to 30 people, who are taken to Bangladesh and put up at a hotel. Only two people from that group then board a flight to Bangkok or Singapore, carrying with them the entire foreign exchange that the whole group is entitled to.

After a shop-till-you-drop stay in Bangkok or Singapore, the group reunites at the Dhaka transit lounge, where the baggage is distributed among the whole group. Since every member of the party is entitled to Rs 6,000 worth of goods free of duty, they have to pay a minimal amount to get their stuff into India.

Once the carriers have gone through customs, they congregate outside the airport, where the goods are collected by the main men of the operation. The carriers are paid their commission, and everyone goes home happy.

While this is one way—and a very popular one at that—of carrying excess foreign currency abroad, sometimes carriers conceal their extra dollars on their bodies. Then, there is a system known as *'hundi'* that is also brought into use. Under this, the carriers are given certain coded messages, which they carry to designated people in Bangkok, who provide them with the money to shop for goods.

But it's not just work, work, work for the carriers. They are intent on oying themselves as well on these trips. And for them the party begins the moment the plane takes off the runway. They down beer and whiskey (served free even in Economy Class on Indian Airlines) and rapidly get very drunk—and often, very aggressive—indeed. They misbehave with the air-hostesses, they smoke in the aisles, dropping ash on hapless co-passengers and generally make a complete nuisance of themselves.



Thailand: A favourite carrier destination

Some parties even sing loudly as the journey commences, and play such games as Antakshari. They bring their own packed lunches, which they proceed to eat after the airline meal has been disposed of. This is all very well, but the Calcutta-Bangkok haul is a short one, and by the time they are half-way through their second meal, it is time to land. But no matter how loudly the air-hostesses entreat them to put up their tray tables, they continue to tuck into their *paratha*s and *achar*.

But the real fun begins when the plane lands. Even as the aircraft is taxi-ing to the bay, the carriers leap up from their seats and begin retrieving their luggage, which is often strewn all over the plane. All entreaties of the cabin crew to keep their seat belts fastened until the aircraft comes to a complete standstill fall on deaf ears. They're far too busy getting their bags together, so that they can be the first off the plane.

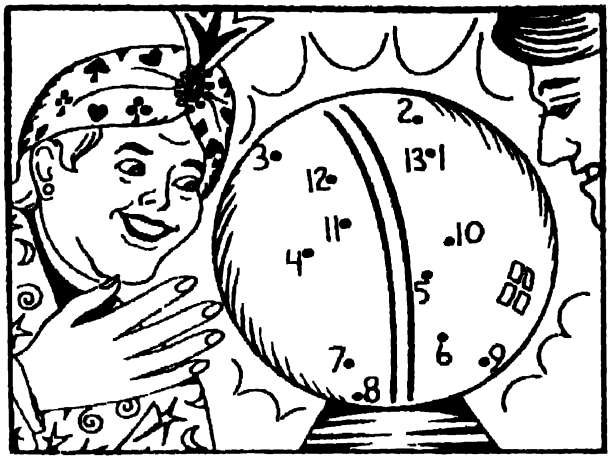
Inevitably, fights ensue between passengers, and quite often these result in scuffles, which the crew is hard put to end.

One reason for all this urgency to get off the plane is that most of these people have to queue up for a visa on arrival. And if they don't get to the baggage carousel on time, their luggage is often 'stolen' by those of their fellow carriers who have their eye on the main chance.

But despite suchproblems —not to mention the hassle of dealing with customs officers in both Calcutta and Bangkok— these carriers continue flying in and out of the country every week, laden with kilos of kilos of luggage. It may not be a great life, but it's a way of making a living ■

The Fancy Market on Calcutta's Garden Reach Circular Road

JUNIOR WHIRL ✻ HAL KAUFMAN

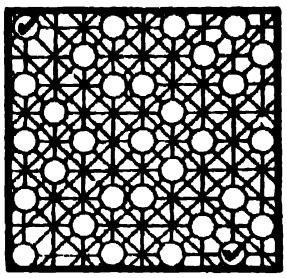


SEE WHAT! Look for a sign in this crystal ball. What sign can it be? Draw lines from 1 to 2 to 3, etc. to find out.

S-CURVES! Letter S completes each of these seven-letter series: 1. MNOPQR ---. 2. OTTFFS ----. 4. MAMJJA---. See if you can explain why. Hint: Each is an initial letter.

1 S is next letter in alphabet. 2 S stands for seven. 3 S stands for Saturday. 4 S stands for September.

DOT'S NICE!

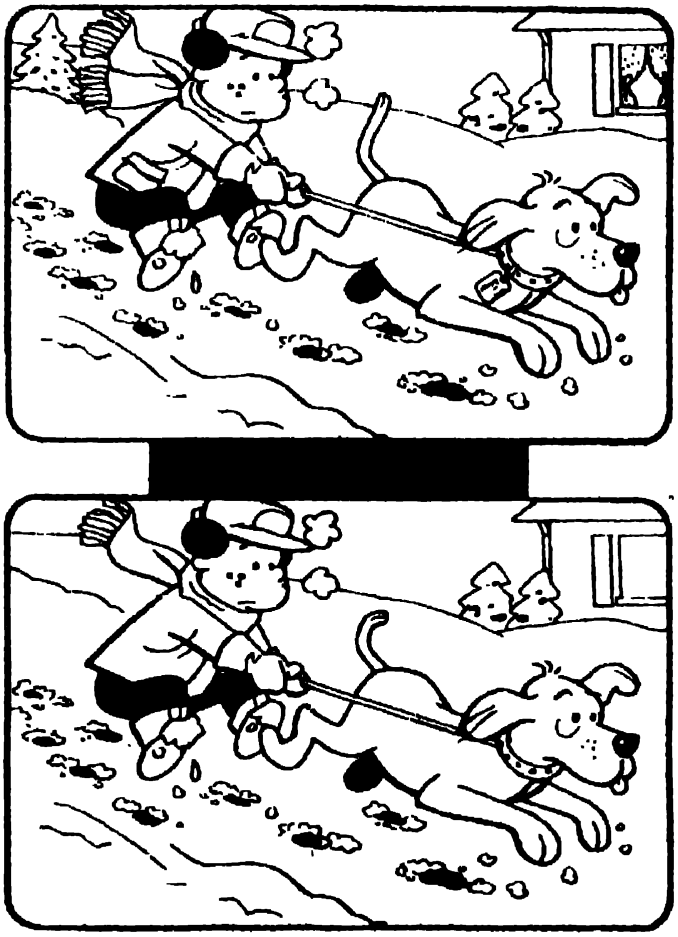


An intricate circle-and-line design shown here provides a challenging wits test. It is possible to place nine check marks among the various circles so that no tw checks appear in the same row, column or diagonal line.

Two starter checks are already in place. See if you can insert the remaining seven.

Checks 2nd circle 2nd row 2nd circle 3rd row 2nd 4th 5th 5th, 1st 6th 3rd 7th 1st 8th

HOCUS-FOCUS



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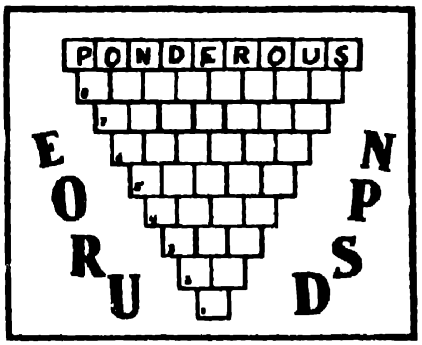
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Tree is missing 2. Pocket is missing. 3. Scarf end is missing 4 Tail is different 5. Tag is missing. 6 Curtains are missing



FIND PONDEROUS STEP WORDS

START at the bottom and work your way up in this PONDEROUS word test.

Each word is composed of one or more of the letters — E, O, R, U, D, S, P, N — shown.

Each term has one more letter than its predecessor. Definitions, from bottom up:

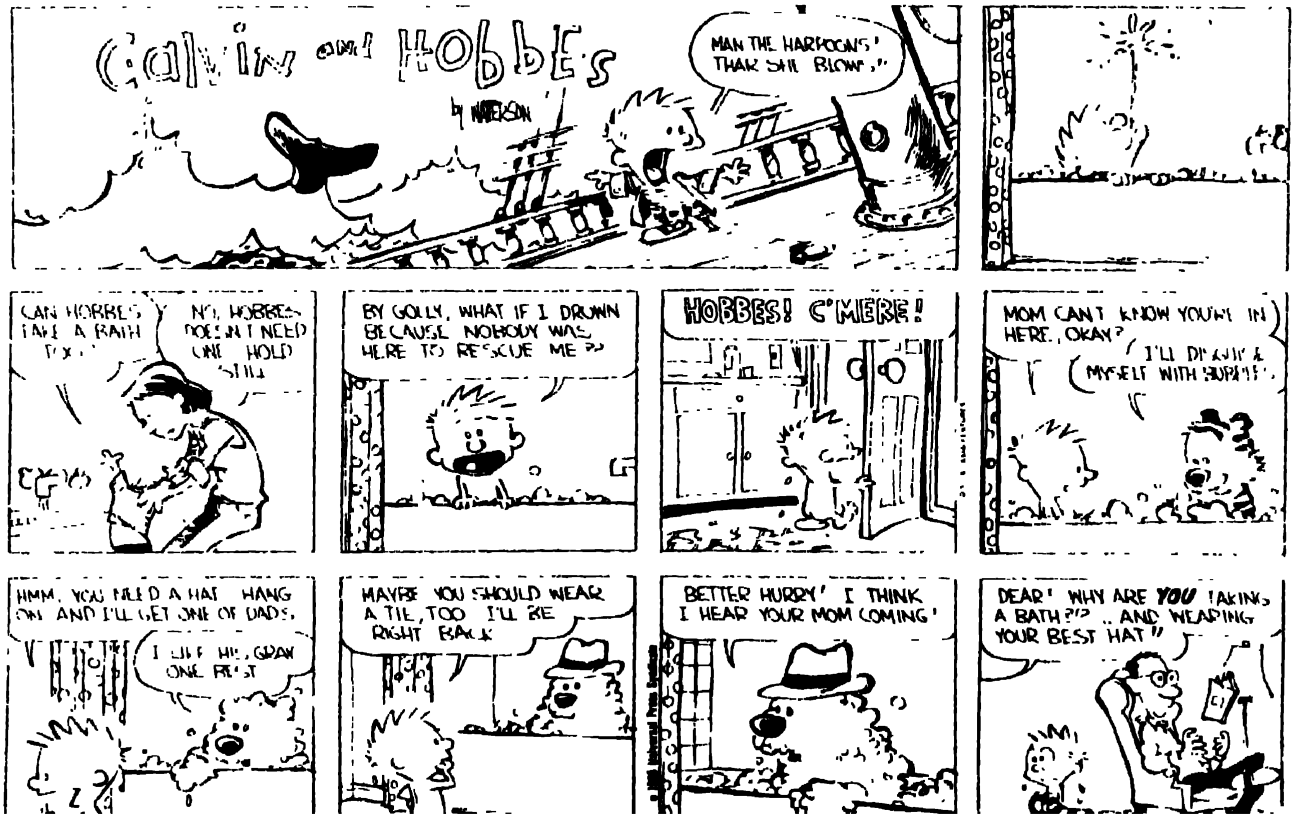
1. Scorecard letter for a baseball flub
2. Compass direction.
3. Ballpoint item.
5. Lying flat out.
6. Man, woman or child.
7. Send a reply.
8. Big fast-food burgers: Quarter ---

Time limit: 2 minutes

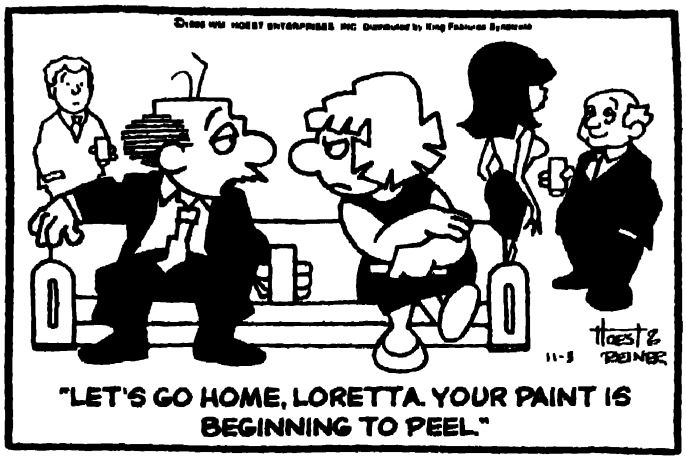
1 F2 Nt 3 Pen 4 Open 5 Prone 6 Person 7 Respond 8 Pounders

ARCHIE

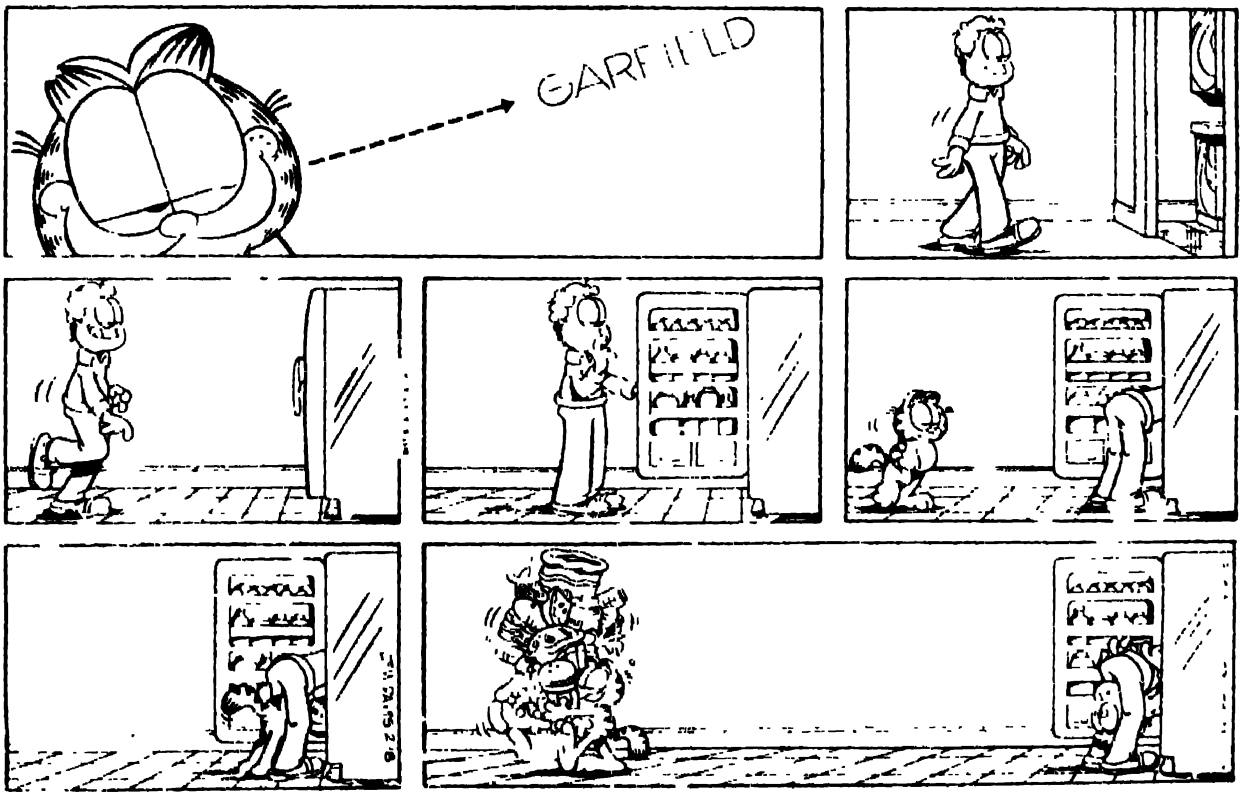
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



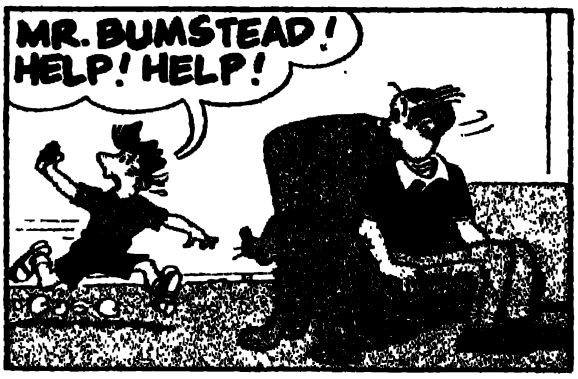
THE LOCKHORNS

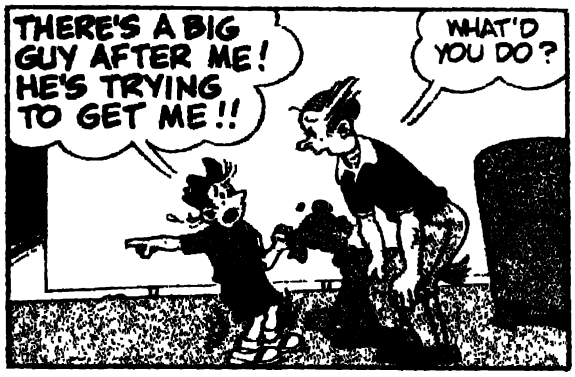


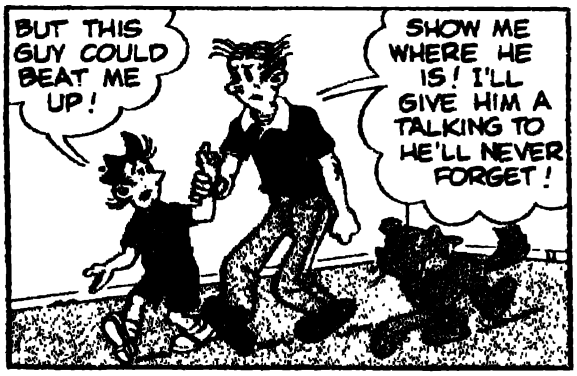
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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LOCKING HORNS

Goans see red as Menaka Gandhi asks for a ban on the bull fights that take place here regularly, reports ***Shameem Akthar***

It was at the height of the bull-fighting season in Goa that Menaka Gandhi decided to lock horns with the organisers. The best-known animal lover in India asked for a ban on the sport, which has been a regular feature of Goan life since the Seventies. It attracts both sports lovers and gamblers, and keeps the organisers in food and fem through the year.

Not surprisingly then, the organisers are seeing red at the prospect of having their bulls sent back to the pen. And have decided to club together in an association to fight the Menaka threat.

Pandharpur, the warrior buffalo who has never lost a single bout or *dhiro* (Konkani word for 'close horns') this season, is not aware of this imbroglio. He chews cud in the afternoon shade, occasionally snorts with an innate anger that sends his rivals scurrying, rolls his blood-red eyes and paws the dung-hard ground with his hooves. When irritated with the clutch of little dusty boys around him, he lets out a deep bellow that evokes a delighted titter from the urchins.

Pandharpur keeps company with the other champions, three buffaloes and three bulls, at the Ciaido household in Zuari village of Goa Velha. Simon Ciaido, self-styled pioneer who transformed the informal bull-fights held in the villages into organised events that now charge hefty entry fees, shares these powerful animals with his seven brothers. The Ciaidos have no intention of losing their livelihood, Menaka's grandstanding notwithstanding.

"If Menaka goes to court, we will fight it out there," says Simon. "Our entire family depends on these animals. We treat them as if they are our family members. They get to eat better food than most human beings."

That seems true enough. The handsome Wellington, another challenger who is temporarily out of the arena for having lost the last *dhiro*, shares kitchen space with Mrs Ciaido and bends like a well-trained dog to be fondled by his keeper. He rubs his long, sensitively-veined face affectionately against Ciaido, whose eyes mist over with emotion.

The bull, standing almost six-feet tall at his pin-sharp horns, is a vision of energy and health — his snow-white, pastel pink skin glows after his daily scrub. His powerful hump bends heavy with healthy flesh, while his shanks stand out in muscular glory.

Little Bosco, Ciaido's son, offers to hold his reins to show you just how tame he is. But that is before another *dhiro* starts and the crowd jeers him into the field for a 'clench' with his equally robust rival.

The blood-thirsty audience will not be appeased till one bull lunges off the field in defeat. Not all bulls oblige. A good proportion of the fights end with one of the animals obstinately refusing to meet the rival head-on. A 'good' *dhiro*, in Ciaido's words, is one where the bulls decide to plunge into a tussle the moment they eye each other, lock horns for an hour sometimes, digging their hooves in, refusing to budge.

Victor Rodrigues, a contractor from South Goa, has organised one such 'Kodekant (champion) Dhirio' at Velsao to celebrate the 'Reianche' festa, a local feast, on January 6. Ice-cream vendors make a killing, as the children, throats parched with screaming for their favourite champions, lick the ice-sticks with a thirsty vengeance.

Organisers have orchestrated the febrile excitement well. Vans, tooting information on the event, make several forays into the neigbouring villages. Multi-coloured posters, listing the names of the bulls — ranging from the inexplicable Latur and 2044 to the hilarious Hand-break and Diesel — have been distributed.

The sleepy village readily forgoes its siesta to be part of this *mela*. Loudspeakers blare out old favourite Goan Portuguese songs, while a Konkani commentator drowns this squeaky

Spectators enjoy a bull-fight in Goa

music with his breathless spiel on the wonders of each challenger.

Rodrigues has lined-up five fights. The highlight of the tournament, however, is the Bobby Vs Brownie match. "Brownie! Brownie!", scream the kids when they spot him, as the title-holder hobbles painfully down the van that has ferried him here from his stable in Agacaim village.

His rival, Bobby, is daubed with ink-blue handprints, which his owners, the Agnelos, hope will keep the evil eye away. Bobby could do with some luck because his competitor Brownie has, this *dhiro* season, gored to shreds the reputation of many champions. Among the vanquished is that glorious bull, Hanuman, owned by Churchill Alemao, former chief minister of Goa, who had growled with displeasure over Menaka's pronouncements.

When Brownie faces Bobby the crowd goes berserk. Local *goondas* join the *tamasha* by pelting the crowds and bulls with heavy stones. The trainers, who run around the animals, trying to hold them down in the lock-horn position, are jostled by the audience. The excited crowd forgets about its own safety and jumps into the pit even as the bulls are charging at one another

The fight ends only when Bobby's neck is stained with blood, to match the red sash around him. He has tried to withstand Brownie for half-an-hour before conceding defeat He is led away, his whole torso shaking with defeat and fear Brownie, with the elan

of a true title-holder, pulls his reins free from his trainer and runs around the pit, acknowledging the cheers of the crowd

The fallow field used as a makeshift ring guarantees protection to viewers, many of whom have come from far-off villages after reading press advertisements. The 'ring' is sunk several feet below the surrounding elevation where viewers grab precarious foot-holds The palm trees bend down with the weight of intrepid village boys, who have clambered up for a better view.

It makes sense to maintain this kind of distance. On January 4, one man, who came too close to the action, died a gory death at the horns of a 'ravaging beast' (in the words of a local newspaper) The victim Chandrakant Naik, a bull-owner, suffered a blood-spattered end after having his intestines ripped out.

Not everyone is interested in the bull fights though Some people have paid the Rs 35 entry fee to gamble at dice games, which could make them much richer by the time the day is over Not that this compares with the heavy betting on the bulls, during which only 500-rupee notes are visible.

Savio Figaro, who operates a tourist-taxi agency in Panjim and also owns a prize bull, explains, "Owners of a single animal do not earn much. But for those who own several, it is not too bad."

Insiders reveal that prize bulls, whose fighting skills keep crowd excitement at fever pitch, may earn their owners as much as Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 per appearance, including the prize of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 and a percentage of the bettings. Even losers earn around Rs 20,000. Of course, the vanquished also earn a tongue-lashing from their owners, and are often manhandled if a disappointed crowd concludes that there has been rigging

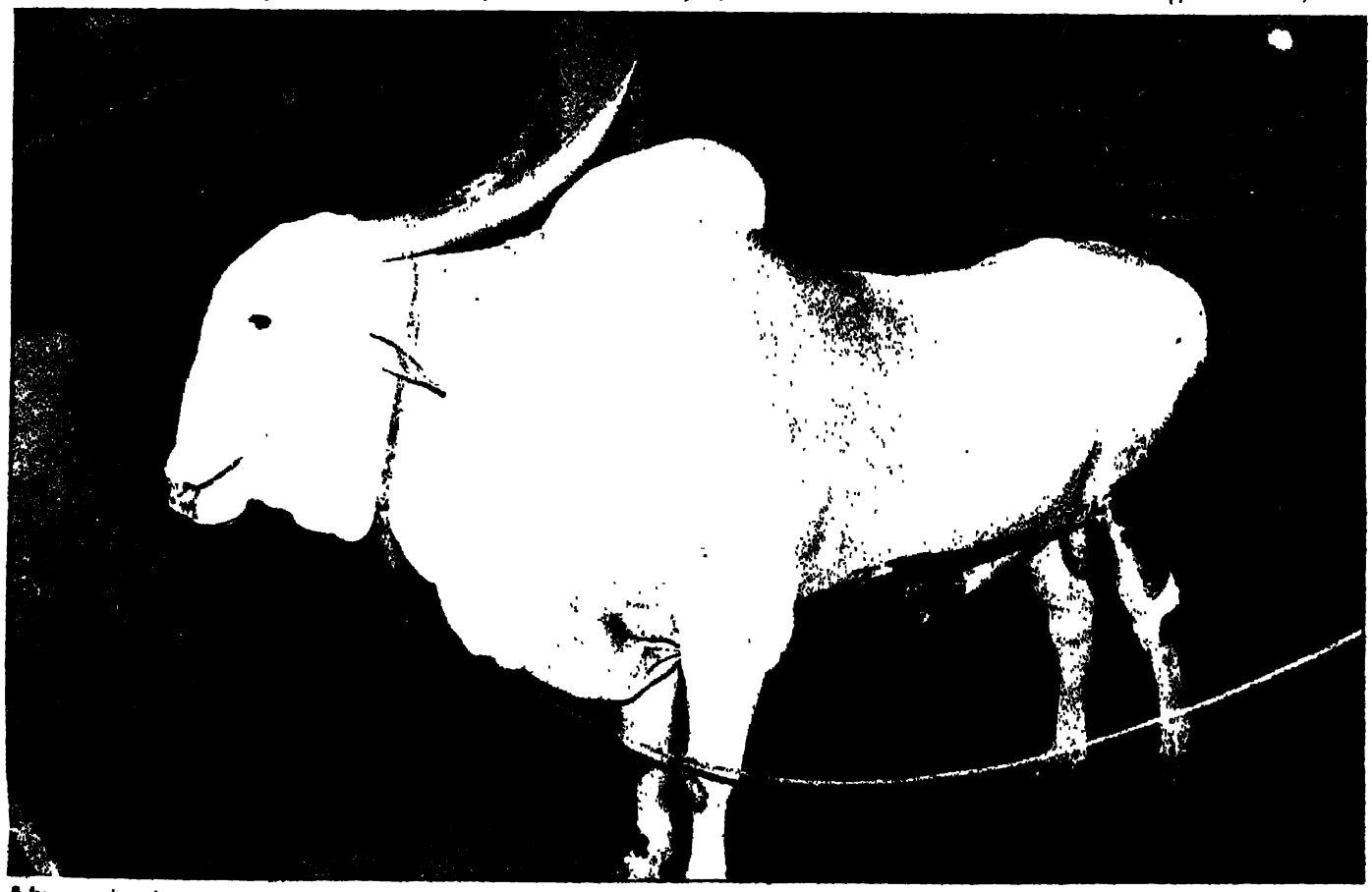
But the figures that are quoted are mostly guesswork; nobody is keeping accounts here. Explains a local, "One reason why these events are always held in South Goa is that, apart from being more rural, it also has more money flowing in from the Gulf where many of its residents work " Like most unregistered gambling this, too, is used to recycle black money, he alleges

Journalist Nora Secco de Souza notes that the trained bulls are 'brought to fighting pitch by being goaded incessantly by several secret methods'. Others hint that this is achieved by making the animal kneel for several hours before the scheduled fight. Bull-owners like Ciaido, Figaro and Alemao dismiss such allegations as so much nonsense.

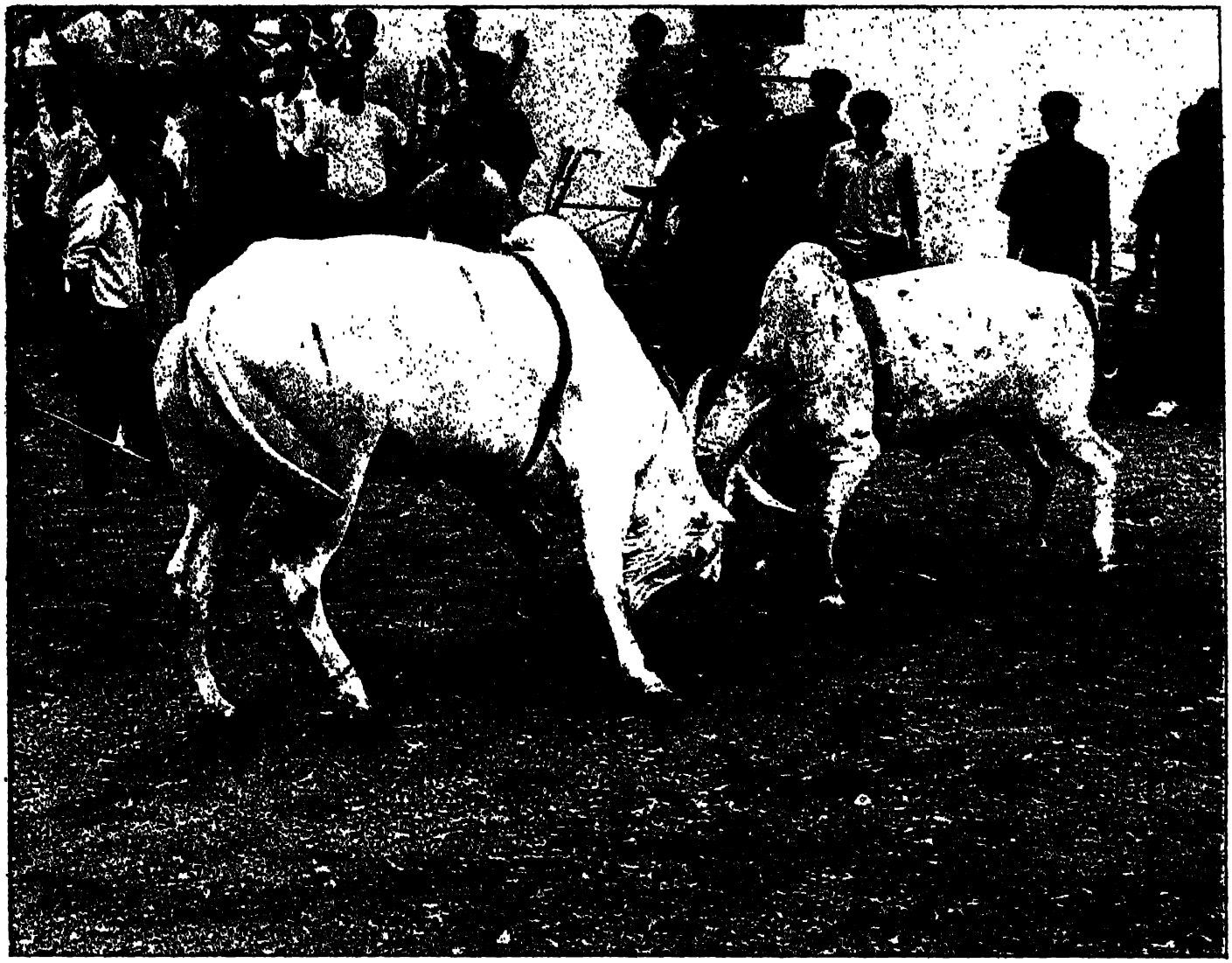
Savio maintains that the profits are not as attractive as they are made out to be. "They promised to pay me Rs 20,000 for my bull But they did not pay even half," he complains. "Calculate my expenses in hiring a van for his transport and my earnings don't come up to much. Money transactions are made on trust and we cannot demand much if the organiser's expectations are not met."

But despite these complaints, any suggestion that bull fights should be abandoned is greeted with outrage. Says Ciaido, "This sport has been part of our village scene for hundreds of years It also coincides with our harvests We cannot have Goa without *dhirios*."

There are not many historical records of this event, which is held every Sunday and on feast-days during these harvest months right from Siolim to Anjuna, from Taleigao (which always kicks off the season with the first *dhirio* by inviting local VIPs) to



A 'warrior' in its pen



A gory battle in progress

Benaulim

Women, dripping with gold jewellery and in their Sunday best, scream alongside their husbands as little children try to outdo them. Except for a smattering of whites, the tourists keep away from this essentially local event.

The bull fights symbolise the vestigeal remains of the Portuguese-Latin rule in Goa. Unlike the Spaniards who killed the bull in an uneven match where the animal was weakened by several barbs before receiving the death stroke, the Portuguese indulged in bull-baiting where the animals' horns were padded. In Goa, however, there is no man versus-beast clinch.

This, in Alemao's reasoning, is enough grounds not to ban it. "It is not as if any human being is injured. Why doesn't Menaka Gandhi do something about wrestlers who fight each other to death on the ring? Why is she bothered about animals when people are dying in this country? Bull-fighting is part of Goan sport spirit. We will never allow it to be banned," he says.

With the crowd frenzy that it whips up, bull-fighting is set to become a fixture on the Goan horizon. The earlier scrawny farm animals have been replaced with stud animals imported from Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Though the animal husbandry department keeps no head-count, Alemao says that there may be 10,000 prize bulls in Goa, specially its southern half. Visits to cattle *melas*, to pick up probable fighters, are now commonplace. Four-year-olds are preferred.

"In Karnataka, bull-fights are more organised. There, the bull has to drag a cart filled with boulders. The fastest bull, which also drags the cart the longest distance, wins. These bulls are trained to be very strong and hardy. Which is why we prefer the animals from that state," explains Ciaido, who claims to feed them the best pulses. "Some trainers even feed eggs and milk to make them stronger," he adds.

Though he has an equal proportion of bulls and buffaloes he says that most trainers prefer buffaloes because they fight longer and are less delicate. Bulls, on the other hand, drain their owners with their constant need for maintenance, cleaning and affection.

In Ciaido's stable there is a four-year-old young bull, nameless until now, pure white and soft-eyed. His head, explains Ciaido, is still too soft to take on the hard, sometimes fatal butts of other fighters. He is being fattened for the fights, for which he will be ready in three years.

Such long-term planning indicates the organised nature of the *[illegible]* here. And as long as a father continues to asks his little son, as he did at Velsao, if he would risk one rupee against 50 paise on Brownie, the will survive, no matter how man minor politicians call for a b

BRET HART, *the five-feet-something International champion, [illegible] Wrestling Federation's top technical [illegible] Hart is a hero of sorts to most kids. [illegible] International Belt, the Tag Team [illegible] Championship Belt [illegible] recently lost his Championship Belt to Bob Backlund). Hart continues to [illegible] shooter' image.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
When my phone doesn't ring.
What is your greatest fear?
Drowning.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My father. He raised a family of 12 with the right values.
What do you dislike most in others?
Smoking.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My inability to be a good father [illegible] use of the amount of travelling I do. I am unable to give more time to my family.

What is your most precious [illegible]
My first wrestling medal I won in high school.

What is your nightmare?

That they are calling out for me at the ring and I am still not dressed

[illegible]
[illegible] am not wrestling).
What makes you most [illegible]?
Poverty.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
I am happy the way I am.
What is your favourite word?
Excellence.
What is your favourite journey?
The ride from the airport to home.
What is your favourite dream?
There are so many.
What is your nightmare?

What do you dislike most in others?

Smoking

That they are calling out for me at the ring and I am still not dressed.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My wife, Julie.
What is your source of sustenance?
My belief that I am the best.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I do not want to hurt somebody.
What is your greatest regret?
Not spending much time with my family.
What has been your happiest moment?
When I won my first medal.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Poverty.
How do you relax?
By reading (whenever I have the time, that is).
What do you envy most in others?
Their time at home.

As the best.

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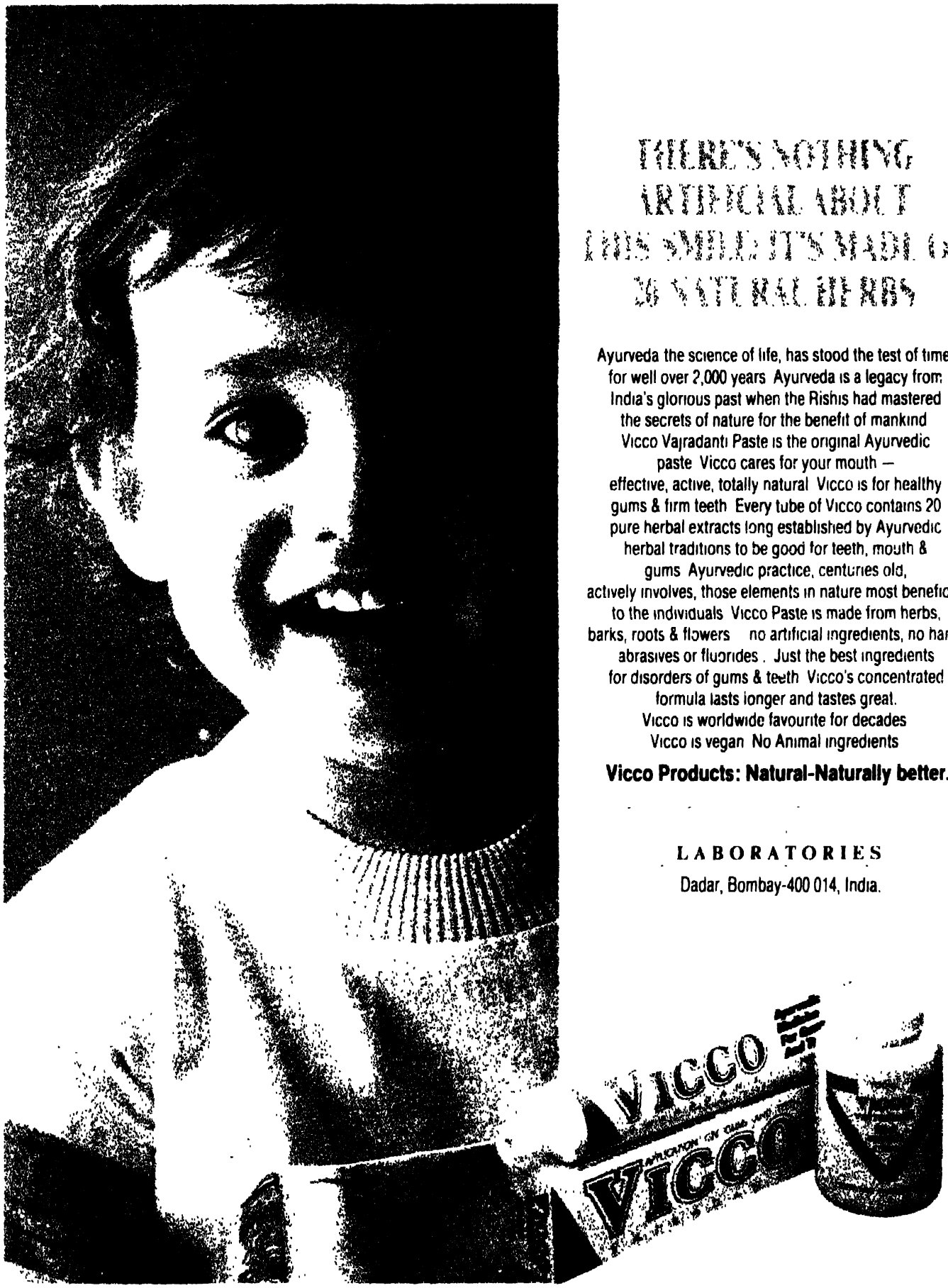

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LABORATORIES
Dadar, Bombay-400 014, India.

10 MARCH 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

End of Terror

■ We find yet another high profile public servant scrutinising the administration through his pen ('An Officer and a Writer' January 14).

The Punjab supercop, Ved Marwah, gives us the inside story of the anti-terrorist operation in Punjab and discloses some startling information about certain politicians, bureaucrats and the police.

It is an interesting trend that senior men of the administrative service are willing to publish their personal feelings regarding certain acts and decisions of the government. It is a good sign that they no longer want to be mere lackeys of the government.

Joydeep Mitra,
Calcutta

■ The life and times of the supercop, Ved Marwah, were brilliantly brought out in the Magazine. If only we had more courageous men like Marwah in our country.

Prabal Guha,
Patna

■ Punjab lived through hell, there were so many killings every day that people and the administration lost track of the numbers. No one was spared; neither the aged nor the women. Innocent children on their way to school were massacred. No one thought the colourful and bounteous state would see such dark days.

Tania Ghosal,
Patna

■ The extract made excellent reading, particularly since Marwah dwells at length on the genesis of terrorism in India.

Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia

■ Operation Black Thunder may have attracted adverse criticism from some quarters, but without this intelligent army operation terrorism would not have come to an end in Punjab.

S. Pramanik,
Calcutta

Rashbehari Das

They came, they saw and they conquered: Aishwarya and Sushmita

Official or Unofficial?

■ As more and more MNCs come to India, rival brands will face more competition ('Not the Hole Story', February 11). When ordinary campaigns fail they will take to counter advertisements like the famous Coke-Pepsi war at the Wills World Cup, playing around the word 'official' and 'unofficial'.

When there are so many products in the market, it is really a difficult job for the consumer to choose. And rival brands will do anything to prove it is better than the other. The Surf-Nirma campaign really had consumers foxed as to which was the better detergent.

Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

Historic Moments

■ I suppose the Magazine needs any excuse to put a picture of either Sushmita Sen or Aishwarya Rai on its pages ('Potted History', January 28). It is almost two years since the two Indian beauties charmed a team of international judges and walked away with the coveted Miss Universe and Miss World crowns.

They are part of history now and best forgotten.

Shaheen Jahan,
Calcutta

Gillian's Writings

■ Why did the Magazine discontinue with Ruskin Bond and Gillian Wright's columns? They were the two most-read columns

B. Bhattacharya,
Serampore (W.B.)

INSIDE

PAGE 4

INDIAN AIRLINES was pronounced the best domestic airline at the recent Hotel and Food Services award presentation. A remarkable turnaround, the credit for which goes to IA's managing director, Probir Sen.

PAGE 28

AFTER HIS mega-hit *Dilwale...*, Aditya Chopra is now Bollywood's most sought-after director.

Indian Airlines

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30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Rupinder Sharma

COVER STORY

HIGH FLIER

How a bhadralok *used courage and common sense to turn Indian Airlines around.* ***Seema Goswami*** *reports*

A FEW WEEKS AGO, CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER GHULAM NABI Azad dragged Probir Sen, the managing director of Indian Airlines, to Bombay along with him. Azad was chief guest at the annual Hotel and Food Service awards, the tourism industry's answer to the Oscars.

As the awards for best hotel, best restaurant, etc., were being announced, Sen realised, to his horror, that coming up was the award for best domestic airline. Others at his table were quick to sense his discomfiture. "Don't worry, Probir," they joked, "at least with you there is no suspense. Nobody expects Indian Airlines to win any awards." Sen smiled tightly.

Then finally, as Liz Kerkar, the chief designer of the Taj Group, arrived on stage to present the award for best domestic airline, Sen felt his stomach tighten. He arranged his features to reflect benign unconcern, but felt his jaw drop as the envelope was opened.

"And the winner for best domestic airline is...Indian Airlines!"

Sen rose to accept the award in a state of gratified shock and when he returned to his table, was pleased to note that the smirks had vanished from the faces of his fellow guests. The award was based on a poll conducted by Marg and there was no possibility of rigging. Clearly, a majority of people in the travel business and the frequent travellers who were polled by Marg genuinely believed that Indian Airlines was better than the private airlines.

Now that he has got over the initial shock, Sen says that he shouldn't have been so surprised. In 1995, IMRB conducted three polls among frequent flyers and all of them showed that Indian Airlines was the airline of choice.

"But somehow, we had all been so demoralised after the launch of the private airlines that we couldn't bring ourselves

Rajender Sharma

to believe that people actually preferred us," explains Sen. "I mean, just three years ago if you had told people that Indian Airlines would be regarded as the finest airline in the country, you would have been laughed out of the room."

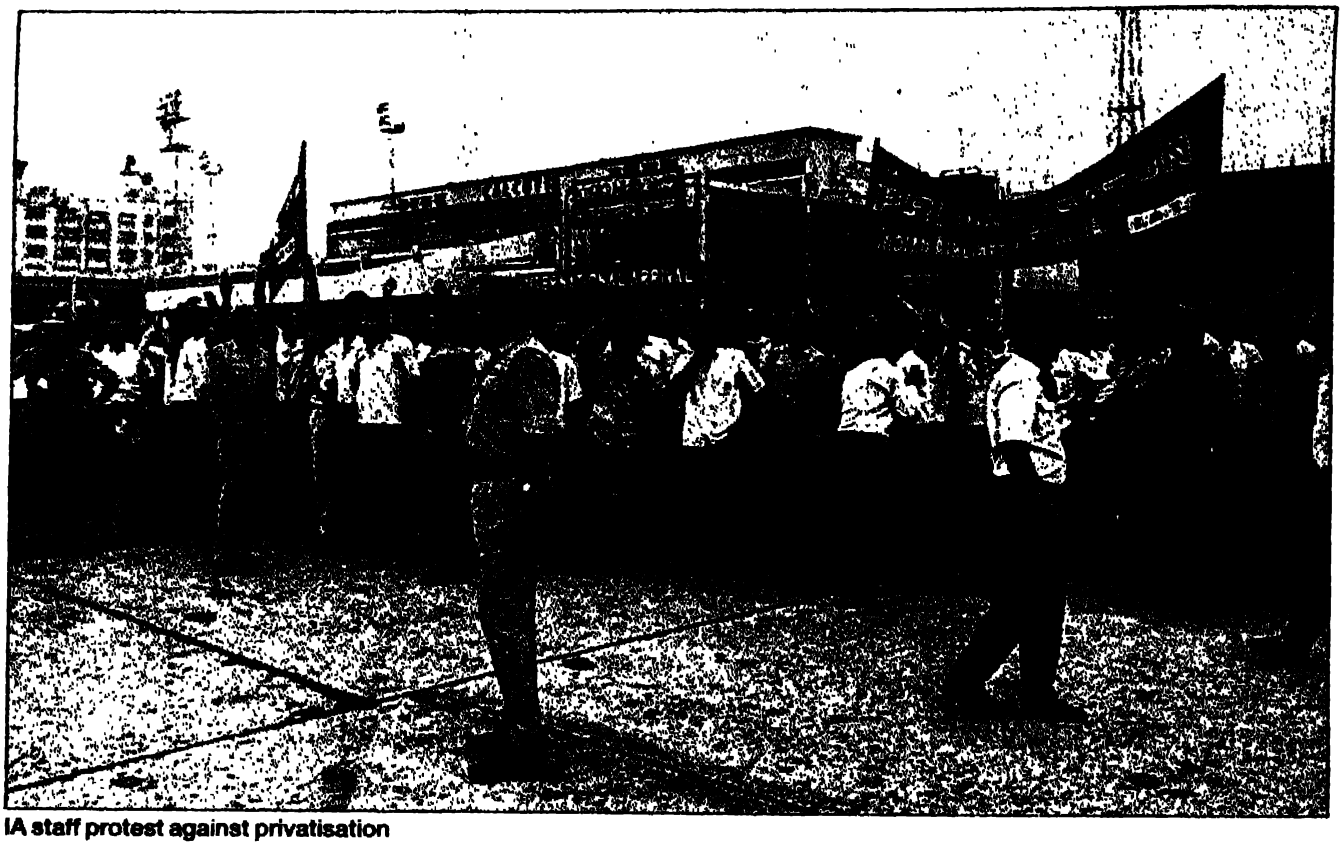
It is, by any standards, a remarkable turnaround. And despite the low media profile that he has deliberately adopted, much of the credit goes to Probir Sen.

Sen is an unusual candidate for a corporate turnaround. In an era where private sector wiz-kids are being drafted to 'save' the public sector, his success suggests that at least some of the old rules are still alive.

In a sense, Sen is the perfect generalist, the very anti-thesis of the management expert who has boned up on his case studies. His background is solidly upper middle-class. He went to Mayo College, Ajmer — one of its earliest non-Maharaja students after the school borrowed Principal Jack Gibson from Doon. He went onto Cambridge where he was a contemporary of Rajiv Gandhi's and then returned to

Ghulam Nabi Azad

Probir Sen



IA staff protest against privatisation

India to take the UPSC exam

He got into the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), chose the Madhya Pradesh cadre, and quickly made a reputation for himself as an independent-minded civil servant with an abrasive streak. To be fair, this streak tended to manifest itself much more in the 1980s after the calibre of politicians declined.

While most cow-belt civil servants learned to grin and bear it, Sen's combination of *bhadralok* self-respect and his public school-Oxbridge background, prevented him from buckling under. He closed factories which flouted environmental norms over the objections of the political establishment and became the civil servant who the more venal politicians loved to hate.

It helped also that Sen was determinedly non-careerist. He knew that as an IAS officer the worst that could happen to him was that he would be transferred to the boondocks. Unfortunately for the politicians, Sen loved the boondocks; he is that rare phenomenon, a civil servant who longs to work in the districts.

Fortunately, not all politicians are unconcerned with performance, and though Sen refused to play the I-was-at-Cambridge-with-Rajiv card, he got posted to Delhi anyway. As a joint secretary in the civil aviation ministry, he held temporary charge of

The perfect hostess

Indian Airlines a few years ago, and was also the director-general of civil aviation (in which capacity he violently opposed the grounding of the A-320s in 1990) before moving on to other responsibilities.

Then, L. Vasudevan, the man selected by the public enterprises selection board to head Indian Airlines got involved in a ruinous battle with the pilots. The airline's losses mounted, services were frequently disrupted by industrial action, and the private airlines began to sweep up Indian Airlines' traditional passengers.

By then, the Vasudevan versus pilots battle had become an ego thing with neither side willing to back down. Civil aviation minister Ghulam Nabi Azad sacked Vasudevan (who went off to Madras in a huge sulk) and gave temporary charge of the airline to a joint secretary in the ministry, Brijesh Kumar

Kumar was able to restore some of the plummeting morale, and began the process of re-inventing the airline. But he remained a part-time managing director with other responsibilities at the ministry and as Indian Airlines seemed in serious danger of becoming a basket case, the ministry looked for a full-time MD. (Eventually, Kumar took over as managing director of Air India.)

Russi Mody

Fortunately for Indian Airlines, Azad chose Probir Sen.

Ask his colleagues about Probir Sen and you will get a variety of responses At the ministry, they are a little peeved by his unwillingness to always play ball (though Ghulam Nabi has always been supportive) His chairman, Russi Mody, regards him as a little too arrogant to make a good subordinate. And his contemporaries reckon that he is a bit of an odd-bod — the sort of chap whose idea of a corporate giveaway is not a keychain or a calendar, but a copy of Hobsbawm's *The Age of Unreason*.

But of one thing there is no doubt: he has recast Indian Airlines in a new image. Gone are the bureaucratic obfuscations of old. In their place is a new aggression and an unfamiliar decisiveness This is now a no-nonsense airline

The results are plain to see Though much is made of Indian Airlines' losses, these are entirely a consequence of the debt repayments on the cost of the A-320s ordered by the Rajiv Gandhi regime Take away those interest payments and Indian Airlines is already profitable In the first seven months of the 1995-96 financial year, it made an operating profit of Rs 16 5 crore

Contrast this with the first seven months of the previous year, when it made an operating loss of Rs 53 crore All other parameters demonstrate the extent of the improvement Passenger load factors in the just concluded tourist season have grown by nearly 18 per cent The overall seat factor for the whole of last year represented a 6 3 per cent rise over 1994 The same is true of on-time performance In 1995, it went up 6 6 per cent over the previous year to touch 68 per cent

An IA Airbus 320

At a time when the private airlines are making losses — industry experts reckon that only Jet Airways and just possibly, Modiluft are at all profitable — Indian Airlines has the decisive advantage of fleet. It has 10 A-300s, 30 A-320s and 14 737s. No private airline, on the other hand, has more than six 737s.

Of course, Indian Airlines also has many disadvantages. In 1992, it had a 100 per cent market share. (But it still made a loss of nearly Rs 200 crore that year.) Now, with the proliferation of private airlines, its market share is down to 63 per cent. Obviously, competition has made things that much more difficult. But even so, its losses in 1994 were lower than in 1992. And this year, the operating profit will be high enough to ensure that net losses (which include interest payments) are at their lowest for five years.

The airline claims that it could probably make a net profit immediately if it did what the private airlines do and operated on the trunk and tourist routes alone. But obviously, this is politically unacceptable and it is forced to fly on several uneconomical routes such as Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar and, of course, the north-east.

Sen has off-set these handicaps by winning for Indian Airlines the right to fly to profitable foreign sectors in the far east and the Gulf. Among the 'domestic' airlines' foreign stations are Bangkok, Fujairah, Kuwait, Sharjah, Kuala Lumpur, Muscat and Singapore. In many of these sectors, Indian Airlines has performed better than Air India. For instance, it makes a profit on its Bangkok flights; Air India does not.

Nevertheless, as impressive as these figures are, Sen's principal achievement is in another area: the pilots.

Anyone who has flown by Indian Airlines knows that the airline has always been at the mercy of its pilots. You can operate a flight without an air-hostess, but you can't do without the pilot.

In the winter of 1991, the pilots went on strike to disrupt operations during the tourist season. When a panicky government settled with them, an outraged Air Marshall Ramdas, the airline's managing director, resigned in protest. The following winter, as the country reeled from the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the communal riots that followed, the pilots did it again. Managing director, L. Vasudevan, tried to break the strike by hiring Soviet aircraft. When one crashed, minister Madhavrao Scindia resigned and a few months later Vasudevan followed him through the door.

All of this gave Indian Airlines' pilots the feeling that they were invincible. At the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) it used to be said that any managing director who dared to take on the cockpit crew would be forced out of the airline.

This was *before* the advent of the private airlines.

When they began recruiting, things got even worse. In just over a year, 158 pilots left Indian Airlines. All of them got salaries vastly in excess of what they were earning at Indian Airlines. Moreover another 48 pilots retired or sought voluntary retirement during the same period. In effect, Indian Airlines lost *200* pilots in the space of a few months.

All of this had the effect of crippling the fleet. Of those who left, 91 were commanders and most of those who retired were also of the same seniority. It is always possible to hire more pilots, but it is impossible to hire more commanders. To reach that grade you need a certain number of flying hours and that takes time.

By last year, Indian Airlines was short of seven commanders for its ten A-300s; of 22 commanders for its 14 Boeings; and 39 commanders for its 30 A-320s. Even this was a slightly improved picture because the airline had re-hired 15 commanders on contract. Take away those contracts and the airline was short of 83 commanders. Last winter, it was unable to use two A-300s and five A-320s because of

this shortage.

Obviously, this is a disastrous situation for any airline. It had the effect of making the pilots even more conscious of their indispensibility. And last year, they decided that they were going to cripple the airline if they didn't get what they wanted.

Had it not been for Probir Sen, they would probably have succeeded.

It was a measure of how arrogant the pilots had got that they launched their agitation by off-loading senior air-hostesses who had committed the crime' of earning more than junior co-pilots. Next, they started reporting sick or walking off flights. In June 1995, Indian Airlines began cancelling 14 flights a day and losses amounted to Rs 50 lakh for each day of disruption

Confident that they had demonstrated their invincibility, the pilots issued their demands. None of them made much sense. They wouldn't fly with contract pilots. They would not fly with senior cabin crew They wanted extra allowances on the Ahmedabad-Delhi sector if passengers on the flight went on to fly to New York. They would not fly with executive pilots who undertook more landings than ICPA members And so on.

The pilots had picked their time well Chairman Russi Mody was abroad. Ghulam Nabi was in London recovering from gall bladder surgery. And Sen was alone.

Damania Airways: Weaning away passengers from Indian Airlines

Indian Airlines introduces new in-flight cuisine

Dum Dum Airport during a strike called by Indian Airlines

They expected him to buckle under To their horror, he told them to go to hell.

Entirely on his own, Probir Sen launched a huge public opinion campaign pointing out that the pilots were making unreasonable demands He lobbied the chief labour commissioner and the labour minister He procured assurances of support from Ghulam Nabi in London and he conveyed his strong stand to the Prime Minister Office (PMO).

As the media turned against the pilots, and the government agreed to back him, Sen did what no other managing director has ever done successfully. Any co-pilot who refused to fly with a member of cabin crew was thrown off the aircraft Pilots who did not turn up were charge-sheeted Those who claimed that they were ill were examined by the airline's own doctors and threatened with suspension of their pilot's licenses And the ICPA was told that Sen had a contingency plan ready

He asked the Indian Air Force if he could borrow 18 Boeing 737 pilots Private airlines were told that in the event of a strike they could take over Indian Airlines' most profitable routes And foreign airlines were informed that even they could come in and fly domestic sectors

Armed with all this, Sen told the ICPA that it was welcome to go on strike

As the editorials thundered, the airline's other unions threatened a boycott of pilots, and public opinion began to turn viciously anti-pilot, the ICPA buckled under There would be no strike There would be negotiations instead.

In January 1996, these negotiations were finally concluded Sen gave the pilots more money, but he extracted more flying hours and secured agreement on a new system which made it easier to promote co-pilots to commanders. More significantly, from a long-term perspective, he broke the ICPA The union is now so divided within itself that it is in no position to threaten anybody else

It would be foolish to pretend that all is well at Indian Airlines You cannot change the attitudes of a lifetime in the course of a couple of years Many members of the airline's staff still act as though they are doing passengers a favour And despite the improvements, the eastern region still remains the black spot in Indian Airlines' record

There are problems in the board room as well. One would have expected Sen and Russi Mody, both public school educated Oxbridge types, to get along, but their relationship has been stormy Mody regards Sen as opinionated and stubborn and Sen in turn treats Mody as a nice old buffer who should chair board meetings and then go home Both men are justified in their views but it is hard to see how such a combination can work in the long run

Nevertheless, nobody can dispute that the airline has changed beyond recognition. Apart from the cosmetic improvements — the quality of service, the greater variety of food, etc. — there is finally a recognition that it is the job of the management to manage and not to give in to aggressive sections of the work force.

That Probir Sen should have been the man to have restored the airline's backbone tells us something of the certainties with which we have approached the public sector Air India has been home to a series of private sector wiz-kids who have pursued short-term strategies and scampered off, leaving behind a sick and unprofitable airline

On the other hand, Indian Airlines is now firmly on the path to recovery That an IAS officer managed to do within the aviation sector what no management wizard could, suggests that even in this era of liberalisation, there is no substitute for education, intelligence and integrity ■

EXTRACT

The strength of SMALL THINGS

A short story from ***Manjula Padmanabhan*** *'s recently published collection*

You know what I mean. you have a train to catch at four thirty, you start packing at three-thirty, and at quarter to four, you're all done That's when you remember that you've forgotten to take your ticket So you go to the big wooden almirah in the corner, the kind in which all important things are kept locked away, and you insert the

little key in the key-hole with the worn edges and — the key refuses to turn

Refuses to turn

To begin with, you are calm, you move it back and forth in the hole, gently, knowing that it's just a small maladjustment, a little jiggling will do the trick.

But it doesn't budge.

You start to get a little anxious. The time is now ten to four. You need your ticket. The traffic is heavy between your house and the station You will need time to find a taxi, time to give the driver the right change, time to check that the train is on the same platform as always, time to find your bogey and your seat.

The key doesn't shift so much as a millimetre.

You tell yourself, Look. the tongue of the key has three little bumps and one depression, the lock has three little depressions and one bump; due to some minor dislocation, the bumps and depressions are not correctly aligned, therefore the key does not turn. It's only a *tiny* little sliver of metal which has caught against the wrong edge in the lock. it's really very small, it'll slip into place now, any minute now, just be patient, any minute now .

No deal. The key feels as if it is turning against a cement wall

Five minutes to four and you begin to lose nerve You jiggle the key, you turn it hard, and your fingers, sweating, slip on the small flat loop of the head of the key

Doesn't budge

You lose control and hit the edge of the door of the almirah with the side of your palm You shake the knob on the door violently. You start to pant.

You sit down by your suitcase in despair You know that this of those situations in which the key will not turn until you have missed your train. You wipe your forehead, you feel cold panic down your spine

That's when you begin to think of the strength of small things One tiny edge of metal, pressed tight against another tiny edge And that prevents the key from turning in the lock, which prevents you from opening the cupboard, and from getting the ticket

Extracted from *Hot Death, Cold Soup Twelve Short Stories* ***by Manjula Padmanabhan; Published by Kali for Women. Price Rs 120***

and from catching your train

The strength of small things

Look at me, for instance.

I'm big. Six foot two. My mother used to feed me with her own hands until I was 10 years old, telling me stories with every mouthful My elder sisters might have been starving, or crying, or just waiting to have their hair brushed, but Ma would feed me first, make sure every scrap of food went in Then she'd wipe my face and my mouth and call me a good boy and tell me that I would be big and strong when I grew up if I always ate like that

I used to adore my mother. Thought the world of her Nothing was good enough for her.

She was small too, come to think of it.

When my father died, I was still just a boy But I was already growing, I was already shooting up, just as any mother said I would I felt big and strong when I was near her. She would stand near me and her head just came up to where the bulge in my biceps began and she would look up at me and I would feel my heart expand with love and pride

She would say that I was all she had, her big boy, her only boy. She would rub the inside of my arm and she would say I must never leave her and I used to wonder why she ever bothered withsaying it I never would. Never did.

Not really. Well, I mean, of course. I had to go away to study. Went to the USA My uncle paid for me I studied to be an engineer. But she was always with me, my mother I wrote to her every week, I thought of her whenever I wasn't thinking of anything else She sent me food, she sent me gifts She told me not to fool with foreign girls. Life was hard for her she said, while I was away She had to live in my uncle's house, my three sisters had to be married off, a lot of money had to be spent on them If I fooled around with any foreign girls, I would forget her and then — who would she have? Nobody. Nobody to look after her in her old age

I used to feel like screaming when she wrote those letters because I felt so useless to protect her, so far away, so futile. I knew I had to stick it out in the USA and that I had to earn my degree and I had to do well Otherwise it would all be hopeless and I would be unable to do anything for her.

I was three years in the USA

In the end, I did have girlfriends, just like everyone else — or, should I say, I had them, but not like everyone else. Some other Indians used to say that they felt bad, when their girlfriends would ask them if they would get married soon, if it was real love But I never felt anything bad I would tell every girl that I loved her, that she was the only one for me They seemed to like to hear that It made them extra loving and caring. They would want to do all my cooking, and washing and cleaning Then after a couple of months I would tell whichever one it was that I had a rare tropical disease and that I hoped they hadn't noticed the symptoms of it yet.

They always left before I had a chance to describe the symptoms!

And in a couple of weeks, at some party or at a bar, I'd meet someone else and the story would start again I didn't ever have to get involved Those girls could never understand that for a man like me, even a thousand of them could not take my mother's place in my life They could clean and wash and cook for a hundred years, even, but when the time came for me to go back to my mother, I would forget their names before the airport bus pulled away from the kerb I would forget their faces, their bodies, their existences

I didn't tell my mother about them, though, I think she would have been hurt. Or afraid Afraid that I might not return to her because of one of them She needn't have worried. I didn't want to do anything which would make her even more afraid for her future than she already was

By the time I returned, two of my sisters had got married and one was being shown around It helped her prospects now that I had returned from the USA, her big brother who was an engineer with a foreign degree I would go with my mother to the homes of prospective in-laws, and I could see how impressed they would get, with my height, and my new accent and my clothes. I would show off a bit, and sprawl on their sofas and tell them about the film stars I had met and the dirty movies I had seen.

We would tell them that, just as soon as I was married, we would be able to give them the sort of dowries they were demanding

Some of them even offered to exchange their daughters for my sister! Free of charge!

I used to laugh at that How will I look after my mother like that, I would say Where is that money going to come from, huh? Who's going to pay for my mother's old age, huh? Your grandfather?

Fools.

Anyway In the end, my sister ran off with someone, some rich boy, and we didn't have to pay a thing. We never met the boy or his parents, and I don't know where she is now or what she is doing My mother said, in her gentle voice, "Good riddance! Now we have only to think of a nice girl for my big boy!"

It didn't take very long I left everything up to my mother. I let her choose the girl and I let her decide on the price. I just went along with her to the homes of the girls, and I smiled at everyone and I showed off my credit cards I even suggested that I had a green card and that we would live in California

The girl my mother chose was not very tall, and nothing much to look at, but we had already agreed, my mother and I, that if a girl is very good-looking, she can also be very proud and cocky. The thing was to find someone who would be humble and who would just quietly sit in the house and look after my mother's needs And mine, of course, but my mother would be there to take care of me anyway

We got married and the girl's family paid 20 lakhs in cash and another 20 in gold and jewellery. They bought us a Maruti and promised that in two years we would have a deluxe model I said that I would prefer a Fiat NE 118. They said, sure, sure, anything — but what about California?

I said, "Everything depends on that extra 50 lakhs we talked about, remember? In dollars, payable in the USA?"

That shut them up

In two years, they said When we marry off our son .

So there we were, three of us, living in a flat in Bombay. The flat belonged to the girl's family, and would belong to us, eventually. I started to work. The girl was a fairly good cook and she had done a secretarial course. She wanted to work, she said, she wanted to earn her own living, but my mother said no to that. My mother said, "When a girl earns her own living, she gets the wrong ideas about life She must stay home and look after her husband."

Then she was pregnant. My mother advised me that we should start a family quickly, to get that out of the way. "Have two sons," she said, "that should be enough."

The first pregnancy was of a

Illustration: Subrata Gangopadhyay

daughter, we went to the doctor and they performed some famous test and so we got rid of that one "Why waste time with girls," my mother said

The second time she was pregnant, my wife said she wanted to go to her parents' house. We wanted to do the test, but she escaped before it could be done. When she came back from her parents' home, we went to the doctor but the doctor said that even if the test showed that the baby was a daughter, it was too late to have an abortion. "It would be dangerous," he said "Dangerous for whom?" said my mother, "Isn't it dangerous to have daughters? Isn't it dangerous for families to have daughters?" The doctor looked at her strangely and said something about old fashioned views I said we would find another doctor

Finally, we had the test, it was shown to be a girl, and we got someone to do the abortion, but when the what's it came out, it proved to have been a boy after all. Then my wife was terribly unhappy and she cried for months and wouldn't do any work in the house and my mother told me that she had a feeling that this girl was not suitable after all

Then she got pregnant again. She said, "This time I won't have any tests You can do what you like, I won't have any tests " My mother said, "If you want to be like that, go to your parents' house and have the wretched brat. Why should we pay for your medication in vain?"

She went away and she had a daughter

The two years were up by this time and I wrote to her family to say that my mother and I were waiting for the 50 lakhs to appear

Her family wrote to say that, unless we took her back, there would be no 50 lakhs anywhere and anytime

I said, "Why? We fed her and clothed her for two years Paid for all her hospital bills."

But there was silence from that side I had not yet seen my daughter even once. Not that I wanted to, but still.

By this time, my mother said she had an idea She said, someone she knew had a daughter studying in the USA, a girl who had got a green card If I could marry that girl, I could settle abroad without all this trouble of waiting for my wife's parents to provide me with the dollars or of being saddled with an ungrateful wretch who refused to listen to reason and who kept running home to her parents at every slightest problem

I said, "But how will I get a divorce? I don't think my wife's family will let her give me a divorce "

My mother said, "Why bother with a divorce? Don't you read the newspapers? There's a much simpler way and everyone does it "

I said, "You mean "

My mother said, "Yes "

For the first time in my life I argued with her. I begged her, I pleaded with her not to ask me to take this course. "It's wrong," I said, "it's sinful to take someone's life "

But she did not budge She said, "When you have a disease you have to cure it by killing the germs "

I cried, I fought, I went down on my knees and touched her feet, I stopped eating my food But she was like a rock. She, so small, so frail, so white haired, was like a great mountain

made of solid diamond and I was like a dung beetle in front of it, trying to make it move.

In the end I gave in, I gave in What else could I do?

I wrote a sweet letter to my wife, telling her how much I missed her. I said, I was willing to settle for half the money now, in rupees, and forget the rest, we'd work out something I said, I needed her in the house and that everything would be different when she came back I said that even my mother missed her. My mother helped me write the letter

We have a mallish flat, just off Princess Street in Bombay There are two bedrooms, one with a bathroom attached and one with a large verandah and some fresh air coming in My mother had that one, because of her breathing problem When my wife came back, she would have liked to stay in that one because of the baby and the need for some more space, but it was important for the plan my mother made that we should stay in the same small bedroom

My wife brought the baby back with her It was four months old by then and quite sweet Sometimes when I held the baby I felt something shift inside me Babies have that effect There are so small, so weak and yet they can reach into the hard places inside a human being and shift something there I don't know how they do it My mother told me not to hold the baby too much or else I would get attached

My wife brought the money back with her in a suitcase It was the old-fashioned type, the kind where the sides are stiff and unyielding, and the locks are the kind where ther 's a small flap which has a sort of flat loop in it The loop fits into a slot on the lower front side of the suitcase when the case is shut, the little flap is held down and the loop pushed into the slot, where it is held in place by a bar which can be slipped back and forth with the aid of a round button-shaped release-lever When the suitcase is locked, the lever is fixed in place, so that the slotted loop cannot be released from the bar You know the kind My mother's plan was that we would put some sleeping powder in my wife's cup of coffee at night, lock her and the baby into the bedroom and set fire to the room We would leave cigarettes around to suggest that my wife had caused an accident while smoking in bed. If we did it late enough at night, no one would notice the smoke until it was much too late

We decided to do it on the first moonless night after my wife's return. I was supposed to go away on a business trip, for which reason I had a couple of bags around, supposedly to take with me on my trip, but actually meant to carry the money My mother would have to stay behind in the house, so that she could see that before the fire came to anyone's attention, she could unlock the bedroom door, so that no one would suspect anything

Also, it would seem as if her own life have been in jeopardy, and that she would convince people that a genuine accident had taken place.

Everything went as planned. My wife didn't suspect a thing We had a hearty meal and my mother made a show of preparing the night-cap of coffee The baby was a bit peevish that night and I was walking her up and down to make her sleep I thought about what was going to happen to her I felt bad about it I felt I couldn't do this to such a tiny little thing. Then I fell to thinking about how it is that women, who are after all, so much smaller, weaker, stupider, less important than men, still manage to survive in life How they endure Girl children get less food than boys, they get attention from their parents, yet when you look around, there are so many old women around, apparently so many of them do survive. They say that women live longer than men

I thought of myself, and of how big I am, and of how I am not afraid of anything. I thought of how much more power I had than this tiny creature in my arms. I thought of how easily I could snuff her life out and how she could do nothing, nothing at all to harm mine. I noticed that she was asleep. Her lashes seemed to tremble slightly and her skin seemed fine and very delicate I felt something shift inside me. I reminded myself that I was so much bigger than her, so much stronger than her and I took her quickly inside the bedroom and put her in her cot and shut the door behind me.

My wife said she would go to bed, because she was feeling tired She offered to pack for me, but I said that I would manage. She went inside I sat in the dining room with the video on, waiting for her to fall asleep.

Soon all was quiet in the house, and in the building It was already about one o' clock and my first flight was by Air India, one of their cheap internal fares to Delhi My mother came to me

and said that we had better get on with the plan.

***

I took one last look around, then I spilled a bottle of my wife's nail-polish remover on the carpet near the bed, let the cigarette drop onto it and noticed with satisfaction the flame spring up I had about 15 minutes to transfer the money from the suitcase to my two bags.

I put the suitcase up on the dining table, got out the keys and unlocked both sides. I wondered whether my wife would wake up at any point or whether the fumes would get to her I had arranged the bed clothes so that the rest of the room would burn before the flames reached her, so that she would die of asphyxiation.

I pushed back the button releases and — one of them refused to move

I said to my mother, "It's stuck, I think it's just some rust Get some of that oil -- that oil you use on the sewing machine-- "

But it was useless, it just made the front of the case messy with oil

My mother said, ' You should have done it before, I told you to do it before'

***

I tried again with the key. I turned it around to lock and unlock the release lever, but in one of my attempts I twisted the keys so fiercely that it got bent and I could no longer remove it from the lock. I began to sweat

My mother said, "Why don't you take the suitcase with you? Why do you need to transfer the money?"

I sat down, my head between my hands "I can't take the suitcase with me because ..because " It seemed such a silly reason now, but I had thought it would seem incriminating, if I came back with the suitcase in tow It was a huge, bulky suitcase and I had thought it would be easier if the weight of the money were distributed in two cases

***

"Break it open," my mother was saying. "take one of the big knives and break it open "

That's when I heard the sound of glass breaking

It came from inside the bedroom, and for a sickening moment, I thought maybe my wife had woken up and was breaking open the windows But even as I leapt up to go and listen at the door I realised it couldn't be that, because surely she would have made some other sound, surely she would have tried the bedroom door first. I stood outside the door, listening, trying to understand what would make that sound

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Then I heard the baby. She had woken up and was crying.

She was screaming Of course, I couldn't hear her very loudly, because there was a crackling sort of noise inside the room and the door was quite thick But I could hear her She was screaming in that way that babies have, half-way between rage and fear, she was screaming for her life. Literally

I remember that my mother tried to hold me back from going in to get the baby, to make her stop crying, but I was already opening the door Or trying to Of course, it wouldn't open. Too hot, right? Right Some small piece of metal inside the lock, now expanded out of shape, no longer accepted the teeth of the key Just a tiny bit, nothing much really, nothing compared to the size of my muscles or the strength of my fear, but enough. Enough to keep me from being able to open the door in time to stop the bay crying Enough to ruin my life

Because the baby's crying woke the neighbours up. Then they saw the smoke, coming in through the bathroom ventilation shaft. In panic they came up to our flat and when we didn't respond to the doorbell, broke the door down and found me and my mother and the suitcase full of money.

My mother died of a heart failure shortly after the fire brigade arrived that night

My wife and my baby survived, but of course they are no longer mine. my in-laws prosecuted me successfully and sent me to jail on the evidence of the neighbours, who were able to say that they caught me in the act of trying to murder my wife

And so I sit here in my squalid cell, which I share with seven other men I watch the ants So small and so industrious

***

And I am dazzled that these small things are -- what is the word? So steadfast, so incorruptible, so pure in their purpoe They have no task but to stay in place and to do the things for which they have been designed. And in their smallness, in their modesty, in their lack of ambition, they have strength

The strength of small things ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: (1) MONDAY (2) TUESDAY (3) WEDNESDAY (4) THURSDAY (5) FRIDAY (6) SATURDAY (7) SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	1220	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	0850	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0645	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BOMBAY					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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DIBRUGARH					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PF [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W-611	1320	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MU 3[illegible]	1510	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1, 3, 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 230	1620	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	4S 811	1635	2, 4, 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	2, 4, 6	4S 612, 615	[illegible]	1, 3, 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	5, 7	MU 32	1610	3, 5, 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	4, 7	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	4, 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IMPHAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
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RANCHI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1510	[illegible]
VARANASI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ 185	1445	1	RJ 184	[illegible]	[illegible]
AMSTERDAM					
KLM-676	0420	7	KLM 875	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
KB-105	0650	[illegible]	KB 106	1020	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 106	1240	5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	TG 213	1240	1, 3, 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 856	1730	4, 7
TG 313	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 732	1505	2, 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-070	[illegible]	[illegible]	RO-071	1200	5, 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC-225	0800	1	IC 226	1020	1
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2, 3 6 7	BG 091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC-723	1250	1, 2 3 5 6	IC 724	1520	1, 2 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2 3 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	[illegible]
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2020	1
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1245	3	Q7-060	1300	2
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	
[illegible]					
RA-214	1215	2 4 6	RA 213	1130	2 4 6
IC-747	1115	1, 2 4 [illegible]	IC 748	1535	[illegible]

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 14	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
SU-536	[illegible]	4	SU-537	[illegible]	4
PARIS					
KB-106	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KB-106	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
SQ-415	[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ-416	[illegible]	2 5
BI 108	[illegible]		BI 107	[illegible]	6
SOFIA					
LZ-504	[illegible]	[illegible]	LZ 503	1050	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	[illegible]	AI 305	[illegible]	6
YANGON					
IC 237	[illegible]	4 [illegible]	IC 238	[illegible]	4 [illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19 [illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3005	19 [illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr [illegible] Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tue [illegible] & Sat Arr Mon Tue [illegible] & Sun	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep Mon Tues Wed [illegible] Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep Thurs & [illegible] Arr Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** [illegible] Way Dep Tue [illegible] & Sat Arr Tue Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	[illegible]	[illegible]
5049	13 00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	[illegible]	[illegible]
5047	15 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4-30	5018
3009	[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	16 15	3008
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	[illegible]
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	[illegible]	3020
3021	16 0[illegible]	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
5639	17-30	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5060
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3023	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3024
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3032
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	[illegible]
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	[illegible]
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20 35	5658
3153	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
3663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	[illegible]
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5085	12 40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6002	[illegible]	**Madras Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr [illegible] Saturday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Kurla Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	2842
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** [illegible] Arr Mon [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** via [illegible] Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Tata Steel Express**	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	[illegible]	8112
8002	[illegible]	**Titlagarh Express**	[illegible]	8006
8013	[illegible]	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	[illegible]	8016
8007	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via [illegible]	[illegible]	8008
8409	[illegible]	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	[illegible]	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
8047	[illegible]	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	[illegible]	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Purulia Express** Dep except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	3015
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Monday [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	
	14 [illegible]	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** [illegible] Tuesday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via [illegible] Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** [illegible] Dep [illegible] & Fri Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** [illegible] Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14-0[illegible]	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** [illegible] Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

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POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This week: The Diary

Began life as: Samuel Pepys' way of winding up a perfect day by putting it down on paper. But there are those who suggest that the diary has longer antecedents than that, and that the first diary was kept by the Neanderthal man in the form of a stone tablet on which he notched his conquests (i.e. every visit to that cave, dragging a hapless woman by her hair).

Gained world-wide fame as: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a haunting account kept by a Jewish teenager of the years spent in hiding with her family. The Nazis were on the rampage, and the Franks were hidden away by some friends until the threat from Hitler subsided.

Natural progression: After the diary as literature, it was only a matter of time before we were treated to the diary as literary device. The most famous — and perhaps the funniest — example of this genre was the *Diaries of Adrian Mole*, by Sue Townshend. The outpourings of a boy growing up in a working-class dysfunctional home in England, these are first-rate studies of the turmoil of an adolescent mind.

Giving this close competition is *The Diary of a Mad Housewife*, a tragi-comic study of a woman in her mid-thirties, with two young daughters and a husband who has lost interest in her. The way she copes with this mid-life crisis is funny all right, but nobody can miss the underlying pathos.

The Indian version: The one that achieved the greatest notoriety was the diary kept by Amita Modi, then the wife of badminton star, Syed Modi. The diary was produced in court as evidence after Modi was murdered, and appeared to indicate that Amita and Sanjay Singh, a friend of the couple (and referred to as S2 in the diary) were having an affair.

And why would anyone think that?: Well, you know how people are. Though the fact that sample quotes went something like, "S2 came twice..." didn't exactly help.

The case for Amita: Well, Tallulah Bankhead did say: "Only good girls keep diaries. Bad girls don't have the time." So, maybe the diaries didn't chronicle a hot affair after all. And, like Amita said, they were merely

Sanjay Singh

Anne Frank

Amita Modi

fantasies that she had written down in idle moments

So, did they turn out to be clinching evidence in the murder case?: Not quite Sanjay Singh was acquitted of the charge of conspiracy of murder. Amita moved in with him ('only a good friend, you understand') to get over the trauma of her husband's death and a few years later the two married quietly and are now jointly raising Amita's daughter

Perhaps, there's not much wrong with diaries, after all: Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Ask any politician and he will tell you that they are the root of all evil and should be banned forthwith. Well, at least, such people as arms dealers and industrialists should certainly be prevented from indulging in such practices.

Arms dealers?: Now, don't tell us that you've forgotten Martin Ardbo already? Yes, we're talking about the Bofors executive who kept a detailed record of the company's Howitzer deal with India, to the extent of noting down how much money had been paid out (as kickbacks or political contributions: take your pick) to those negotiating the deal.

Who benefited the most?: Well, strangely enough, it was a man who hadn't been paid a single kroner: V.P. Singh. He resigned as finance minister from the Rajiv Gandhi government, after levelling charges of corruption against the Prime Minister Eventually, he formed his own political party and became Prime Minister of India after the 1989 general election.

What happened next?: The V.P. Singh government fell within nine months and after a brief interregnum when Chandra Shekhar took over as Prime Minister with support from the Congress And once the Congress was back in power, Bofors was given a quiet burial, though not before intrepid investigative journalist Chitra Subramaniam had got a book out of it.

Latest installment: Why, the Jain diaries, of course, in which industrialist S.K Jain has apparently kept detailed records of how much money he paid out to which politician. And to make things easy for the investigators, Jain obligingly referred to the politicians in question by their initials (L.K A for L K Advani, for instance)

The government response: Narasimha Rao adopted a lofty 'the law must take its own course' ...sition, and the CBI charge-sheeted several of his ministers and such stalwarts of the Opposition as BJP leader, L.K. Advani. But contrary to what most people had imagined, the accused succeeded in getting bail (unlike poor Kalpnath Rai, who landed in Tihar after being charged under TADA).

P.V. Narasimha Rao

The politicians' defence: Some denied taking the money; others agreed that they had accepted the payments, but that these were in the nature of political contribution (in layman's terms, money to fight elections with).

The Bofors gun

The public reaction: It could be summed up quite accurately in two words. "So what?"

You mean nobody cared?: Not really The general reaction was, "Well, all politicians take money, anyway So, who cares if these people did, too."

Did this make sense?: Most certainly. In the absence of state funding, Indian elections are fought with the help of contributions made by industrialists. And while it is true that these payments should be made by cheque and should be accounted for, it is a sad fact of Indian political life that they are invariable in the nature of cash hand-outs.

Bottom line: After the usual sensational headlines, this too shall pass After all, how many of us remember Martin Ardbo today? ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, get off to a headstart, take the initiative and that will help you to get work done. Jupiter-Uranus happy formation promises money, romance and a slice of good luck, so necessary for singular success. News and messages will be of the utmost importance for Arieans. Take care of health.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Venus, your main planet is in excellent formation with Saturn giving you a chance to marry, get engaged, enter into partnerships, develop contacts and cultivate friends, as gardeners cultivate roses. Journey with a possible stop-over is likely and should prove beneficial and purposeful.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Mars helps you to reach out to people and places in a grandiose and gainful way. That means money, even mega bucks. Children, promotion/perks, speculative ventures, a new high in profession, entertainment and amusements are the other aspects of the week. The cult of elders may cause concern.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The key is in group activity, camaraderie, socialising, the ability to get along and be a team person. You will certainly swing it. Deals, transactions, negotiations, out of court settlements are the indications. Children, hobbies and creative ventures give you delight.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

From remote controlled aeromodels to massive organising to flights of fancy, will be your enormous range as the moon conjuncts Jupiter, the good luck planet. Yes, Jupiter also helps you in matters related to house, home, office, renovation, decoration, shifts and moves. Your wit will dazzle the audience.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Journeys and collaborations appear fated. Matters related to gifts, taxes, legacies, endowments and joint-finance make you happy. Do expect honey and money, a combination hard to better. A proposal or offer comes to you. Accept it. Those in authority will definitely help.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

You will not be mired in dark turmoil but rather find a new zest and joy in life. Expect your heart to quiver, your mind to bend, your imagination to hit the sky. In short, expect chance, money and family to enrich your life, says Ganesha. Home and office also come in for a possible facelift.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

The great love of your life is on his/her way, that is if he/she has not done so far this year. Anticipate love, life, laughter, expenses, deals, contracts, collaborations, meets, interviews, outings, rendezvous, negotiations and settlement. Quite an armful really. This is also the time to devote yourself to work.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

While legal issues and posers are possible, just remember these can and should be sorted out. A trip, a journey, a meeting should help you to turn things around. Avoid bravado and bluster, keep to adjustable schedules as changes are certain, and be ready to create your own demand.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The new moon brings about a fast forward in business, trips, art, teaching, religious rites, trading, courtship and marriage. Children will play a pivotal role and that also means the birth of a child. Group activities will be ideal and are therefore to be encouraged. Social status soars.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Expect a major promotion if in service, a loan if in business, or a new office if in profession. Property matters are distinctly favoured. Here, a house or office move is not unlikely. Plenty of commuting and shunting is your lot. Those in teaching, preaching and publicity win laurels.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

You will be working and also playing on various levels simultaneously, but the two main ones will be money and love. Expect tremendous joy, thanks to children, an important journey, a possible collaboration, trading and brokerage. Hobbies will have an extra dimension to them.

BIRTHDAYS

March 10: Moon trine Sun-Saturn formation says play your cards well, you will, and thus reach the top, be it love, money, sports, launch of an industry or an idea.

March11: Moon square Mercury could lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, intentionally or otherwise. Secret deals and finances could well be go hand in hand.

March 12: Moon's last quarter could fire your imagination considerably. But others, including family members and even wellwishers may not quite agree with you.

March13: Moon trine Venus leads to comforts and creativity. Just see that you are not cheated or deceived. Family members may not see eye to eye with you. Those in arts, research and chemicals do well.

March14: Moon, mind, Jupiter, good luck, hold hands giving you freedom of expression, passion, enthusiasm, ability and willingness to go all the way and acertain confidence.

March 15: Mercury sextiles Jupiter ushering in a lot of opportunities and avenues say, marriage, promotion, higher learning, new ventures. Let your mind open out and unfurl.

March16: Moon squares Venus making for expenses, all sorts of connections and ties. Avoid the use of drugs, go slow on drinks and take good care of health.

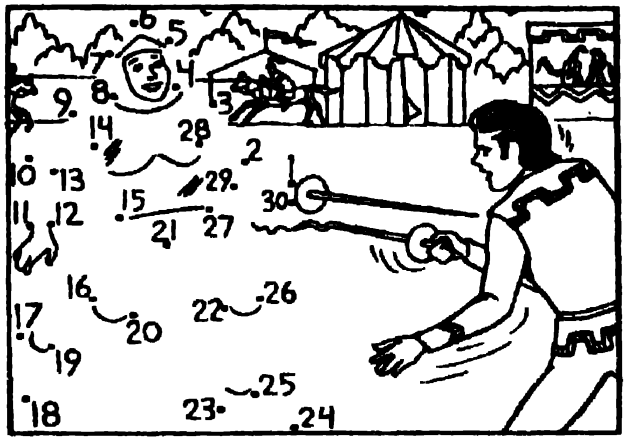
Exquisite craftsmanship in International Standard 22/22 karat gold and diamond jewellery. Dealer in precious and astrological stones.

P. C. CHANDR
W L

of Jewel

JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN



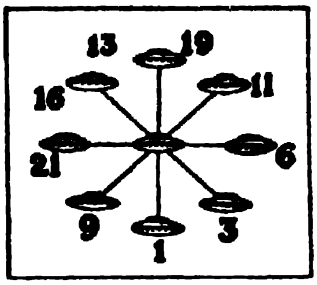
DUEL CONTROL! Unfair! One person above seems to have a big advantage. Draw lines dot to dot to complete picture.

DUD LETTER! Just scrutinise this sentence very carefully and it can be quickly determined which letter of the alphabet is missing. Which letter? Answer in 30 seconds.

The 24th letter

UFO A-GOGO!

A skywatcher claims to have spotted a formation of nine unidentified objects (see diagram), each bearing a respective number, with numbers of each row having a total of 33.

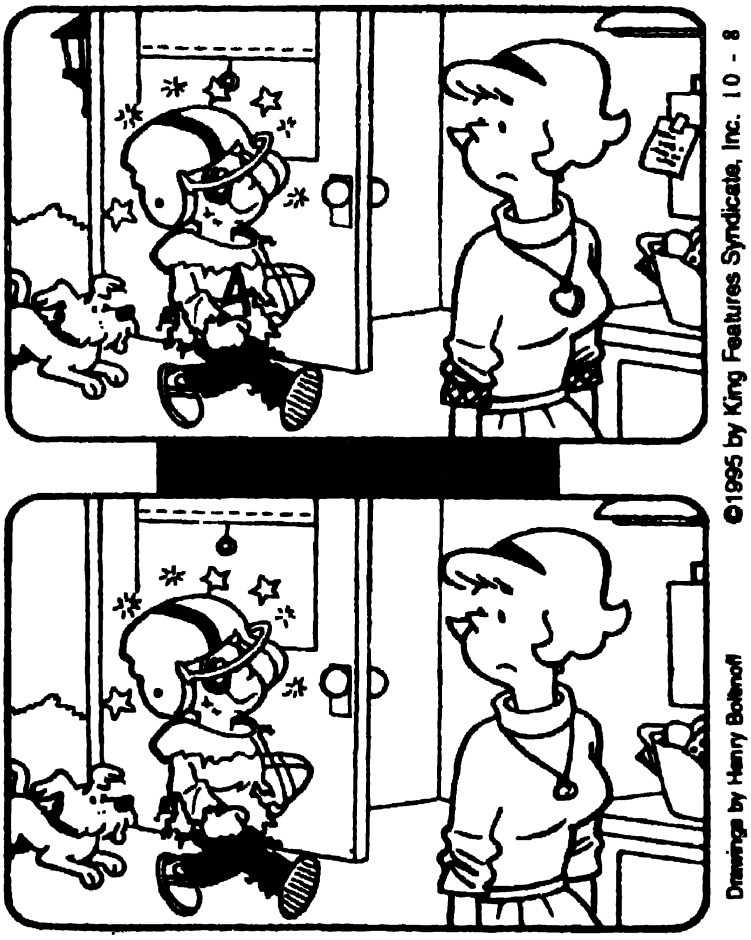


Unfortunately, our pal could not recall exactly where each of the numbers appeared in the group. See if you can puzzle it out.

Remember, each row totals 33. Each number shown is used once.

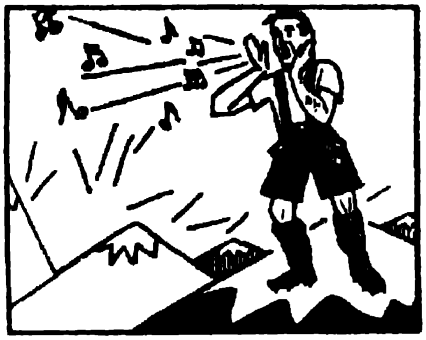
Center — 11 top, clockwise — 16, 7, 21, 9, 6, 19, 1, 13 million

HOCUS-FOCUS



FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Light is missing. 2. Number is missing. 3. Shade is raised. 4. Sleeves are different. 5. Locket is different. 6. Note is missing.



PONDER THESE NO-SEE-'EMS!

SEE HERE, folks, you may not be able to see what's described below, but all four subjects, assuredly, are familiar ones. How quickly can you identify them?

1. Though I can't be seen by you at all, I can be heard and will return your call. (See illustration).

2. Hellos, goodbyes, and in love I'm dwelt, I can't be seen, but I can be felt.

3. I walk, I run, I work, I play, but I can't be seen on a cloudy day.

4. I'm something that no one ever yet did see, that never was, but always will be.

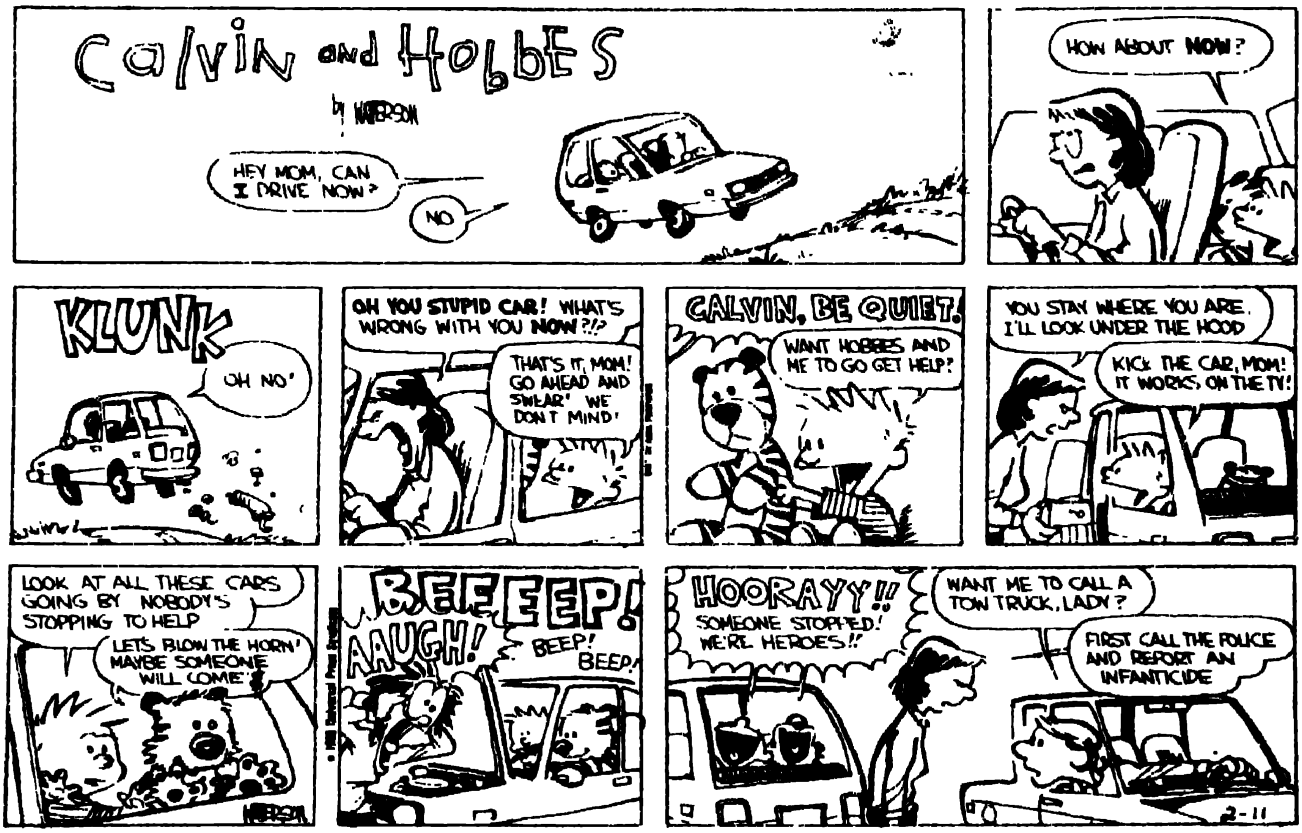
Out of sight, out of mind? You decide.

1. An echo 2. A kiss 3. A shadow 4. Tomorrow (Or did you guess other answers?)

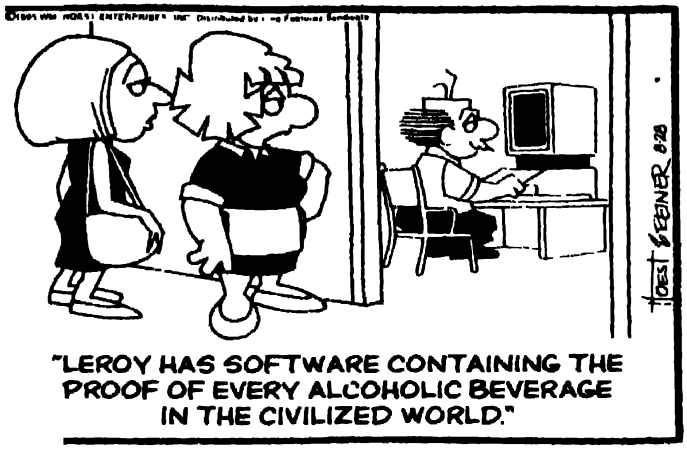
COMICS

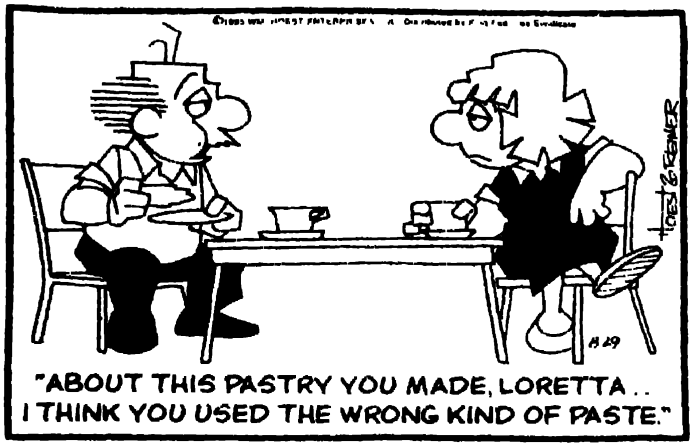
ARCHIE

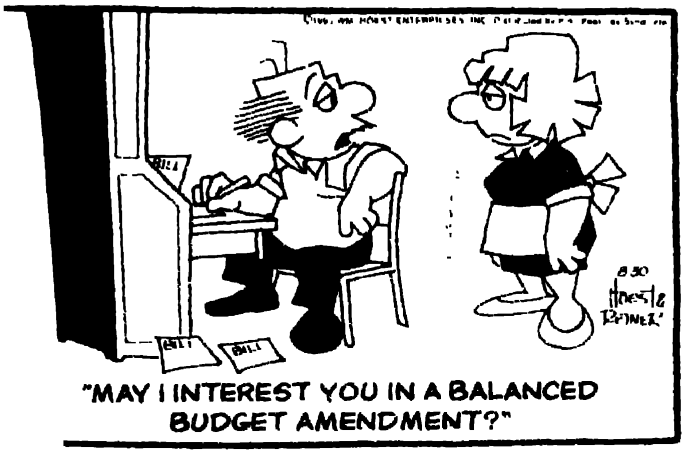
CALVIN AND HOBBES ☐ WATTERSON



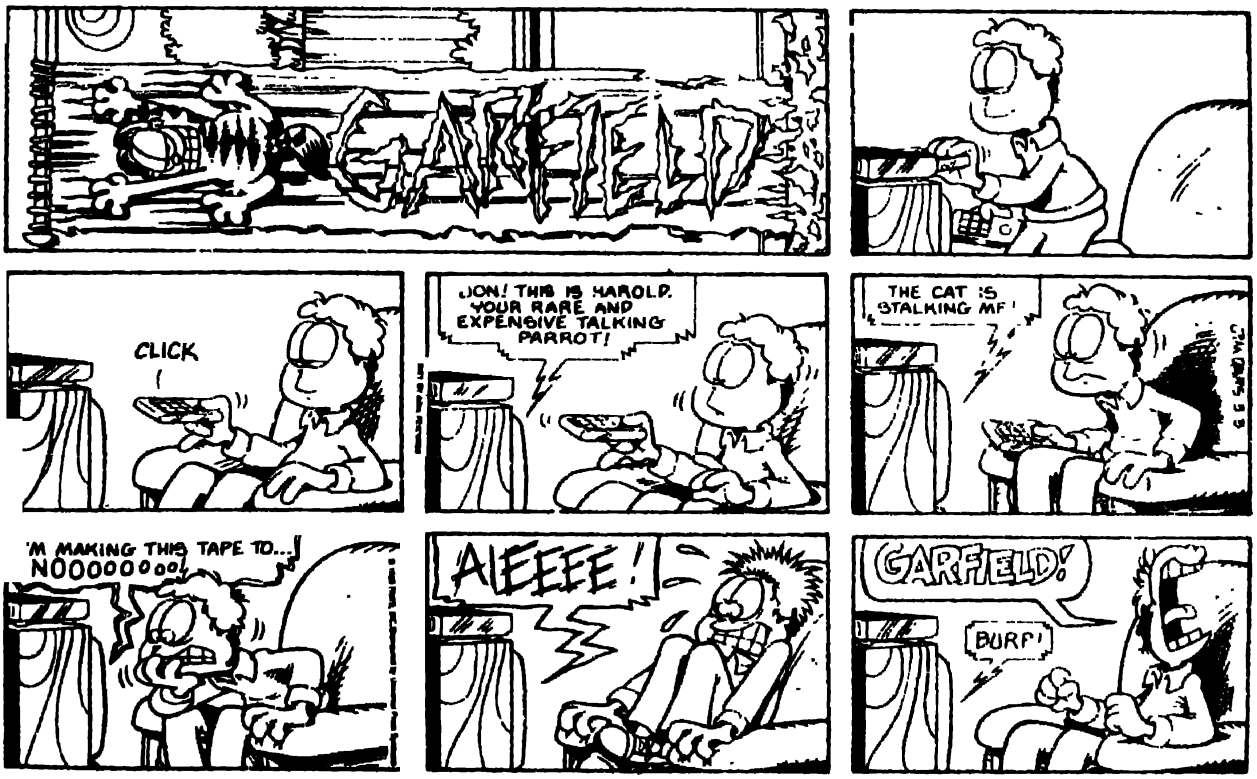
THE LOCKHORNS



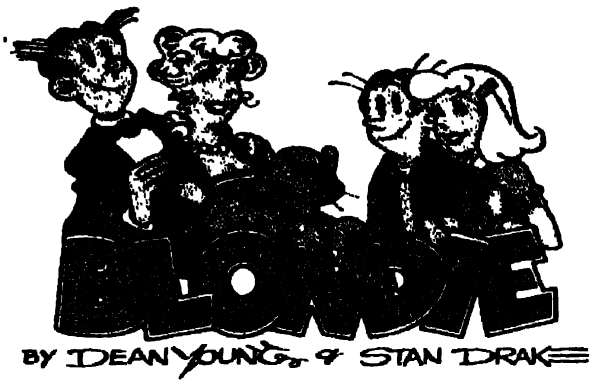


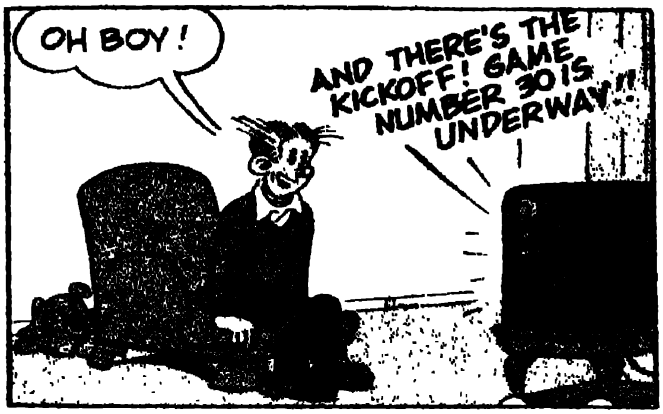


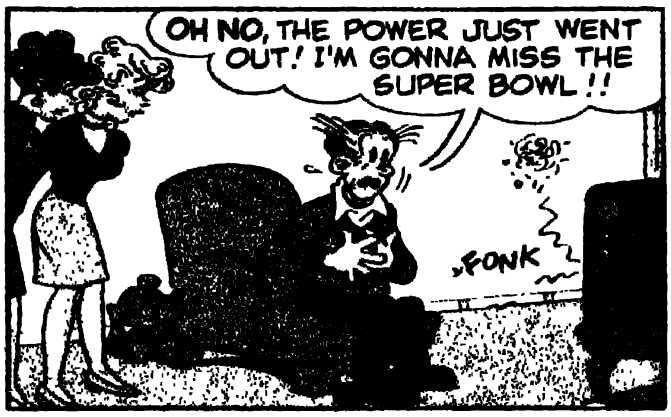
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

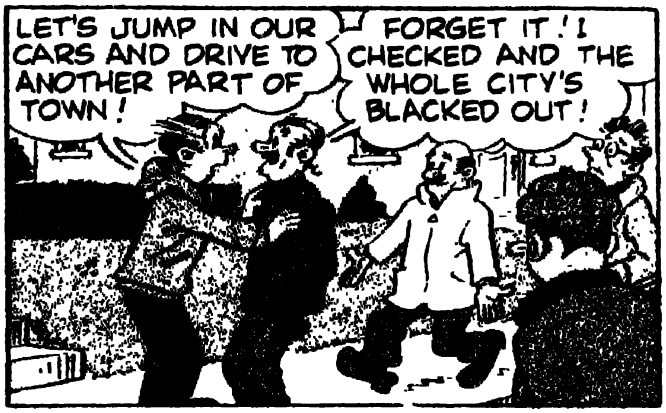


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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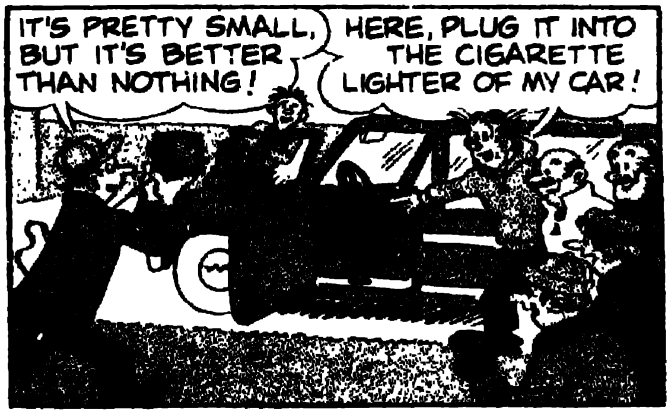


FASHION AND FABRICS

Both were on display in Calcutta, as Bengal tried to popularise its weaves, reports ***Rajlakshmi Bhattacharyya***

Photographs by Arko Datta

It was, perhaps, one of the most amazing collections of Bengal's fabrics ever From mesmerising muslins to gorgeous jamdanis; fabulous baluchars to delicately woven kathas, crisp tassars to ethnic tangails — all these, and more, were showcased in a scintillating fashion show The event was jointly hosted by NIFT, the premier fashion institute of this country, along with the ministry of textiles, six apex bodies of Bengal and a bunch of highly talented designers — Aruna Ghosh, Kuheli Roy, Asha Bakshi, Nandita Dasgupta, Sujata Roychowdhury, Swapna Dua and Anjali Sharma — and sundry weavers, dyers, printers and fabricators.

Choreographed by Marc Robinson, the show at Hotel Airport Ashok, Calcutta, had all the glamour of a major event The 3-day extravaganza (from 15-17 February, '96) to show off the wealth of Bengali weaves and craftsmanship saw 22 supermodels — among them Nayonika Chatterji, Pooja Batra, Shyla Lopez, Anuradha Ahuja, Ruchi Malhotra, Svetlana Casper and Colleen Robinson — pirouetting on the bamboo-enforced ramp.

Even as the models

sashayed down the catwalk, the first-ever Bengal Textiles Trade Fair was in progress at the Netaji Indoor Stadium, where exclusive fabrics of silk tussar, muga, muslin, cotton and jute blended yarns found pride of place. The clothes connoisseur could buy the classiest collections at prices that were a steal, ranging from Rs 900 to Rs 2,500. Colours were either in subtle shades of pale olive, ivory and beige, or bold as in black, carmine or brilliant turquoise

The eight-sequence fashion phantasmagoria had as its first offering, the centuries-old kantha collection including the nakshi kantha, quilted katha and the balapas reversibles There were the delicate attar scented cotton nestled between Murshidabad silks coupled with khadi muslins.

The second comprised zardozi, hand-painted tussar and jute-blended fabrics. The sequence climaxed with an eco-friendly plaid trouser suit made of hand-woven fabric on which vegetable dye had been used. Western wear in this category was marked by patterns that owed a lot to Santiniketan As a fitting tribute to the hand-painted collection, a dramatic churidar kurta was done up in kaleidoscopic hues and the same pigments of colour were repeated for the stole. The zardozi in untreated silk and yarn-dyed garad, reflected the famous Kashida Zari work. Natural tussar and black topped the collection's evening wear ensembles And a PVC shirt added a piquant touch to the proceedings. The accessories were made of velvet, terracotta, stone and zardozi, and had been specially created for the handwoven collection.

The third sequence took off on a more contemporary note with the spotlight on the casual and executive

line. It used Balkals, a silk and wool blend, yarndyed plaids, screen printed silks and jute blends Two paisley patterns in green and magenta were combined with a dreamy blue blouse. A beaded wig added an Afro touch to the whole ensemble.

Jackets, trousers and dress shirts in yellow, grey and black were given trendy silhouettes to suit the sartorial preferences of today's executives. Shoes and bags were made of jute, and the jewellery was mainly in terracotta, threadwork and silver filigree

The fourth was a zari collection Sherwanis made of resham were redolent of the nostalgia of 19th century zamindari. Salwars in ochre and zariwork dazzled the onlooker as did the mauve jacket and the typically traditional dhakka dhoti replete with creases and starched folds.

The fifth was an all-black autumn and winter collection which emphasised longer silhouettes. The flares and straight cuts added elegance to the wearer and accessories were pared down for a neat, uncluttered look.

The sixth in line was an exquisite natural colour collection with hints of yellow and red wood. It included a gossamer summer cotton dhoti set for a couple, a dhakai tussar marriage ensemble, an outstanding namabali motif printed salwar suit and a kantha-stitched set. The silk lehenga choli however left a lot to be desired What was most striking was the more formal ladies suit for summer wear in matka Terrocotta,

pearls, meenakundans, oxidised metals and gold added glitz to the gaily coloured range of the show

The seventh collection contained blue-grey camouflage prints on cotton twills combined with beautifully knitted T-shirts. Denims draped with soft prints and exquisite lace gave that breezy look for summer and spring Flowery crepes and floral prints dominated the short summer dresses category

The last collection of the show comprised intricately-worked balucharis The 'anchals' had different replicas of badshahi and oriental motifs that had once sunk into obsolescence in Murshidabad but was later revived by Shuvo Thakur in the Forties. He, along with Akshay Kumar Das of Bishnupur, worked to bring back the lost heritage of baluchari art. They are now back in vogue and have come to be synonymous with Bishnupur. The colours were very 'modern', with an abundance of greys, newrose, beige, black, midnight blue and maroon

Though the designs of the clothes weren't exactly breathtaking (most of them, however, had a certain precision and were quite wearable), the range and colour of the materials definitely were Perhaps now, these fabrics, hitherto unexplored, and languishing in local *bastralayas*, will create a splash in this country's ritzy couture circuit ■

MAKING MAGIC, NOT MOVIES

The Dilwale... *director, Aditya Chopra, is a private man, says* ***Lata Khubchandani,*** *but he knows how to appeal to the public*

What do you do after you've delivered the box-office hit of all time? Well, if you're Aditya Chopra, the 24-year-old director of *Dilwale Dulhaniye Le Jayange*, you promptly go underground and put yourself beyond the reach of the press. All requests for interviews are turned away by parents Yash and Pam Chopra, and Aditya himself never comes on the line.

When he's finally lured to the phone after being assured that he'll be left alone after a short conversation, all he comes up with is: "Well, I really have nothing to say." Push him a little further and he concedes, "I feel very thankful to God for giving me this success."

But what made him decide on making yet another boy-meets-girl-and-parents-get-mad kind of story?

"I've always watched films," explains Aditya, "where a boy and girl meet and fall in love and then when their parents protest, they run away. That always bothered me, what did they do, did they ever meet their parents again? I wanted to make a film where the pair do not run away but marry with their parents' consent."

The young Chopra, who wrote the story for the film himself (though there's some dispute over that: Honey Irani claims that she collaborated with him), began his career in films as his father, Yash's, assistant. *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* was his first movie as a director, a fact that makes his success even more creditable. Of course, there are those who suggest that Aditya merely copied a tried-and-tested formula and came up with a thinly-disguised remake of the mega box-office grosser, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*. But not everybody agrees with this perception.

Says Taran Adarsh of *Trade Guide*, "In Bollywood, the saying goes, 'Hit *hai* to fit *hai*.' So, even if the film reminds people of *Hum Aapke Hain*

Aditya Chopra

Koun, ultimately that's not important, the entertainment value of the film is. And *Dilwale* ... is not just three hours of fantastic entertainment; it is one year of fantastic entertainment. Aditya is brilliant, and that is an understatement."

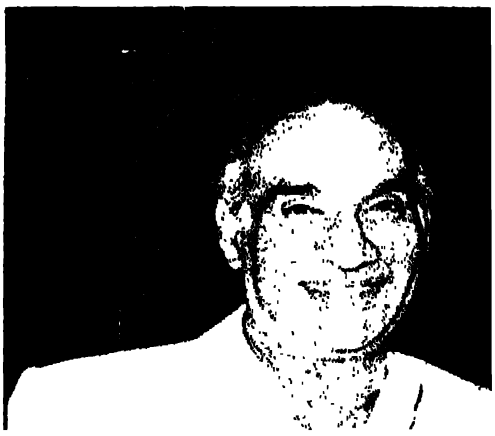
According to Adarsh, Sooraj Barjatya and Aditya Chopra are the future of Indian cinema. "You can mention their names with the best filmmakers we have had: Raj Kapoor, V.Shantaram ..They have proved that it is not technique that works, it is the quality of the film that makes people sit in a dark auditorium for three hours."

Indra Kumar, the director of such hits as *Beta*, *Dil* and *Raja*, agrees: "We think that the younger lot have no background of traditions, but today it is the young directors who are moving away from sex and violence to films that can be watched by the whole family together. Aditya has obviously been inspired by Sooraj Barjatya, but the film he's made is incredible."

Movies have always been a passion with Aditya. Even when he was a little boy, he would spend countless hours watching films. Says his mother, Pam Chopra, "Hindi films are his life blood, though he watches every kind of movie. When we travel abroad, he's the first one to hunt around for a good film that is playing and see it."

Pam remembers a time when the entire family was watching a movie on television. Suddenly, Aditya, who couldn't have been more than eight or nine years old, said, "That's a crane shot." His parents were completely taken aback by this kind of comment from a young boy. But Aditya was obsessed with the movies: he would write stories, develop scenes and recount them to us, show us how he'd worked out a script.

Perhaps his love affair with cinema is best illustrated by an incident that occurred when Aditya was still in college. He was sitting for his B.Com final exams, but on the day of the first paper, a trial run of *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander* was scheduled. The show was due to begin at 3 pm, and Aditya's paper ended at 2 pm. But since the theatre where the film was to show was some distance away from the examination hall, he finished his paper half an hour before and rushed to see the movie.



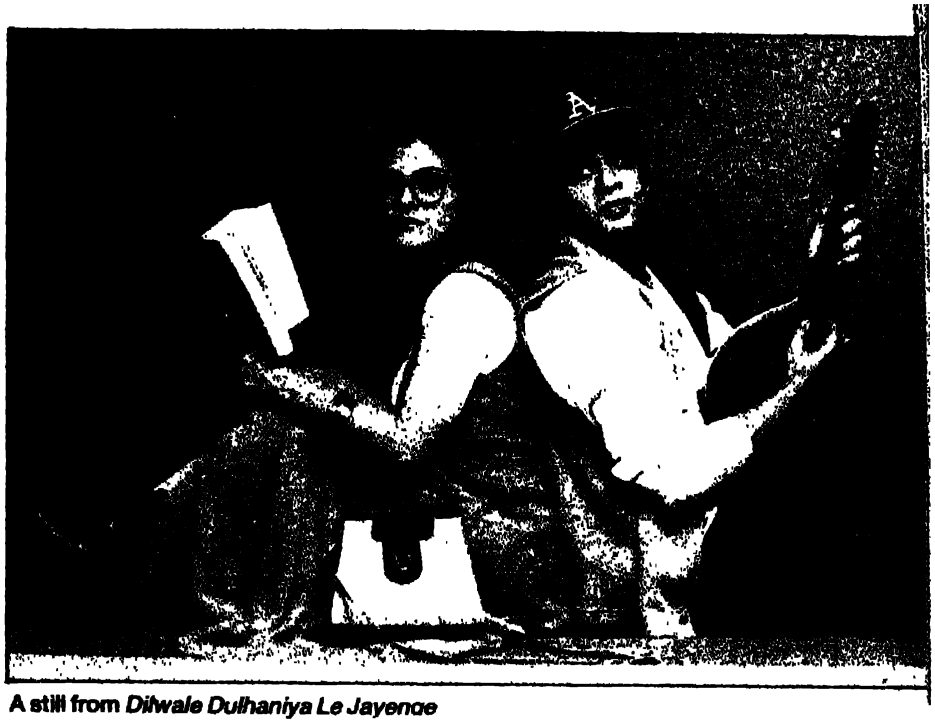
Yash Chopra with wife Pam

Says Pam Chopra: "He's a completely commercial *bachcha*. He must see every film on the first day, sitting with the audience in the theatre. Of course, he has my husband's influence, but he's different in his approach. He's not sophisticated just for the sake of it."

But Yash Chopra, Aditya's father and producer of *Dilwale...*, is unwilling to take even an iota of credit for the movie. Says he, proudly, "I have contributed nothing at all to the creative side of the film; it is fully Aditya's baby. I was just the producer."

According to Yash, his son was completely sure about what he wanted in the film, and which actors he wanted to cast. "He had Parmeet Sethi in mind for the villain's role, and nobody else would do. Then he had to have Mandira Bedi and Achala Sachdeva. Next, he made it a point to explain to each actor and actress himself, so that his perception of the role was passed on to them He's done a better job than even I would have done. He's put everything in the film. The background of family life in Punjab was so authentic that it surprised even me He has rarely been to Punjab, he gets all this from his mother."

Pam Chopra is cautious enough to point out that they should not get carried away by one hit, even though *Dilwale...* is not a fluke, considering how confident Aditya was during its making. "If at times I was not convinced about something or did not agree with it," she says, "he'd manage to change my mind every time. I really



A still from *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*

don't know what allows him this conviction. Maybe, it is the fact that he's watched so many films, has gathered so much knowledge about the movies "

It was this courage of conviction that helped Aditya win the respect of his actors even though most of them were senior to him. "It was as if," says his fond mother, "the film was running in his head "

Anupam Kher, who played a pivotal role in the movie, agrees wholeheartedly "Initially," says Kher, "he was a little embarrassed because he'd just graduated from being an assistant to his father to becoming a director, but I don't think he was unsure at all. I've known him for the past eight years and he's always been singularly passionate about his work, be it the story, the screenplay or the music. Everything is an obsession with him, and he's also smart enough to know what is popular, what works with the audiences. And his conviction comes through in his work "

But if your first film is such a phenomenon, then wouldn't everything after that be something of an anticlimax? Ramesh Sippy, who has to contend with being known as the *Sholay* director, so many years after the event, feels that people should not burden the young Chopra in this manner. "What he has made is a lovely film," says Sippy. "And the success ratio of this film should not be used to judge his subsequent work. His films should be judged as individual films, and if they're lovely, well then, they're lovely. *Dilwale* should not become a barometer for the rest of his work "

Like almost everyone else, though, Sippy has nothing but praise for Aditya's first film. "To the extent that this is a romantic film," he says, "you could say that he is following his father's footsteps, but he has his own individual approach I was very impressed by the way Aditya showed two different lifestyles: the Western atmosphere and the homecoming to India, so that the contrast could be highlighted. It is very contemporary, very today, and yet he has shown the traditions and values that need to be adhered to, respect for elders and the well-being of the family."

That's not to say, of course, that *Dilwale...* is a perfect film. The characters are somewhat stereotyped and the ending is cliched and even inexplicable in many ways. The central characters who have been defined very strongly in the film, suddenly start acting completely out of character. Shah Rukh, the *dilwala* and his even more flamboyant father, Anupam Kher, suddenly bow out of the struggle for the *dulhaniya* without any explanation being profferred On the other hand, Amrish Puri, who has remained stern and unbending throughout the movie, undergoes a sudden change of heart, and tells his daughter to follow wherever her love leads her.

But this is, after all, a Hindi film. And with it pulling in crores, nobody's complaining. ■

FIRST PERSON

***NARESH KUMAR**, the 1962 Arjuna Award winner was the non-playing captain of the Indian Davis Cup squad in 1989 but stepped down after the India-Australia tie at Chandigarh in 1993. Himself a former national champion, Kumar recorded wins over Sven Davidson and Leonart Bergelin, some of the top players of his time. The Naresh-Ramanathan (Krishnan) partnership has been termed as one of the best in Indian cup history. At present, he is still involved with tennis and is one of the foremost anchorpersons of the sports media.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Playing with my grandchildren.
What is your greatest fear?
I can't think of any.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My brother Suresh and Russi Mody.
What do you dislike most in others?
Insincerity.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Cracking jokes at the expense of others.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a gentleman

What is your most precious possession?
My wife, 'Sun-Sun'.
What objects do you always carry?
Nothing in particular.
What makes you most depressed?
Poverty.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Nothing in particular.
What is your favourite word?
'Thank God'.
What is your favourite journey?
Overnight flight to London
What is your favourite dream?
Sitting in the Royal Box at Ascot with the Queen.
What is your nightmare?
Arriving at the centre court at Wimbledon with no racquets.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Tennis.
What is your source of sustenance?
Family, unity and love.
On what occasions do you lie?
On too many occasions.
What is your greatest regret?
That I didn't work harder and achieve more.

Ashoke Chakraborty

What has been your happiest moment?
Recently, our victory against France in the Davis Cup at Frejus.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Scenes in Bollywood movies.
How do you relax?

What is your favourite dream?

Sitting in the Royal Box at Ascot with the Queen

What do you envy most
I am not envious.

How would you like to be

As a [illegible]
How [illegible]

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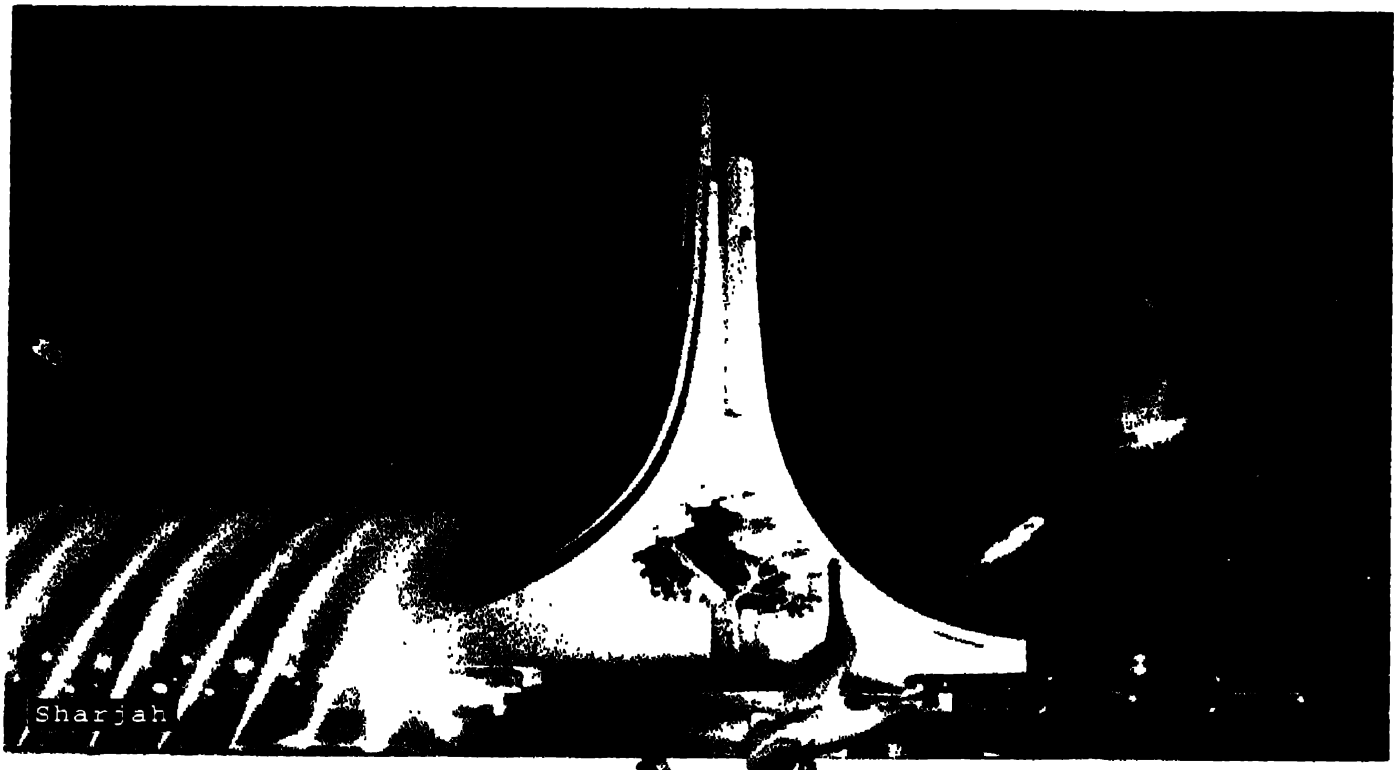


इंडियन एयरलाइन्स
Indian Airlines

17 MARCH 1996

The Telegraph

POSTMORTEM

Unaffordable Luxury

■ Five-star hotels with mind-boggling architectures and stunning decor, attract classy people who like to live in style ('India's Finest Hotels', January 21).

On the contrary, the bulk of India's population make their holiday plans on shoe-string budgets; being forced to live in small-budget hotels and the ubiquitous holiday homes that suit their purse.

With salaries which do not match high standards of living, such travellers have to satisfy themselves by meerly looking at the pictures of these ritzy hotels.

Partha Pratim Modak,
Howrah

■ The cover story was an unkind joke on the readers; for how many of them can afford that kind of luxurious accommodation?

These hotels are meant for people who have unaccounted money or for people whose holiday expenses are paid by companies they work for.

If the Magazine is so interested in giving publicity to these hotels, it should come out with a special issue which will be circulated in the right circuit.

M.S. Qureishy,
Calcutta

Five-star luxury

■ Thanks to the government's economic liberalisation policy, the tourism industry has received a boost like never before. No wonder five-star hotels are mushrooming all over India. As they are constructed with a view to attracting foreign tourists, they match international standards regarding comfort, amenities, cleanliness and hospitality.

I was surprised you omitted Calcutta's Hotel Hindusthan International

Mili Das,
Sindri (Bihar)

■ The rich, people who have money in abundance, can experiment with five-star hotels, favouring one and discarding the other for one reason or the other. But for the poor, five-star living is a real dream. They can read a lot about luxury hotels but never get the opportunity to stay there.

Abhishake Kumar Saha,
Ichapur (W.B.)

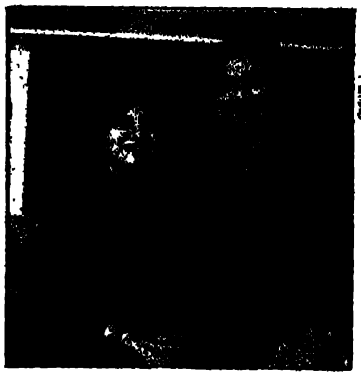
■ There is something really nostalgic about Calcutta's Oberoi Grand. During the days of the Raj this hotel was the finest haunt of the Britishers. Despite the passage of time and cultural changes over the years, the Grand has been able to retain its old world charm.

Debasish Sen,
Calcutta

■ Middle-class readers may not have even heard of the hotels you have mentioned, let alone stayed there. So what is the use of such cover stories?

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

INSIDE



Gautam Patole

PAGE 6

THE DAYS of Lata-Asha domination in the world of Hindi playback singing is over; it is now Kumar Sanu and Alka Yagnik who rule the roast in Bombay. Profiling the two singers, who interestingly, started their careers in Calcutta.

PAGE 26

THE INDIAN market, too, has become eco-conscious.

Kumar Sanu and Alka Yagnik

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
26 FOCUS
30 FIRST PERSON

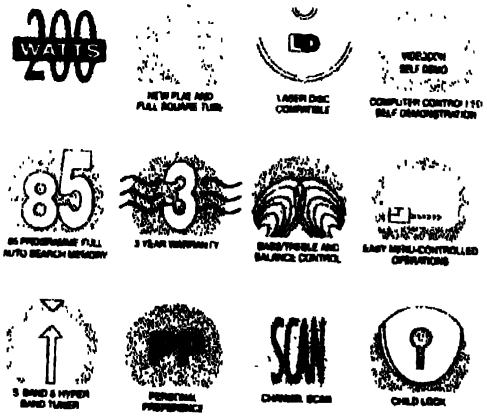
Cover: Gautam Patole

The only TV that shows and draws gasps

The new Videocon 21 Bazooka has loads of exclusive features that make it the largest selling 21 FFST Colour TV in India. Take for example the Bazooka Woofer. A breakthrough in woofer technology from Toshiba Corporation Japan, it has won world-wide acclaim for the distinct advantage it offers. The Bazooka's unique reverse bass effect even brings to life frequencies less than 60 Hz, to let you experience the complete music range. A Flat and Full Square Picture Tube gives you the whole picture in vibrant colour.

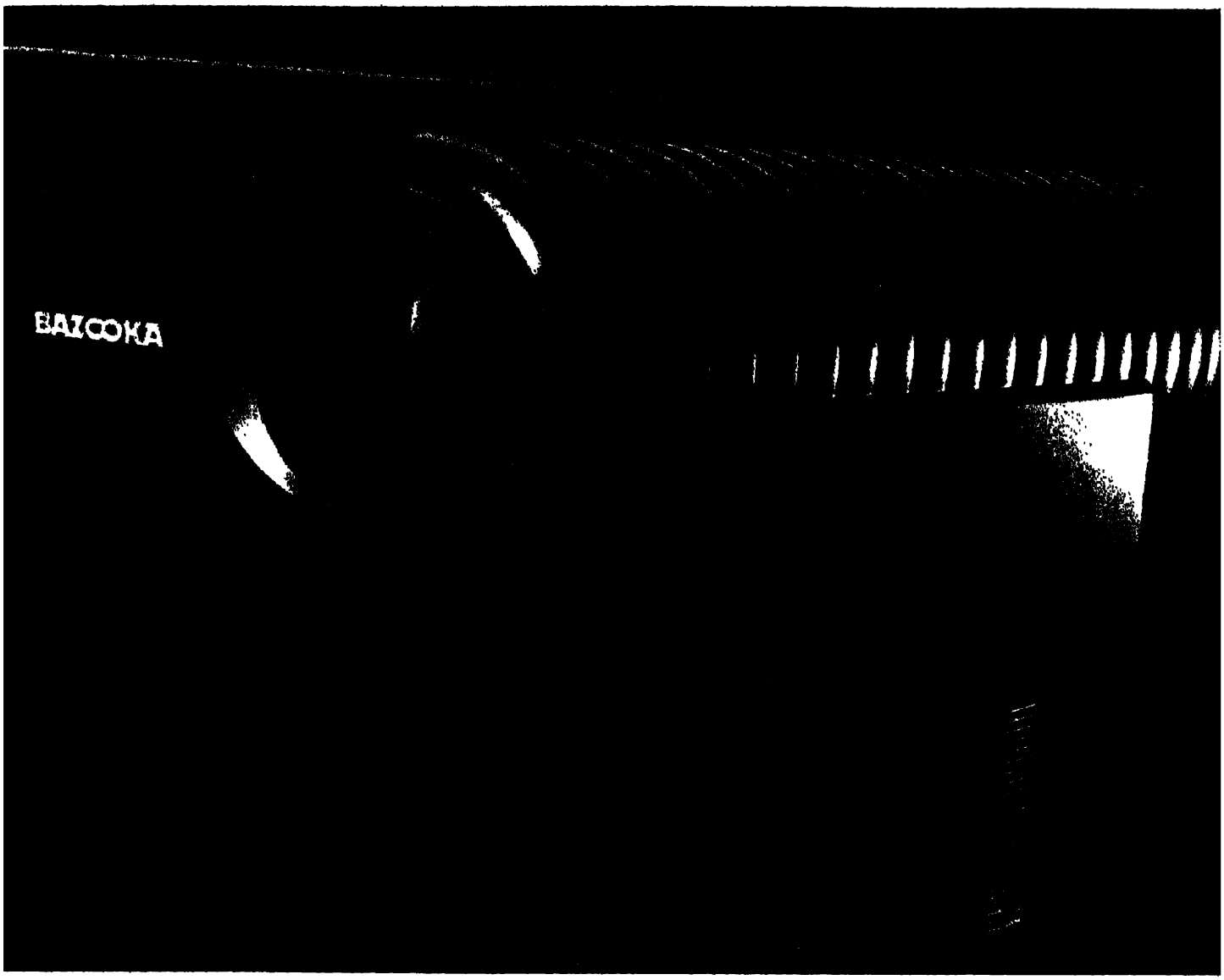
No wonder it is the first choice of discerning viewers looking for the best in sound and picture quality.

The new Videocon 21 Bazooka is designed to take your breath away, any which way you look at it. Back or Front.



BAZOOKA is a trademark of TOSHIBA CORPORATION, Japan

its back to the world of admiration.



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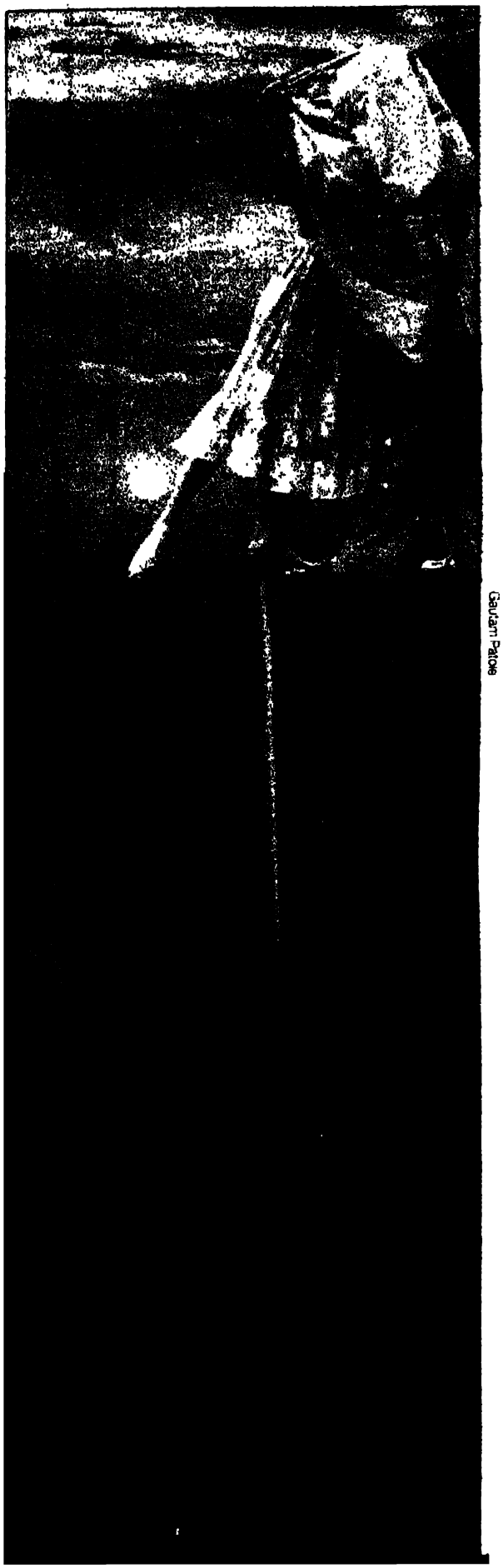
COVER STORY

The Golden Couple

Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu; (inset) a still from *Aashiqui*: Kumar's first big break in Bombay



Gautam Patole

Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu dominate the field of Hindi film playback singing, reports ***Lata Khubchandani***

SWITCH ON THE TELEVISION SET, AND TUNE INTO ANY Hindi film song-based programme. You will soon discover that it is impossible to get away from the voices of Kumar Sanu and Alka Yagnik. Eight out of 10 (if not more) songs will be sung by this pair, and in all probability, the two others will be solo numbers by them. Whether it is Kajol, Madhuri, Sridevi or Tabu, she will be crooning in Alka Yagnik's sweet, if slightly tinny voice, and the men, right from Anil Kapoor to Akshay Kumar, will sing in Kumar Sanu's Kishore Kumar soundalike tones.

Much has been made and said of the Mangeshkar monopoly, of the fact that sisters Lata and Asha dominated the world of playback singing and kept every newcomer out of the reckoning. But few people seem to have noticed that another monopoly has taken over the world of Hindi film playback singing: that of Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu.

They have not been dubbed the Golden Couple for nothing. It is beginning to seem as if Alka and Kumar have only to sing a duet for it to climb inexorably up the charts; they have only to record a solo number for it to be nominated for some award or the other; and they have only to announce a live show for the tickets to sell out in a matter of hours (and that's as true in Mumbai as it is in Manchester)

Perhaps, the best measure of their monopoly can be gauged from their performance at the Filmfare awards, the Indian version of the Oscars, and just as prestigious. Kumar has won the Filmfare award for best male singer for five consecutive years, from 1991 to 1995, a record in itself. And when Alka won the Filmfare Best Female Singer award for *Choli ke peeche hey kya hai*, she confessed to being slightly disappointed. And she had good reason to be. All the five nominated songs had been sung by Yagnik and she was hoping to get the award for a song other than the *Choli*

Qayamat se Qayamat Tak: A landmark film for Yagnik

number which had not made any great demands on her as a singer. But her disappointment was somewhat dissipated when she won the National Award for *Ghunghat ke aad se*.

The two of them have long since lost track of how many songs they have sung over the years, though they concede that it would be far above the 10,000 mark. Kumar Sanu, in fact, functions as a bit of a song machine, moving from one studio to another, recording as many as 10 or 15 songs a day; his record, he says, is 28 songs in 24 hours. Rumour has it, he often makes as much as Rs 20-50 lakh every day, though some insist that the figure may be even as high as Rs 1 crore.

Yagnik's day is just as hectic, though she says that she is trying very hard to cut down on her commitments. "I've tried to reduce the number of songs that I sing because it was getting too much spending the whole day going from one studio to another," she says. "Nowadays, I've reduced my work to one or maximum two songs a day and I'm enjoying it more. I've also stopped singing for regional films, though I've sung a lot in regional languages earlier."

Nevertheless, it is often difficult to get Alka's and Kumar's dates for recording on the same day, so they often end up recording their bits separately. The duet is then spliced together in the studio. Some may say that this has the effect of reducing spontaneity and even lessens the effect of a song. After all, a film number often acquires an additional resonance from the interplay between the singers. But in this age of digital hi-tech, and over-worked playback singers, music directors are only too willing to make such compromises.

And with cassette sales mounting, and the songs themselves climbing the popularity charts, nobody is complaining.

He may be the highest-paid singer in the business today, but Kumar Sanu stumbled into the field of playback singing quite by accident. The son of Pashupatinath Bhattacharya, a classical musician, Sanu was trained to be a tabla player. But singing was always his first love, and he was determined to make it as a singer. He sang at some clubs and community functions in Calcutta, where he was born and brought up, before he decided to try his luck with Gulshan Kumar's

Barsaat: Kumar's *Love tujhe love mein karta hoon* became a runaway hit

T-Series label.

Sanu went off to Delhi, where Kumar decided that he would launch the young singer as a Kishore Kumar clone. T-Series brought out an album of old Kishore Kumar hits sung by Kumar Sanu, which became one of the biggest grossers of the label, and launched Sanu with the proverbial bang. In fact, such was the success of the album that an elated Gulshan Kumar gifted Sanu with a Maruti van as a reward for a job well done

It wasn't long before Kumar decided to move to Bombay, in an attempt to make it in the Hindi film industry. He didn't have to wait long; his first film as a playback singer *Aashiqui*, proved to be a runaway hit, some said mainly because of its successful soundtrack, and Sanu was on his way to the big time Today, he is the undisputed king of playback singing in Bombay and can say with great aplomb, "I'm expecting to get the Filmfare award for either *Tujhe dekha to yeh jaana sanam* from *Dilwale Dulahaniye Le Jayenge* or *Sawali saloni teri jheel se aanken* from *Hum Sab Chor Hain* or *Love tujhe love main karta hoon* from *Barsaat* "

Strangely enough, even Alka Yagnik began her career in Calcutta, where she used to sing folk and filmi songs at cultural functions and the like "I have a very cushy background," admits Yagnik today "And even in my career I didn't have to struggle very much.

Alka Yagnik

Very early on I got to sing for Prakash Mehra's *Lawaaris* The song was *Mere angne mein tumhara kya kaam hai*, which became very, very popular I got immediate recognition as a result, and I haven't looked back since then "

Yagnik learnt singing from her mother, who is a classical singer But Alka herself was never really inclined towards classical singing "I enjoyed light singing," she says, "and as a child used to be stuck to the radio all day, imitating singers like Lataji and Ashaji I love to sing romantic soft numbers, and I think they suit my voice "

Yagnik became really busy after 1986 when she sang for *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* Says Alka, "My voice seems to go well with a lot of heroines, I think it particularly suits Madhuri Dixit, Juhi Chawla and Kajol But I have sung for almost every heroine In one sense, I guess I'm lucky in this industry it is hits that count, other things are less important "

Yagnik concedes that 90 per cent of the songs that she has sung with Sanu have been runaway hits "People seem to like us together," she says referring to the popularity of their duets in such films as *Raja*, *Barsaat*, *Karan Arjun* and *Coolie No 1* Sanu adds, "Even with such films as *Akele Hum Akele Tum* which were not so well appreciated, the music of the film was noted and liked "

While Sanu has given such filmi hits as *Bholi bhali ladki* (*Sabse Bada Khiladi*) and *Tu mile dil khile* (*Criminal*), he also

Kumar Sanu with his wife

brought out a non-film album in 1995. This private album, called *Nasha*, was produced by Time Audio, and did very well according to Kumar. "All in all," says Sanu, "1995 was a good year for me."

Professionally, Sanu may have done very well indeed, but his personal life was a bit of a mess. His marriage broke up very acrimoniously, with Kumar moving out of his bungalow, named Aashiqui after his first hit film, leaving his wife and two sons behind. His wife, for her part, moved court to ask for half of Kumar's income, which she said amounted to nearly Rs 1 crore every day.

Sanu is very bitter about his marital break-up, and is liable to rave and rant about his estranged wife at the slightest provocation. His sister has, since then, moved in with him to look after his house, and there have been rumours of his involvement with various starlets. (One such starlet had her car windows smashed by Sanu's irate wife.)

A still from the film, *Criminal*

Kumar Sanu

Yagnik's personal life is far happier, though it is not very conventional. Her husband and children live back home in Assam, while Alka is based in Bombay where she works hard at her career. She makes frequent trips to Assam to be with her family and they come down during the holidays as well. And so far, at least, the arrangement seems to work.

But whatever the difference in their domestic arrangements, both Yagnik and Sanu are universally regarded as being the pick of the lot as far as playback singing is concerned. Says music director Anu Malik, "They are very popular today, their songs are liked by the public, and that success is very important. Alka's voice suits my tunes, and she is able to mould her voice to suit any actress which is one reason for her popularity. For the dulcet kind of songs, both Kumar and Alka are very good. You could say that there is an Alka\Kumar monopoly in the film industry, but it is a constructive one."

Jatin Lalit, who composed the music of *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, have a different perspective on the situation. "Yes," they say, "Alka and Sanu are definitely the most popular singers today, but actually today it is the songs that do well and not the singers. Today singers can't have a monopoly because if a number is good it will do well irrespective of who sings it. Singers are important but the public accepts a good song despite them."

That may be one point of view, but there aren't very many people who subscribe to it. After all, if it didn't matter if Sanu sang your song or Sonu Nigam did, then producers wouldn't be paying a bundle and waiting for months so that Kumar could do his stuff before the microphone. And if Alka was just another singer who has incidentally delivered more hits than anybody else, then Kavita Krishnamurthy would have as many films on hand as Yagnik.

But that's not how it is. Both in terms of their pay packets and number of movies on hand, Yagnik and Sanu are miles ahead of the competition. And if you have any doubts on that score, well then, you can always rely on your own ears. Switch on the television or turn on the radio; the voices that will reverberate through your living room will be those of Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu ■

EXTRACT

Television and the

Has the idiot box destroyed family life as we know it? Extracts from a new book about the impact of TV on children

BY NAMITA UNNIKRISHNAN AND SHAILAJA BAJPAI

Extracted from** The Impact of Television Advertising on Children **by Namita Unnikrishnan** and **Shailaja Bajpai; Published by Sage Publications India Private Limited; Price Rs 450

Every viewer has a very private and personal relationship with the television set, even when he is watching it as part of a group. After all, each individual has unique feelings, responds differently to and absorbs the messages of television in a distinctive manner. We might, therefore, be watching the same programme but our reactions to it could be diametrically opposite.

What we are currently experiencing is a drawing-room revolution of almost contradictory dimensions. Television is changing relatioships within the family and even outside it. On the one hand, the trend, mentioned earlier, of families owning more than one television set and acquiring more viewing options suggests that people living in the same house are getting increasingly isolated from one another.

Simultaneously, our study found that people believe that televison has the power to unite people and help them share similar experiences. It is commonplace, nowadays, to discover an entire family sitting and watching TV together either in companionable silence or talking all the while.

Television has also become the focus of social interaction on a larger canvas. Many of the mothers we spoke to, rather shamefacedly admitted that if they were invited out to dinner on a weekday, they did not leave the house till 9.30 pm -- much to their husbands' annoyance — because they wanted to watch their favourite soap opera. Someone should have told them that they could have watched it along with their hosts! The father of a three-year-old told us that he had decided not to opt for satellite TV.

Because everywhere you go in the evenings people are so busy watching TV that they have no time for you. We've been invited to people's homes

only to find ourselves sitting in silence watching *Santa Barbara* or something. Is that what we're meeting for? Might as well stay home and watch it. (At the time of this study *Santa Barbara* and *The Bold and the Beautiful* were aired from 8 pm to 9 30 pm.)

Also, coming home to find everyone engrossed in *The Bold and the Beautiful* is not my idea of family life. Besides, if people can get so involved in what's happening in the lives of a handful of TV characters who are not even Indian why can't they show more interest in what's happening in the lives of people around them?

Television's ability to simultaneously unite and separate people worries many observers Jerry Mander, for one, describes rather eloquently how TV isolates human beings. "Television encourages separation. people from community, people from each other, people from themselves ..it becomes everyone's intimate adviser, teacher and guide to appropriate behaviour and awareness Thereby, it becomes its own feedback system, furthering its own growth and accelerating the transformation of everything and everyone into artificial form This enables a handful of people to obtain a unique degree of power "

Mander's observations could just as well be about the modern urbane Indian home A young working mother, who is away from home between 9 am and 7 pm. outlined her normal evening routine "I get back, have my bath, then begin to help in the kitchen We now have two TVs and are thinking of getting a third You see, the men want to watch sports, while my mother-in-law and I want to watch serials like *The Bold and the Beautiful* My five-year-old daughter gets irritated if we switch channels from MTV and Hindi films songs programmes which she enjoys Instead of having to listen to her constantly say, 'Why aren't you letting me watch?' we may as well invest in another TV "

Many people we spoke to, said they would do anything to keep the peace at home Even if it means spending another Rs 12,000 or more to buy yet another television set for a five-year-old.

But imagine what life in such household is like after 8 30 pm, when major chores are over dinner is no longer a family affair at the dining table It is now eaten in front of the television The working mother (who has the second TV in her bedroom) and her mother-in-law take their plates to her room The men sit in the drawing-room watching sports The little girl usually joins the women but will soon have her own corner and her own television set As she grows up, the little girl will establish her own special relationship with her TV set. It will be her companion, her surrogate playmate, compensating for other activities within and outside the home Evidently, family life is no longer what it was even five years ago

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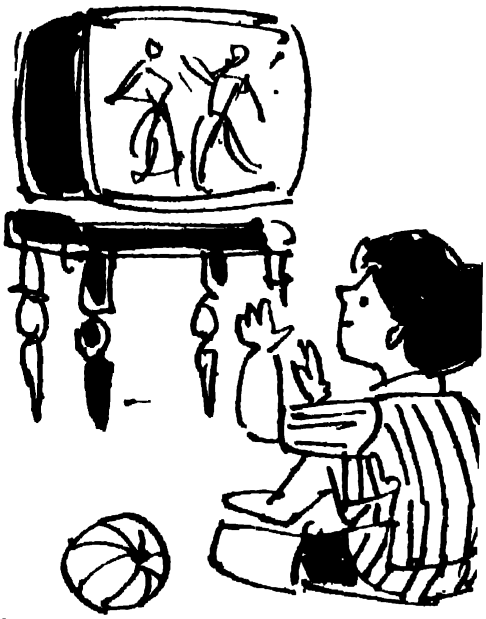
MEALTIME IS TV TIME

Our earlier observation that dinner was a popular accompaniment to TV-watching was confirmed when more than 50 per cent of our respondents (the figure rises to almost 60 per cent in the 8 to 15 years age group) said that mealtimes were synonymous with TV time This figure drops to just under 20 per cent in the case of the 5 to 8-year-olds largely because this age group eats early and presumably goes to bed early too

The eating-as-you-watch-TV syndrome, our research showed, was most pronounced amongst the affluent families and least pronounced in families that are less privileged. Children in the 8 to 15-year age group from middle class and affluent homes said that watching TV, particularly over dinner, has become the norm Parents admitted that they found TV the best mealtime baby-sitter, specially for children who are fussy about their food Describing their evening routine, several adults said that dinner is increasingly becoming a casual affair It is not always the collective, on-the-table or on-the-floor family event it used to be

TV watching does not, however, dominate mealtimes in lower class families where eating is not a leisurely pastime Many children (mostly girls) told us that they are actively involved with household chores throughout the evening They help to cook, wash, serve and clean; TV time is, therefore, restricted and, generally something they indulge in after their chores are over In families such as these, dinner is a one-time affair, being cooked and served hot as it comes off the stove

What else do children do while watching TV? Well, when they're not eating they tend to talk More than 40 per cent of the children in our study, claimed that they chatted to one another or others, repeated things they heard or saw on the picture-tube and even enacted some of the scenes Sometimes, they admitted, they even enjoyed a good fight!



KRISHNENDU CHAKI

* * * * *

GROWING CONCERNS

As television and children's dependence upon it for recreation have increased, so has parental concern about the effect on their children of watching television indiscriminately for long hours Some parents, who earlier regarded television as an innocent and harmless way of keeping children occupied, have subsequently changed their minds The parents of a three-year-old who has grown up on a rich diet of television, say their child knows not only how to operate the TV set and tune in to particular channels or programmes, but also how to have the local cable-operator contacted and summoned to sort out satellite and cable-related-problems That apart, the parents are now beginning to look at television critically to see if it might have anything to do with the way their son has begun behaving.

He's suddenly become very aggressive, somewhat uncontrollable, and physically demonstrative in ways that disturb us We are wondering whether his intake of adult programming on television and the high degree of violence that satellite and cable incorporate in their programming might in some way be responsible for the way he is right now He certainly seems to be aping things that he sees, but does

not understand, and it makes life difficult and sometimes embarrassing.

Whether or not the behaviour of this child has a direct correlation with watching TV is of course unclear. The role of television and indeed of films in promoting aggressive, violent reactions continues to be a controversial issue. Different studies have suggested either that there is evidence to bolster the claim that it does encourage violence or that such a connection cannot really be proved.

Nevertheless, existing data on children and television suggests that we cannot ignore the possibility that there is a symbotic link between violence on TV and violent behaviour in real life. For instance, according to the Committee for Children's Television (Metro Detroit, USA).

- Acts of violence occur in six out of 10 TV programmes (on American TV)
- Cartoons depict four times more violence than other TV programmes
- Research shows cartoon violence produces anger, irritability and aggressive behaviour.

Recently, a story in an English daily newspaper in India reported how a young boy had severely beaten up his younger sister after an argument over which TV programme should be watched. His tactics and inspiration were from World Wrestling Federation (WWF), a popular satellite TV and cable TV programme.

Whatever be the truth of the matter, for many parents the euphoria of enjoying access to so many channels is now being tempered by a growing sense of unease regarding television. Most of this anxiety relates to the hold television has on children of 8 years and above. Television is bringing in new ideas, a culture that many parents are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with, and diverting children's attention away from creative activities, sports and school-related work.

Significantly, we discovered, that in spite of their growing concern, parents are finding it difficult to control their children's TV viewing habits.

* * * * *

WHO CHOOSES?

In their responses to our questionnaire, more girls than boys claimed that their parents decide what they should watch. More boys said that parents were not concerned with what they watched than did girls.

This gender bias might be due to the parental desire to protect girls from exposure to seamy and steamy scenes and images depicted in many Hindi films and foreign and Indian TV serials. Safeguarding the purity of the girl's mind and body is still considered important by Indian parents. Conversely, it is felt that boys should be aware of the facts of life in order to grow up into men.

A class profile of viewing habits also reflects a gender difference. In the slum and *basti* environments, children said they watched "whatever was coming on TV", adding that when a choice had to be made it was the elder males who took the decision. Most children from these areas said that their mothers rarely watched TV because their "eyes hurt", they were embarrassed to watch with the menfolk; because they could not understand what they saw, or because they simply did not have the time. In sharp contrast, children from affluent homes (particularly in the 8 to 15 years age group) indicated that they were much more in control of their TV sets and they often decided what they wanted to view.

Simultaneously, close to 85 per cent of the youngsters in the 8 to 15 years age group, irrespective of class, said that they were regularly advised not to watch too much TV. When asked why they claimed their parents were worried about the effect it could have on their eyesight. Very few recalled their parents objecting to television on the grounds that the programming might be unsuitable for their age group.

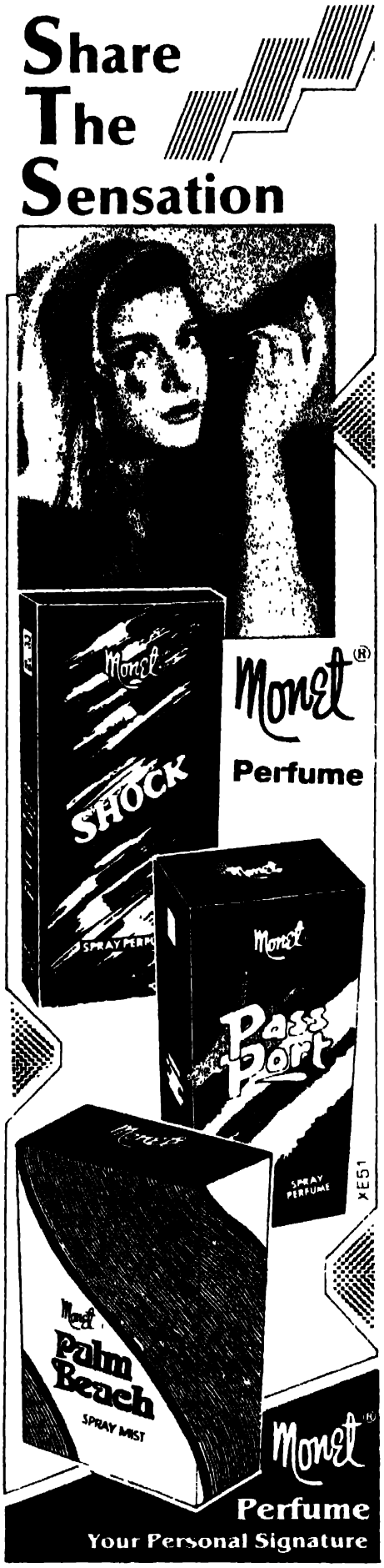
These responses seem to indicate that the majority of children do not feel restricted by active parental intervention in their TV viewing habits and that they enjoy almost unlimited access to TV at home. But, in some measure, the children contradicted themselves when in answer to the questionnaire, they wrote that there were several kinds of TV programming that their parents did not want them to watch.

Significantly, more than 30 per cent of the children in the sample said they were under no parental guidance whatsoever with regard to programme selection. How many of these children were merely indulging in wishful thinking remains unclear.

Of those who volunteered information regarding their parental objections to certain kinds of TV habits and programmes, 42.26 per cent said these were related to watching late night programmes and films. Parents, with whom we discussed the issue, said that late night TV viewing eats into the children's quota of sleeping hours, leaving them groggy, difficult to rouse in the morning and inattentive at school. They also objected to the 'adult' scenes in such programmes.

Asked to identify programme which parents restrict them from watching, the children listed the following:

1. Late night programmes/films 43.49 per cent
2. Others (This category includes adult programmes, WWF, MTV and



programme with sexually explicit scenes): 14.20 per cent
3 Violence and Horror: 11.06 per cent
4 Hindi films/films. 9.11 per cent

In spite of this feedback, we remained unclear about how effective parental intervention really is — even when it occurs. For example, a number of children mentioned that their parents had forbidden them from watching several Star TV serials, including *World Wrestling Federation* and *The Bold and the Beautiful* as well as the chat shows on DD which discuss marital, sexual or women's problems

However, a few children, went to the trouble of letting us know in the questionnaire that despite the prohibition they watched *WWF* and the other programmes whenever they could Parental sanction, it would seem, does not always work

TV DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

Several parents, especially those of younger children, told us that they did not want their children watching 'dirty scenes, condom and sanitary napkin ads' or even campaigns for family planning They felt uncomfortable about exposing their children to such issues. However, given that television does not discriminate between adult and child viewers, they find it difficult to prevent this from happening Parents cannot always police their television sets or their children However, some mother said that although they were embarrassed to discuss these issues, especially in front of other family members (especially the men), they were pleased that television was taking on the responsibility of educating their children about them

We also found that sometimes, despite the good intentions underlying a TV presentation, TV can be harmful, especially when children are too young to understand the full meaning of the message delivered. For instance, a Bombay ad film maker found himself disturbed by a satellite TV ad on parental neglect of the child While he had no quarrel with the sentiments and the concerns of the advertisements, he felt a child viewer might end up harbouring unfounded resentment against his or her parents merely because the context of the ad had not been understood. In this particular case, the ad was framed in a Western nation where child neglect was legally defined and punishable.

Clearly, television does not take upon itself the full responsibility of showing the right stuff to the right viewer at the right time, and where children are concerned, the onus of discrimination lies essentially with the adults in the household If parental vigilance is lax or simply non-existent, children tend to watch whatever comes their way. This is particularly important in the view of parental viewing habits. In a chance encounter on the Rajdhani Express from Bomaby to Delhi, we overheard a mother recalling a recent

episode from a popular TV soap opera. Her eight-year-old corrected her as she went along. Surprised and not a little annoyed, she asked, "How do you know so much about it?" "Well," replied the child, "I was sitting right there while you were watching it." Visibly upset, the mother exclaimed, "But I told you not to watch!"

As pointed out in the introduction, there are positive contributions that televison can make to children's awareness and learning. Not everything shown on it, is harmful; selecting the right programmes for children to watch and discovering relevance or meaning in programme content is a conscious and demanding activity.

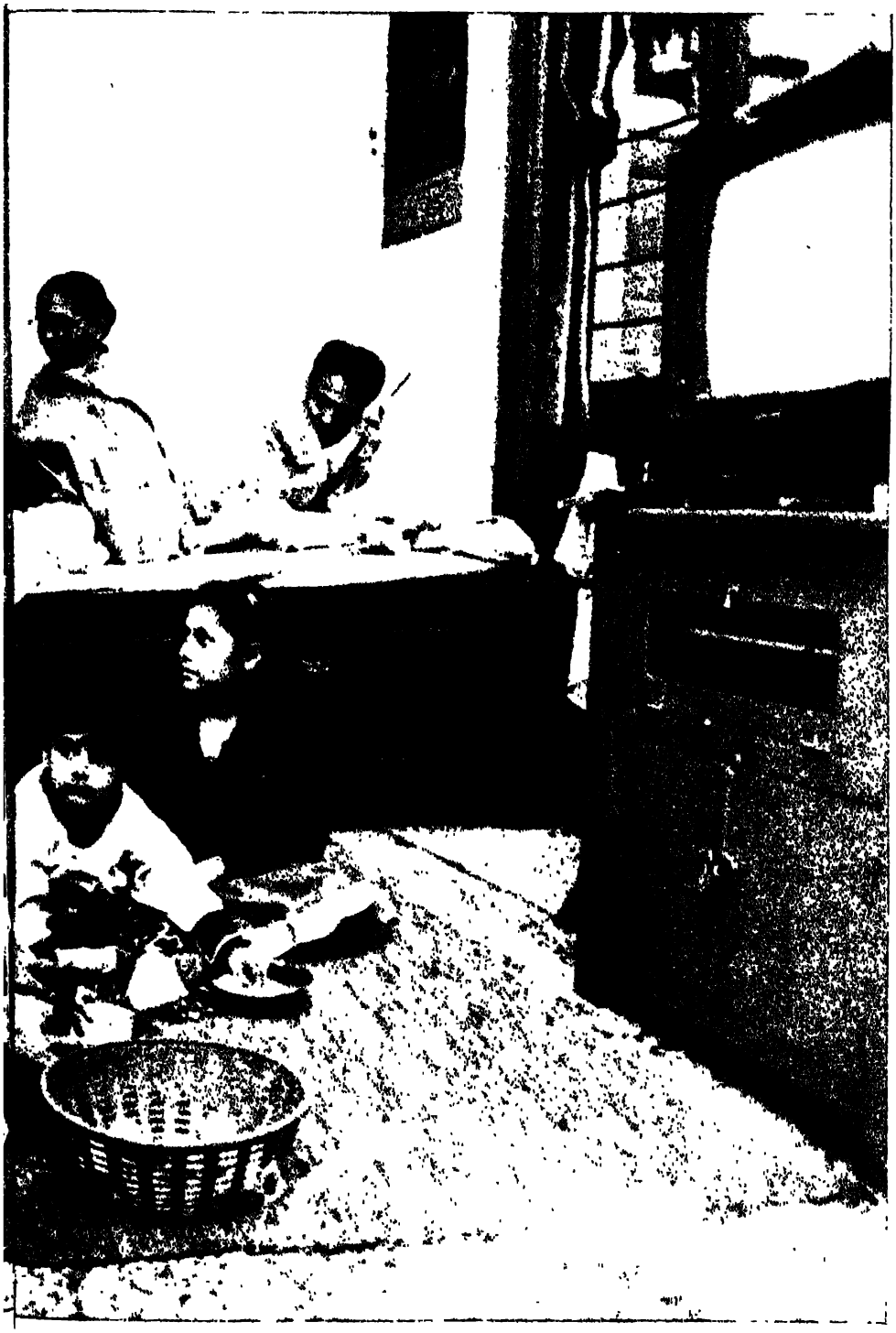
To find out just how active a role parents are playing in influencing their children's programme choices and helping them to get the best of TV, we asked the following questions: "Do parents look out for good informative-cum-entertaining programmes on television for their kids to watch? What do they encourage them to tune into?

About 60 per cent of the 8 to 15 year olds said they were encouraged to 'watch TV'. Asked to specify what they were urged to watch, 37 per cent mentioned informative programmes on science and international affairs, quizzes and the news bulletins. Less than 15 per cent of the children, particularly those in the 8 to 12 years age group, said their parents encourage them to watch entertainment programmes.

However, from the tone of their responses and from the list of programmes they claimed to watch most frequently, it is evident that children resent parental guidance and generally consider parental recommendations to be boring. This attitude may well be a response to the lack of quality programming on TV in areas other than entertainment.

Not a single child drew a link between learning a subject in school and related programming on television which might make it more interesting. Using television to enhance regular learning is not usually attempted either by schools or at home. In any case, very few programmes bear any relevance to topics in science, history, economics etc., which would awaken children's interest. Since this research was conducted, some TV channels to satisfy/target the child audience and more child-specific programming is beginning to appear. BBC World Service Television has a number of documentary, science and nature-related programmes. Ideally suited for children Star TV's scientific and environmental series are greatly appreciated by some parents and they do encourage their children to watch them. These programmes/series are well made, fascinating and hold the child's attention. They are not viewed by children as an imposition.

Finally, and in the Indian context, the most important TV service is of course, national broadcasting network, Doordarshan. Conceived of as a public broadcasting system whose primary aim was to educate an illiterate population, Doordarshan has a history of educational programming. The University Grants Commission (UGC) runs a one-hour educational programme on weekdays and there are regular class curriculum broadcasts on weekday mornings. However, the quality of such programming is largely poor and, as we will see in the next chapter, Doordarshan's emphasis has now changed and education is no longer a priority. ■



TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	1[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC 742	1[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC 711	[illegible]	daily
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
SG 026/005	0[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5	SG 026/005	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	0[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 402	1555	2 4 5
			PF 402	[illegible]	1 [illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 722	15[illegible]	1 3 4 [illegible] 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DZ 151	1[illegible]	[illegible]
DZ 151	[illegible]	[illegible]	DZ 153	1130	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	0605	daily	IC 772	1348	daily
9W 511	1[illegible]	daily	9W 512	21[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DS 401	16[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]		IC 741	[illegible]	
[illegible]	10[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 770	1745	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9[illegible] 105	[illegible]	[illegible]
BOMBAY					
[illegible]	0[illegible]	daily	IC [illegible]	08[illegible]	daily
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W-[illegible]	09[illegible]	1 3 4 5 6 7
DZ [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DZ 1[illegible]	0850	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 30[illegible]	1330	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	1440	[illegible]	9W 511	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 274	[illegible]	daily
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD 40[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 6
MD [illegible]	170[illegible]	daily	MD 30[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DZ 1[illegible]	200[illegible]	daily	DZ 10[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DELHI					
IC [illegible]	06[illegible]	[illegible]	SG 0[illegible]	08[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
SG 026	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 [illegible]	MD 30[illegible]	08[illegible]	daily
MD 30[illegible]	0[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 63[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4[illegible] 60[illegible]	11[illegible]	1 [illegible] 4 [illegible] 6
[illegible] 40[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 401	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	17[illegible]	[illegible] 5 4 5 6	SG 50[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 3 4 [illegible]
			IC 811	171[illegible]	[illegible] 3 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 [illegible]	MD 301	1[illegible]	daily
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC 264	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible]	IC 655	09[illegible]	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
4[illegible] 816	[illegible]	4 6	IC 703	1630	1 3 5 7
4[illegible] 81[illegible]	1215	1 3 5	4[illegible] 815	1645	1 2 4
IC 703	1240	1 [illegible] 7	4[illegible] 811	1615	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
IC 2[illegible]	1145	4 7	IC 2[illegible]	1550	4 7
PF 301 [illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 5	PF 306/302	1555	2 4 5
GOA					
SG 026/021	0850	1 2 3 4 5	SG 022/005	2305	1 2 3 4 5
GUWAHATI					
D[illegible] 60[illegible]	0800	1 3 4 6	D[illegible] 606	1915	2 3 5 7
IC 70	0610	1 3 5	IC 704	1120	1 3 5
			IC 704	1220	2 6
9W 611	1[illegible]	daily	9W 612	1410	daily

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
M9 [illegible]	1[illegible]	daily	M9 3[illegible]	1510	daily
PF 301	0[illegible]	1 3 5	PF 302	1500	1 3 5
IC 70[illegible]	0[illegible]	4 7	IC 230	1620	daily
IC 229	1410	daily	4[illegible] 811	1635	2 4 6
4[illegible] 816/811	[illegible]	2 4 6	4[illegible] 816/811	1[illegible]	1 3 5
M9-5[illegible]	1[illegible]	1 5 7	M9 327	1616	3 [illegible] 7
M9 3[illegible]	12[illegible]	1 4	M9 3[illegible]	1610	1 4
HYDERABAD					
IC 727	1[illegible]	3 [illegible] 7	IC 728	2015	3 5 7
IC 769	1635	2 4 6	IC 770	1745	2 4 6
VI 106	1[illegible]	1	VI 105	1700	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 2[illegible]	1405	3 [illegible] 7
IC 2[illegible]	1140	2 6	IC 2[illegible]	1[illegible]	2 6
JAIPUR					
SG-020/027	0850	1 2 4 [illegible]	SG-028/005	2005	1 2 4 [illegible] 7
JORHAT					
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC 257	1550	4 7
LILABARI					
PF 301/303	0645	[illegible] 3 5	PF-304/302	1[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	171[illegible]	1 3 [illegible]
SG 026/0[illegible]	0850	1 2 3 4 5	SG 012/005	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 5 [illegible]
MADRAS					
D5-40[illegible]	0700	4	D5 40[illegible]	1630	[illegible]
IC 542	1115	1 4 6	IC 541	1030	1 4 6
IC 544	111[illegible]	2 7	IC 543	10[illegible]	7
DZ 172	1[illegible]	daily	DZ 171	11[illegible]	[illegible]
			DZ 173	11[illegible]	1 [illegible] 3 4 5 [illegible]
IC 765	1[illegible]	daily	IC 766	2220	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	174[illegible]	2 4 6
PATNA					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	[illegible] 5
IC 612	1[illegible]	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 [illegible] 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0540	1 3 5	IC 286	1100	[illegible] 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 3 5
SHILLONG					
D5 601	0600	daily	D5-605	1935	daily
SILCHAR					
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC-256	1405	3 5 7
IC 253	0715	2 4, 6	IC 254	1025	2 4 6
M9 325	1220	1, 4	M9 326	1610	1 [illegible]
M9-323	1220	2 6	M9-323	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC 211	1140	2 6	IC-213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	3, 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 4, 6	IC 541	1030	1 4 6
D5-402	0700	4	D5 401	1630	3

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ 1[illegible]	1445	4	RJ-184	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 87[illegible]	0420	7	KL 875	0235	7
BANGKOK					
KB-105	0850	2, 6	KB-106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	5
IC 731	0855	2, 5	TG-313	1240	1, 3, 6
IC-855	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6	IC 732	1505	2, 5
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2150	5, 7	RO-075	1200	5 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0600	1	IC 226	1020	1
BG-696	1730	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
DHAKA					
BG 092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC 723	1250	1 2 3 5 6	IC 724	1120	1 2 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	1 2 3 5 6, 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
DOHA					
QT-061	1245	4	QT-060	1300	2
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
BA 214	1215	2 4 6	BA 213	1130	2 4 6
IC 747	1115	1 2 4 6	IC-748	1435	1 2 4 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	2115	4 7	BA 143	1515	4 7
MOSCOW					
SU 538	1755	4	SU-537	1505	4
PARO					
KB-106	1105	3	KB 10	0810	2 6
KB-108	1445	6			
SINGAPORE					
SQ 415	2445	2 5	SQ 416	2230	2 5
BI 108	0830	1	BI 107	2000	6
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI-306	1910	5	AI 305	1620	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1530	4 7	IC 228	1950	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
3003	21 00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13 00	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	13-45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thur & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12-50	2306
2307	21 30	**Jodhpur Express**	4-10	2306
2019	6 20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
3073	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri-Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed, & Sat	11 35	3074
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	12 25	3046
5049	23-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
5047	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	9 30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11-55	3020
3071	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3072
5659	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14-30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8 45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20 35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11 20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18 20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	12 30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 25	2859
2021	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20 40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	8033
8030	11-20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14 05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 10	2842
7003	8 10	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	19-40	7004
6311	22 35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	15 45	6312
8013	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8111	6 00	**Igatpuri (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 25	8112
8005	20-55	**Titagarh Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21-40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-10	8016
8007	22 15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8409	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 30	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22-05	2822
8045	10 30	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 10	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11-35	8018
1030	15 50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	16 10	-
	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10-15	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22 15	
—	14 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13 45	6321
	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	-
6316	22 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22 15	
	14 05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Jemima (Goldsmith) Khan

Early life: Was the illegitimate daughter of Sir James Goldsmith and Annabel Birley (after whom her husband Mark named his nightclub) Her parents married only when Jemima was around seven years old; until then Annabel lived with her first husband, Mark Birley, who has since been described as her only real love

First taste of fame: As part of the famed Goldsmith clan — several wives, mistresses and numerous children — Jemima was never far from the public eye But she became a full-fledged media celebrity when *Vogue* featured her in an article revolving around a pivotal moment in her young life: the purchase of her first *haute couture* garment

A salwar kameez, right?. Er, well, not quite Jemima's choice was a long, black dress by the Italian designer, Gianni Versace, with a plunging neckline and a halter neck, which showed off her thin, well-toned and evenly tanned arms to perfection.

Did Imran approve?: He wasn't on the scene those days Jemima was busy dating various eligible men in her set, though not always very successfully. On one memorable occasion, the Goldsmith heiress quarelled with her boyfriend (who shall remain nameless) while driving on the motorway.

The argument got more and more heated, until finally Jemima pulled over, asked her date to get out of the car, and drove off.

So, where was Khan, anyway?: Too busy consorting with such women as Sita White, the daughter of Lord White, from whom he is alleged to have an illegitimate child Sita apparently tried her best to get him to marry her, even changing her name to one that embodied wifely devotion (Sita) Alas, nobody told her that Ram was a Hindu, not a Muslim. god

How Imran met Jemima: Contrary to the general perception, the couple did not meet at Annabel's, the nightclub named after Jemima's mother. They were introduced by mutual friends, and apparently, hit it off immediately

Whirlwind courtship: And before you could say *Inshallah*, Imran and Jemima had announced that they were to wed Not surprisingly, that set the paparazzi on their tail, though the couple

Imran Khan with wife Jemima

managed to throw them off long enough to have a private *nikaah* in Paris (the registry bit had been taken care of in London)

The Indian connection: Tarun Tahiliani, fashion designer and owner of the Bombay boutique, Ensemble, was assigned the task of making Jemima's wedding dress, a salwar kameez. Tahiliani made it in record time and flew off to London, booking an extra seat for the 'dress'.

Much to poor Tarun's embarrassment, however, the dress was rejected, and Jemima decided to go with a light blue salwar kameez designed by the British couturier, Bruce Oldfield

Public reaction: General dismay in the popular press in England, at the thought of a young English rose marrying a middle-aged Pakistani roue. After all, the argument went, how would poor Jemima adjust to life in *purdah* after being brought up as a free spirit

There was a strong anti-Islamic current running beneath all the criticism, though. Sample cartoon: Imran asks Jemima's father for his daughter's hand. Sir James replies, "Why, has she been caught shop-lifting?"

And were the Pakistanis pleased?: No way. Imran had always claimed that he would marry a nice Pakistani girl when it was time to settle down. And nobody could quite forgive him for marrying a foreigner, and a Jewish one, at that

The consensus was that Imran had destroyed his political prospects by marrying Jemima; and that Benazir Bhutto no longer had anything to fear from him.

The public relations battle: Imran and Jemima went on the Breakfast with Frost show on the BBC World Service to tell Sir David Frost — and millions of viewers — how much they loved each other, and how they were sure that their marriage would work

Imran did most of the talking though, dressed for some strange reason in cricket whites, and threw nervous glances in Jemima's direction whenever she tried to get a word in edgeways, scared perhaps that she would say something that would be taken amiss in Pakistan, where the BBC World Service is available

Jemima's contribution: An article she wrote exclusively for *Vogue* about life in Pakistan. According to Jemima, women in Pakistan were strong, independent, and had careers of their own; there was no question of living behind the veil

She, at least, was enjoying herself immensely, gorging on what she called "*kulfa*" (*kulfi*, presumably), even as everyone called her "*pabli*," the Punjabi word for sister-in-law

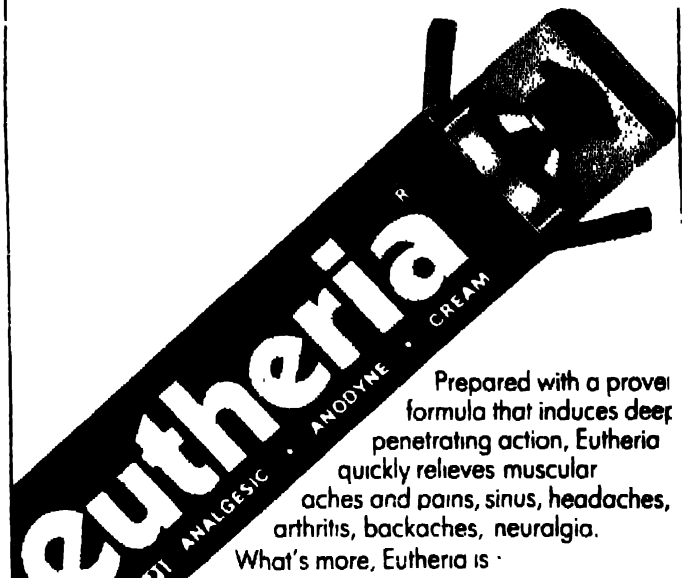
Was that all that she did?: No. Jemima also did her bit for Imran's pet project: the cancer hospital he has built in his mother's memory. She invited Princess Diana to Pakistan to help raise funds for the project, and the Princess of Wales was flown over in Sir James Goldsmith's private jet, accompanied by Jemima's mother, Annabel.

And did the publicity help Imran?. Well, actually, the visit did more to further the cause of Indian — and Pakistani — fashion. Princess Diana, Jemima and Lady Annabel all wore salwar kameezes, and that went a long way to popularising the outfit abroad

What next?: Who knows? Maybe an article in *Vogue* about another pivotal event in young Jemima Khan's life: the commissioning of her first designer salwar kameez. ■

THE SHORTEST GAP BETWEEN PAIN

AND RELIEF



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BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

The moon enables you to get your way through manipulations says Ganesha The most positive and successful course of action will come through working with a group towards a common goal, be it finances, family values, trading, buying/selling, entertaining, wheeling dealing and so on

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Groups will meet you more than halfway as moon conjuncts Mercury so make it a social affair or call in the family for help and advice This week, be firm You have a lot of power and personal leverage, as the sun is in your sign, according to Western astrology Learn to use that wisely and well

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Heavy expenses or overenthusiasm may trip you because legal matters could entangle you A secret affair is more than possible So is a trip It is best to keep your options open If things do not quite move your way, you could slide into a different situation or ball game Safeguard health and be resourceful

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Good week to apply managerial techniques to personnel issues and posers Have someone come in, or you should take up the role and give a workshop featuring creativity, motivation and organisation Expenses will be high but work will be done. Be sure everything will fall into place

Leo
July 21 -- August 21

Important companies can be involved in your success Your work will be your life blood and that's saying a lot The power of the written or spoken word will be in sharp evidence Tactics must be forceful Someone who helps you in the beginning returns to help you in the end

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Journey, intuition, education and research take top priority along with ceremony and conviviality You will most certainly scheme and plan more carefully and thus the chance of success will definitely be greater Beware of a glitch, a delay or postponement You will work with a will

Libra
September 23 — October 22

By March 17, money, investments buying, selling, shopping, trading, and journeying should present a clear picture. If you are dealing with two partners or people, one will have the golden touch while the other one will not be particularly helpful. Learn to use the connections of the resourceful

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha says, reserve your best shot for March 18 Marriage, collaborations, journeys and conference find you in your element Paradoxically, court cases are also foretold Or a grievous hurt brought about by a big chasm/difference in attitude and opinion It is this which makes it an interesting week

Sagittarius
November 23 -- December 20

Health safeguards won't hurt You will have a juicy bit of information that you doubt and need to use. Maybe, you have a superb idea that you need to implement but do not know how Let others help you Group efforts will be helpful if you are willing to seek the help of others

Capricorn
December 21 -- January 19

Take all the help you can as that's the way to succeed You will succeed through a partner or with correct information knowledge or education or both are mighty important now Do put on a good front for sure even if you do not feel like it Time to socialise heavily as the mood in your family will be upbeat

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Home and the outside world now really meet in the sense that buying, selling, renovation, decoration, office, house will take up your time and energy and yet it will be essential to the success of your work Get all the ducks in a row while waiting for things to move ahead Children give great joy

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

Good week to take advantage of situations as they arise and radically change circumstances for the better Actions pay off You can get a promotion with a large financial gain before December January You must reach out to people and places to use a cliche This is definitely one of the most newsy weeks

BIRTHDAYS

March 17: **Sun conjunction Saturn, sextile Neptune means avoid depression and melancholia and do develop a positive attitude as it really boils down to it.**

March18: **Moon Jupiter sextile leads to excellent opportunities for advancement, be it work, play, love, children, marriage or a new venture.**

March 19: **New moon gives you the chance to really make it. Arists, scholars, businessmen, farmers and pharmacists will be in their element.**

March20: **Moon square Jupiter signifies that as long as you are not too hasty and impulsive all will be well. Buying, selling, and renovating are very likely. You will be called upon to host dinners and parties.**

March21: **Mars sextile Neptune assures final victory and abundance. That is what life is all about. You will work with a will and do so intelligently.**

March 22: **Mercury sextiles Neptune, Mars conjunction Saturn means there could be a slight danger of an accident, operation and depression. It will pass away.**

March23: **Sun-Pluto trine assures power, pelf, position You will reach out to people and places effectively. This is a thumping good year. Progress is certain.**

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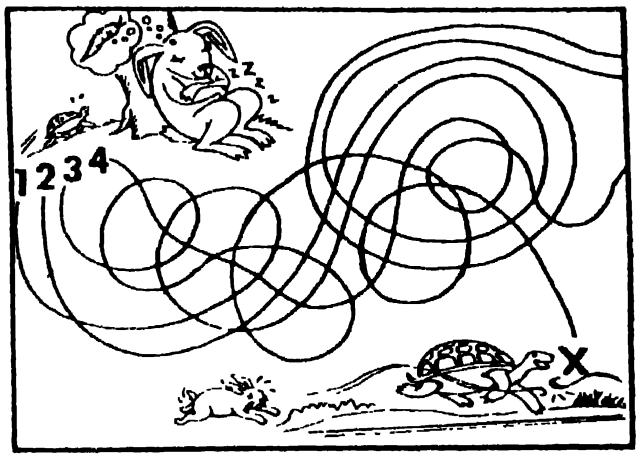
JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN



HARE THIS! Sweet dreams, Mr. Rabbit, but your turtle pal is winning the race Which path leads to the finish line?

CERTAIN AGE! Take your age, add seven, double result, add 16, double result again, divide by four and subtract 15. Answer will be your age, whether you are 1 or 100. Give it a try, then challenge someone else.

STRING ALONG!

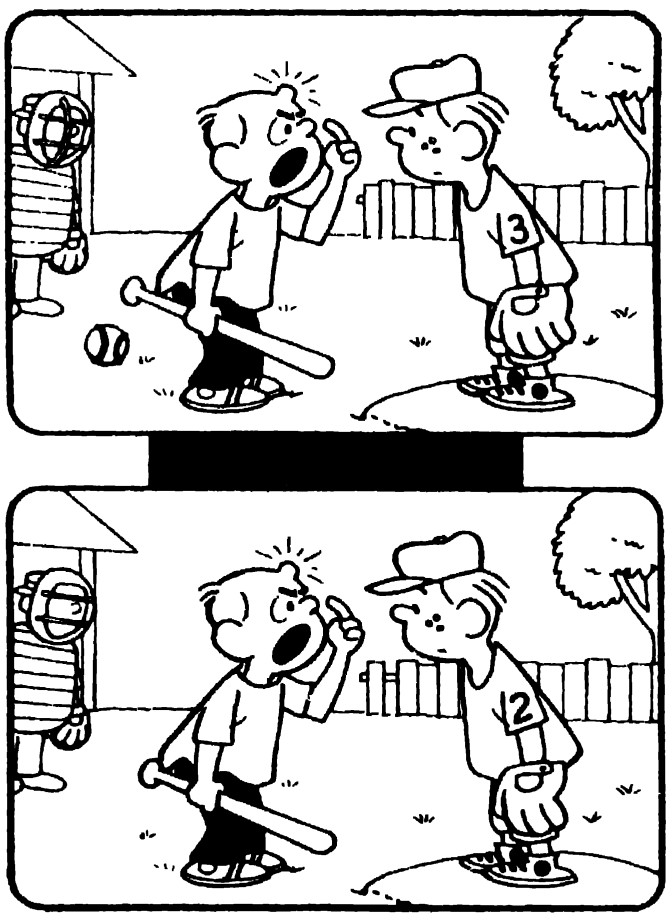
You are challenged to insert names of five musical instruments in blanks at right, and do so in such a manner that letters in squares showing musical notes may be rearranged to form the name of a sixth instrument — one of six letters, usually having six strings.

1		L	♪	♪	
2		♪		N	
3	B		♪		
4		♪			O
5		♪	G		

Use five of the following five-letter names to comply: Banjo, viola, piano, bugle, cello, organ, flute.

1 Flute 2 Piano 3 Bugle 4 Banjo 5 Organ 6 Sixth instrument Guitar

HOCUS-FOCUS



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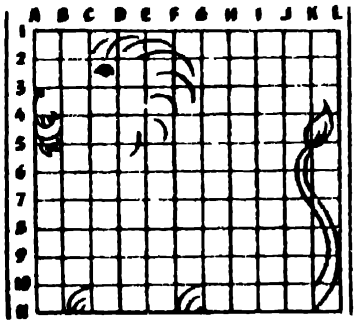
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences 1 Mask is different 2 Ball is missing 3. Bat is shorter 4 Fence board is missing 5 Number is different. 6 Glove is different.



LION IN WAIT FOR DETAILS

HEADS UP, it seems the king of the jungle, at left has all but disappeared To restore missing details. simply draw lines in accord with these letter-number coordinates:

Begin at B-4, draw to C-5 to D-5 to E-4.

Start again at D-5, draw to D-6 to C-10.

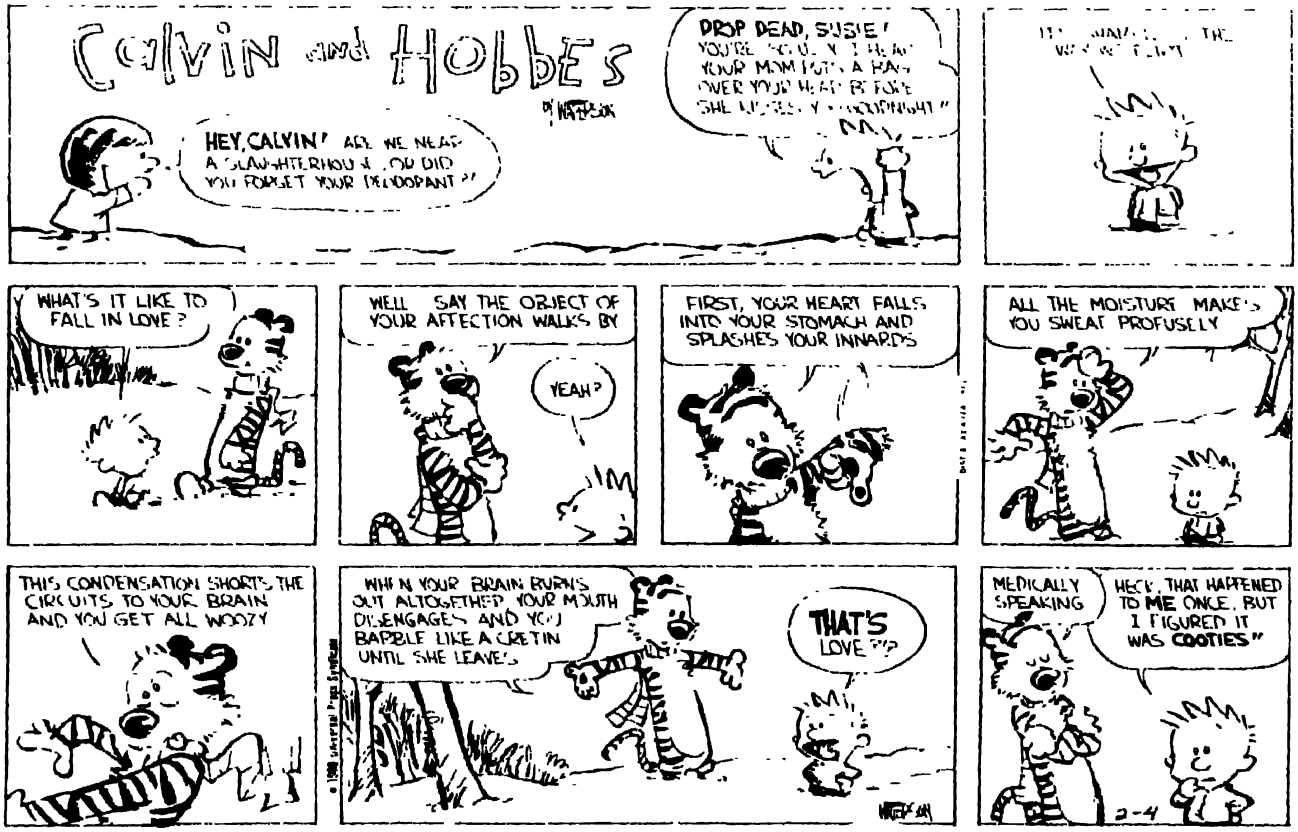
Draw from C-11 to D-11 to E-7 to H-9 to H-8 to J-8. Add E-6 to E-7; also add H-9 to H-10 to G-10; add G-11 to K-11.

Draw from K-11 to K-8 to F-3. Add A-3 to C-2 to complete the task.

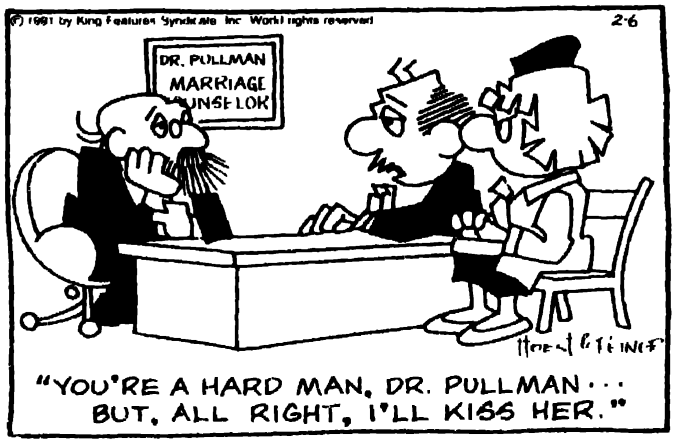
If crayons are handy, add an appropriate colour or two. How long will it take you to finish?

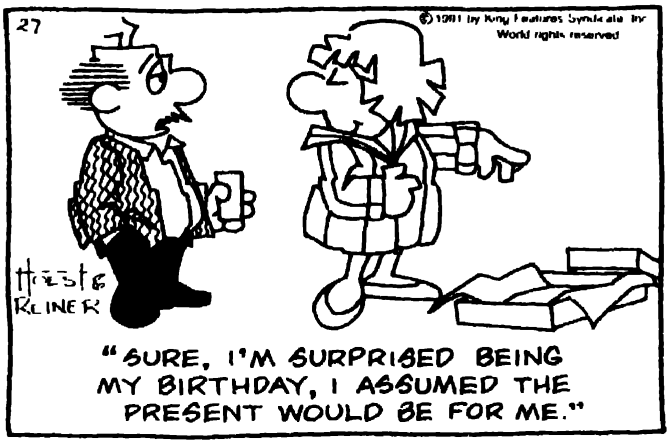
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

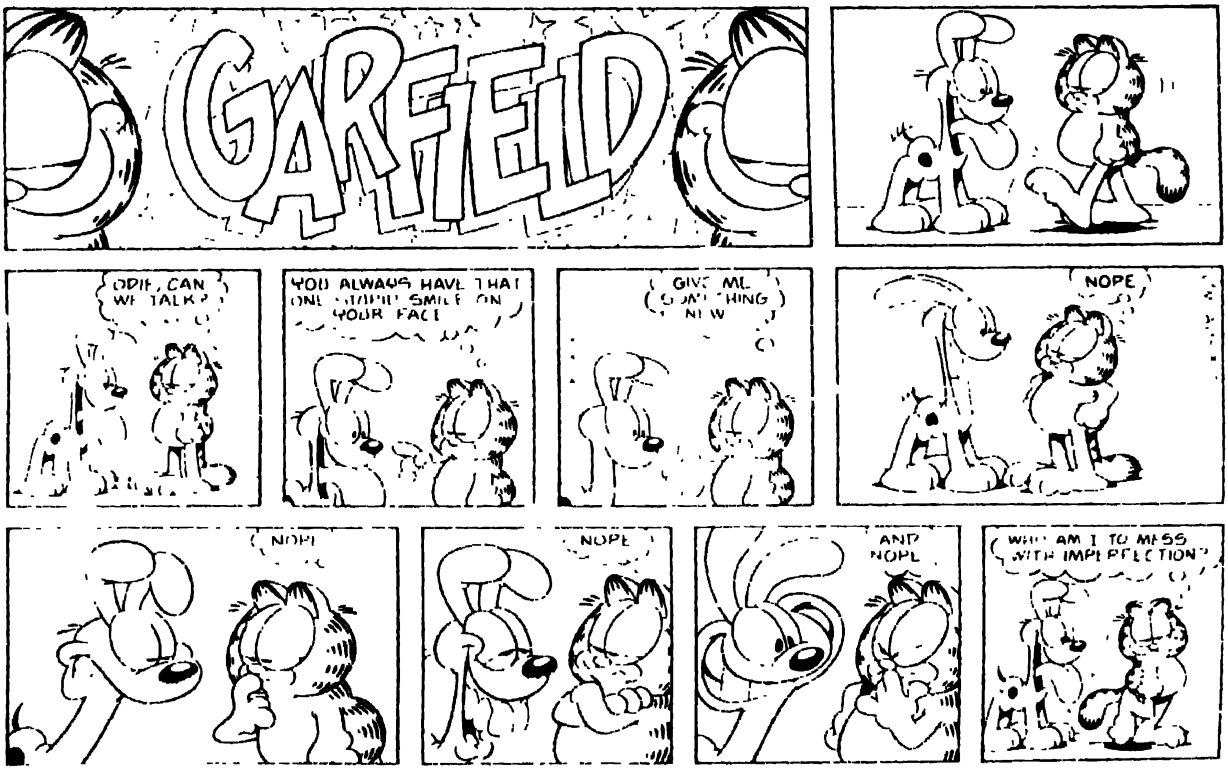


THE LOCKHORNS

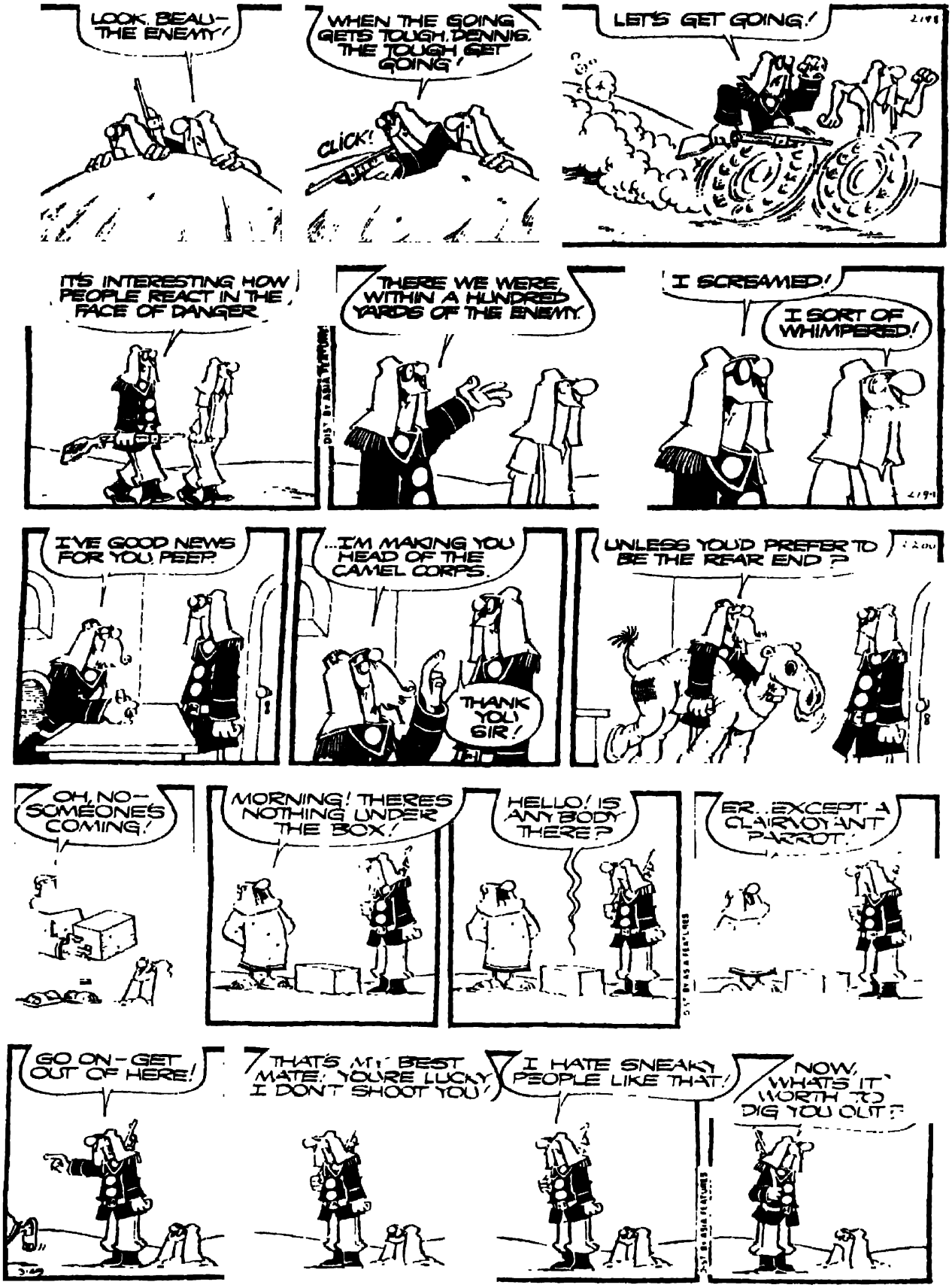


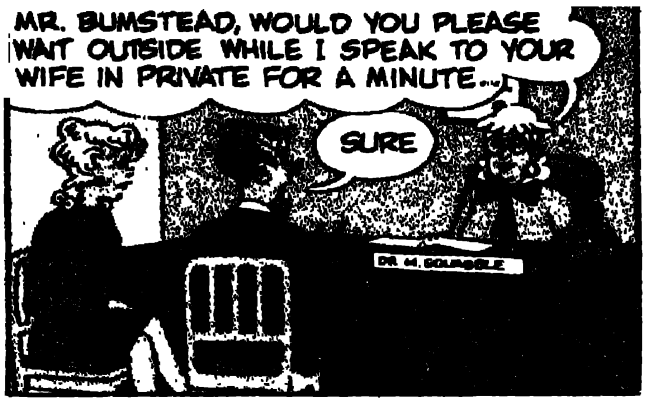


GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP





MY WIFE'S GOT NO AMBITION... ALL SHE DOES IS SIT AROUND WATCHING SOAP OPERAS AND TALK SHOWS

FOCUS

SHADES OF GREEN

Eco-consciousness has come to Indian marketplace as well, reports ***Shameem Akthar***

So, where does one start? Perhaps, with the Green toothpaste, Niranjan, which is specially made for vegetarians; in case you don't know, most other brands use bone-ash. Or should one begin with Green boilers, which consume less power than the conventional variety, or even Green refrigerators which are free of the eco-unfriendly chlorofluoro carbons, and are currently being used by Coca-Cola in its can-vending machines. Then, there is Arvind Mills' blue denim which has recently turned an attractive shade of Green by proudly sporting the Eco Tex trademark affixed by a German consortium which certified it as an "Ecologically Optimised Fabric".

The ministry of environment, recognising the possibilities inherent in such certification, has also got into the act, releasing numerous advertisements to drive home the importance of having an eco-mark logo. This is designed in the shape of an earthen pot, and apparently serves as a "guide to the right environmental choice which signifies that the product that carries it, does least damage to the environment".

To sell the logo to stick-in-the-mud manufacturers, the ad appeals fervently:"The earthen pot symbolises the earth. And the earthen pot stands for man's inherent urge to create and preserve. Its solid and graceful form represents both strength and fragility, which also characterises our eco-system".

It urges consumers to look out for eco-labelled products such as toilet soaps, detergents, paper, laundry soaps, food items like edible oils, tea, coffee, beverages, infant food, processed fruits and vegetable products, lubricating oils, packaging material like

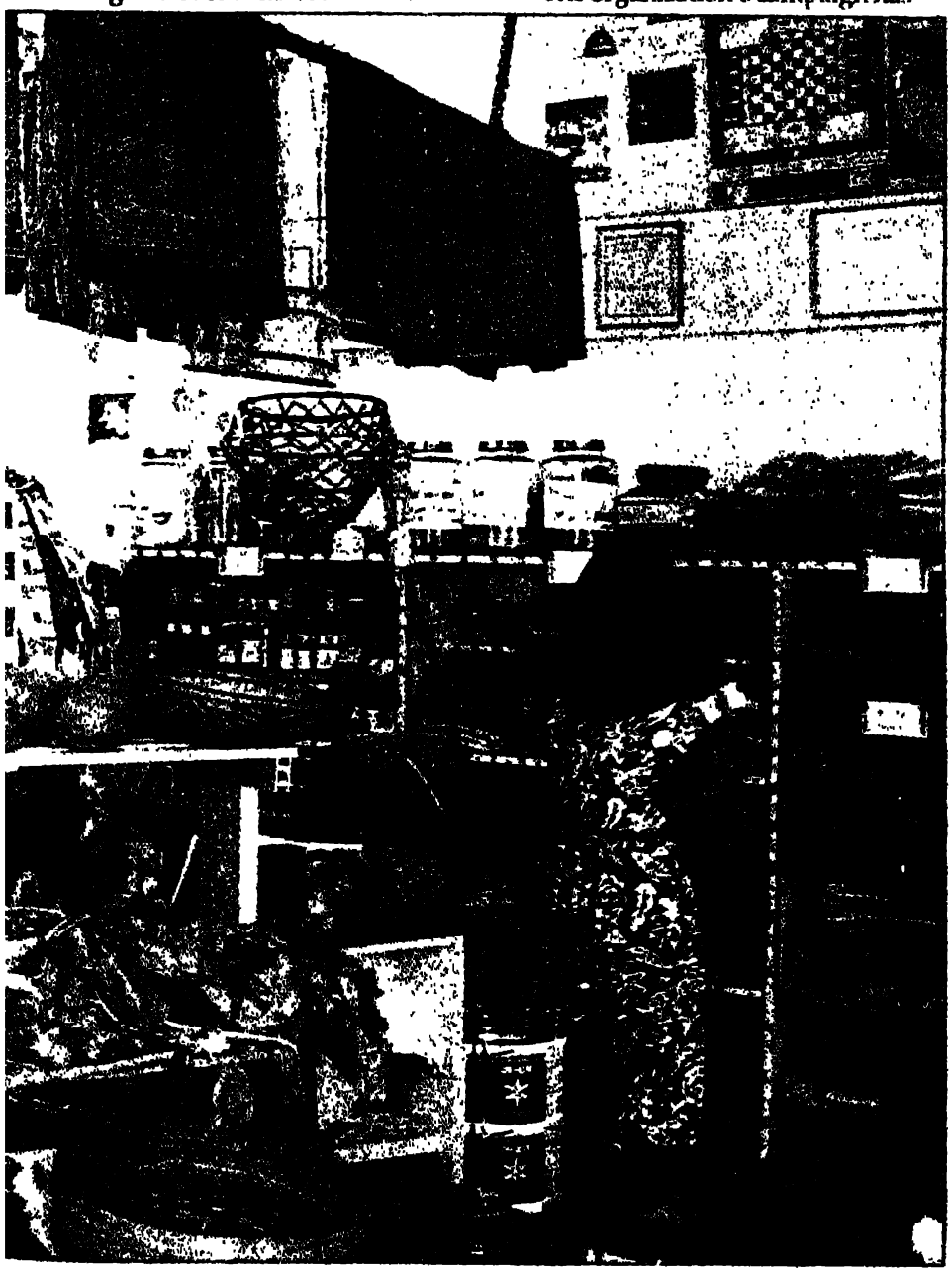
Nature Options: Customers become eco-conscious

paper, boards, plastics, laminates, architectural paints and power coatings and automotive lead and acid batteries. The list is long and obviously not many of us were aware that an innocuous sip of tea or the casually crumpled paper could actually wound Mother Earth.

With the emergence of the eco-mark logo, Indians, too, can claim to have become part of the international movement to save the environment, to preserve the fragile balance that keeps our planet habitable by man. And since most movements that begin in the West find ready adherents in India, this eco-consciousness trend may well succeed. Already several Green products are on the market, though most of them are much more expensive that the ordinary brands available, and can only be bought by people who are not on a tight budget. But then, the eco-friendly movement in India is itself driven by those in the upper socio-economic bracket.

Eco-fads are well and truly in, though to be fair, most are more than just fads. Beauty Without Cruelty, the Pune-based organisation has, since 1974, been campaigning against the use (or misuse) of animals in cosmetic trials. The organisation is bitterly opposed to testing any product, used to beautify men and women on animals, and also directs its ire against the misuse of animals by industry as a whole.

The organisation's campaign has had some effect. The Indian government has banned the use of animal rennet in cheese-making since this is extracted from the stomach of unweaned calves. Over the last seven years, thanks to the untiring efforts of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) we have been eating only vegetarian cheese in India. Once the foreign brands enter the market, however, even die-hard vegetarians will not be able to know which of them are responsible for the slaughter of calves.



BWC has also managed to weave together the first polyester brocade zari sari in a 'silky finish woven on handloom'. This saves unsuspecting silk moths from a very hot, uncomfortable and untimely death. Not that most silk lovers know that to produce just one gram of woven silk, 15 moths are either boiled or steamed alive in their cocoons.

The organisation has been on its "Save the Animals" campaign for more than a decade now. In the Eighties, the BWC bought an entire flock of Karakul sheep to save the lambs from being killed for their pelts. These lambs are specially sought after because the soft curls of their wool remains tightly wound since they are slaughtered within 48 hours of their birth. Again, in 1992, the BWC launched a campaign which pressured the government into banning trade in ivory.

As impressive as these campaigns and their success is the BWC's Investors' Guide, whose purpose is laid out as follows. 'The BWC Investment Guide has been created at the request of prospective investors who come from a ..vegetarian background, for a source of information about the nature of businesses carried out by various companies.

'Many such people are very concerned about what ingredients the company's product contains for what the process is of making that product. They even refuse to share in the profits of such companies since to them it represents ill-gotten wealth. It is for such people that this guide is written.'

The guide contains the names of all companies listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange at the end of 1994. The companies are listed under green, orange and red to identify whether the company is truly green or red (as opposed to green) or orange (which means that BWC is not certain). For example, companies making jelly use bone material, badminton and tennis racquets have strings made from catgut, while soaps have animal fats and even an innocent

A WWF shop

looking silver foil or *varkh* needs the intestinal wall of freshly killed oxen on which the silver foil is kept and hammered to fine thickness

Sounds a bit extreme? But wait, you haven't heard anything yet. Try this for one: a Poona Hospital run by Jains is among the first to categorise blood as vegetarian and non-vegetarian on the basis of the diet of the donors. Similar alternatives to dedicated vegetarians are offered by BWC's List of Honour which suggests available options to finicky shoppers. Those who enjoy the finer things of life may be shocked to learn that gourmet tastes extract more than their share of flesh.

Here is what BWC has to say: pharmaceuticals are tested on animals; dairy products lead to starvation of male offspring; insecticides and pesticides are tested on animals; wine and beer need animal ingredients for clarification, glycerine and gelatine contain animal fat and bones respectively.

The Green movement has even led to the invention and sale of eco-friendly toilet paper, which is wood-free and made from recycled agro waste: a procedure that spares numerous trees from an untimely and wasteful death. Then there is jute, a material that is increasingly being seen as an eco-option to skin-ravishing synthetics. Jute chappals tread with more grace than killer-leather shoes.

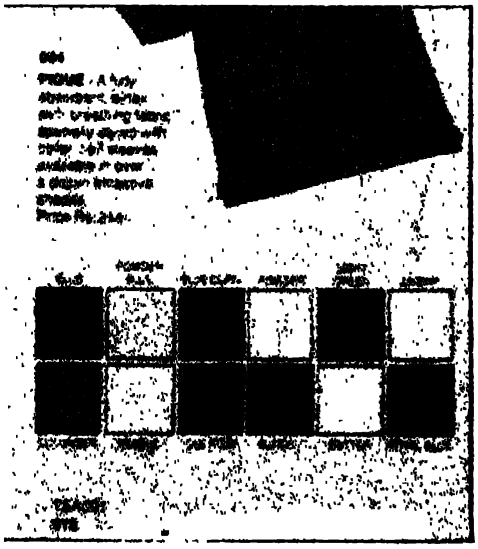
Eco-geysers will soon replace energy-guzzling ones (no PUF or glass wool in the paint), with venting systems that will release toxicants from chlorinated municipal water. We also have new Adidas unisex shoe that "taps the growing demand for footwear made of natural and recyclable materials," aptly titled 'Hemp' shoes (kicking up a controversy over its being synonymous to marijuana).

Synthetic ceramic granites, brands like Bell Granito Ceramics, now cement this new environment-consciousness. This means tiles naturally-grained and hard like granite without any mining involved---a process that disembowels Mother Earth.

A naturalist's path is paved with not just eco-granites but also soft flowers. Dr Rupa Shah in Bombay has resurrected 'flower remedies' created in 1930 by Harley Street homoeopath Edward Bach. Flowers specially culled from pure Himalayan tracts are used for this healing process which

Courtesy WWF

T-shirts promoting nature care



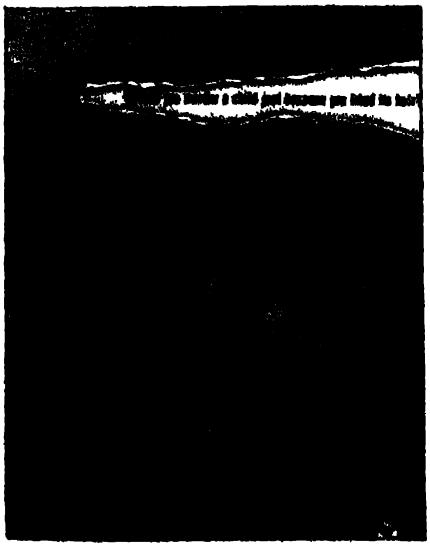
marks yet another return to Mother Earth's lap. From stressed-out management types to infertile housewives all have been rushing to embrace this new-craze nature cure.

Now there is also eco-jewellery, paper ear-rings, coconut shell pendants and terracotta chains, all eco-packed in cotton by the new kid on the designer block, Santosh Nair. Melange, the eco-fashion house that Sangita Kathiwada built on a no-plastic foundation, is treading a similar path. Here you find only eco-designs, all nature inspired.

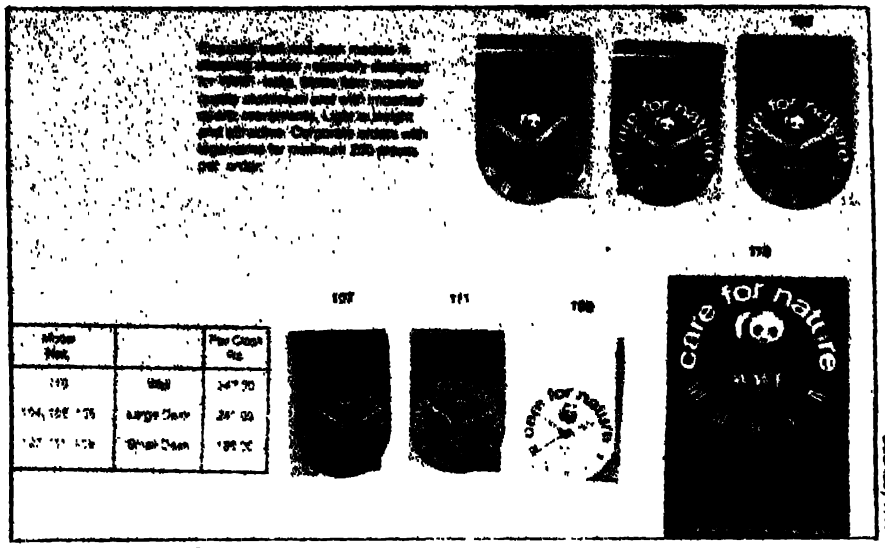
For instance, Wendell Rodricks' 'Clothing the Soul' range last year was inspired by the sun, sand, sea and air of sun-kissed Goa. Two years ago, Narendra Kumar held his show on clothing made from *chattai*. But eco-fanatics may frown at pearl embroidery and silk folds (poor oysters and moths which are sacrificed at the altar of fashion).

Tradition, too, is being repackaged in eco-fadism. Kalamkari, vegetable dyes on cloth from Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh, is being resold to a hungry public as "indigenous art that uses only plants, trees, iron and jaggery as sources as dyes Waters from river Swarnamukhi is used to wash the paints so that the right mix of salts in it holds the colours firmly on the cloth".

In keeping with this trend is Kavita Mukhi's Nature Option shop in Bombay's elite Napean Sea Road, which has most things natural. It is also very eco-righteous. Its pamphlet, which dubs the shop as Earth People and Animal Friendly Establishment,



A poster from Beauty Without Cruelty



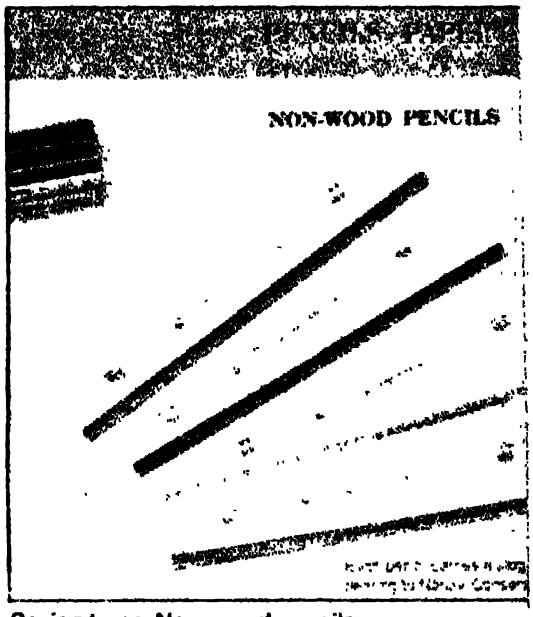
Courtesy WWF

Eco-friendly clocks

asks pointedly: "We conserve, protect and re-use all that we can. Do you?" And promises that it will go beyond its latest addition, the veg-dyed dhurries. "Gradually we will have the natural alternative to all that you need, that is, we will soon be the natural everything shop."

Mukhi's options say no to sugar, refined oils and refined grains. In short, Mukhi would say no to all these 'nutrient thieves'. As this movement takes root in India, the eco-dictionary is gradually expanding to accommodate a number of exotic new words and phrases. And Nature Options has them all — there are organic grains (as opposed to those grown with the use of pesticides), there are sun-ripened tomatoes, nature cures such as aromatherapy and ayurveda delights like spirulina, amla murabba. And now T-shirts, bags, aprons or dusters with 'earth messages'(all meant 'for the soul').

And 'for the mind' a selective collection of books that range from the rib-tickling *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* by James Finn Garner and the prolific health guru Deepak Chopra writing on *The Return of the Rishi* to *Quantum Healing*. There is also a rebounder / trampoline that promises a 10-minute guarantee to good health. Cashing in on this eco-boom is Allen Solly (from Madura) which held a wildlife tie festival where stodgy corporate men were given a chance to go wild with animal motif — from the cute Daffy Duck to sinuous lions. Another shoppers' stop replete with animal motif is the Worldwide Wildlife Fund's Nature Shop which was inaugurated by Prince Charles. T-shirts sporting the Panda logo show that 'You care for Nature'. The same



Saving trees: Non-wood pencils for children

slogan screams from key chains, caps, clocks and wrist watches. Non-wood pencils made from non-toxic polymer urge you to 'Plant more trees', while corporate gifts sporting tigers and koalas entreat you to return to nature

In the U.S., the World Watch Institute has mooted an eco-tax on erring companies which besmirch nature. In India, the trend has just started with the gurus of the alternative lifestyle urging us to use shikakai instead of shampoo, jute instead of plastic, cotton instead of synthetics, etc., etc

Eco-friendliness, however, comes complete with a steep price tag But as the Greens would say, that is a small price to pay. Afterall, when we talk of preserving Mother Earth, what we are really talking about is our own preservation. ■

***MOON MOON SEN** had tried her hand at everything from graphics to modelling before she decided to join films following in her mother Suchitra Sen's footsteps. Making her debut with Kabuchita, she went on to act in Bollywood as well. But be it a Bengali film, a television serial (she even acted in Ray's 'Satyajit Ray Presents') or a Telugu movie, life for Moon Moon continues to be one long party. Though a mother of two teenaged daughters, she is still a raging beauty, trying to balance her home and career.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A mental quietness and to know that my husband and children are in perfect health.

What is your greatest fear?

That when I wake up my hair has gone grey and I am toothless.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

My mother to a certain degree, my husband the most and my education.

What do you dislike most in others?

Dishonesty, flattery and a patronising attitude.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

The fact that I have to lie sometimes; that I am terribly overweight in a profession where I can't afford to and lack the personal discipline to school myself. I happen to be temperamental as well.

What is your most precious possession?

My faith in myself that nothing can hurt me.

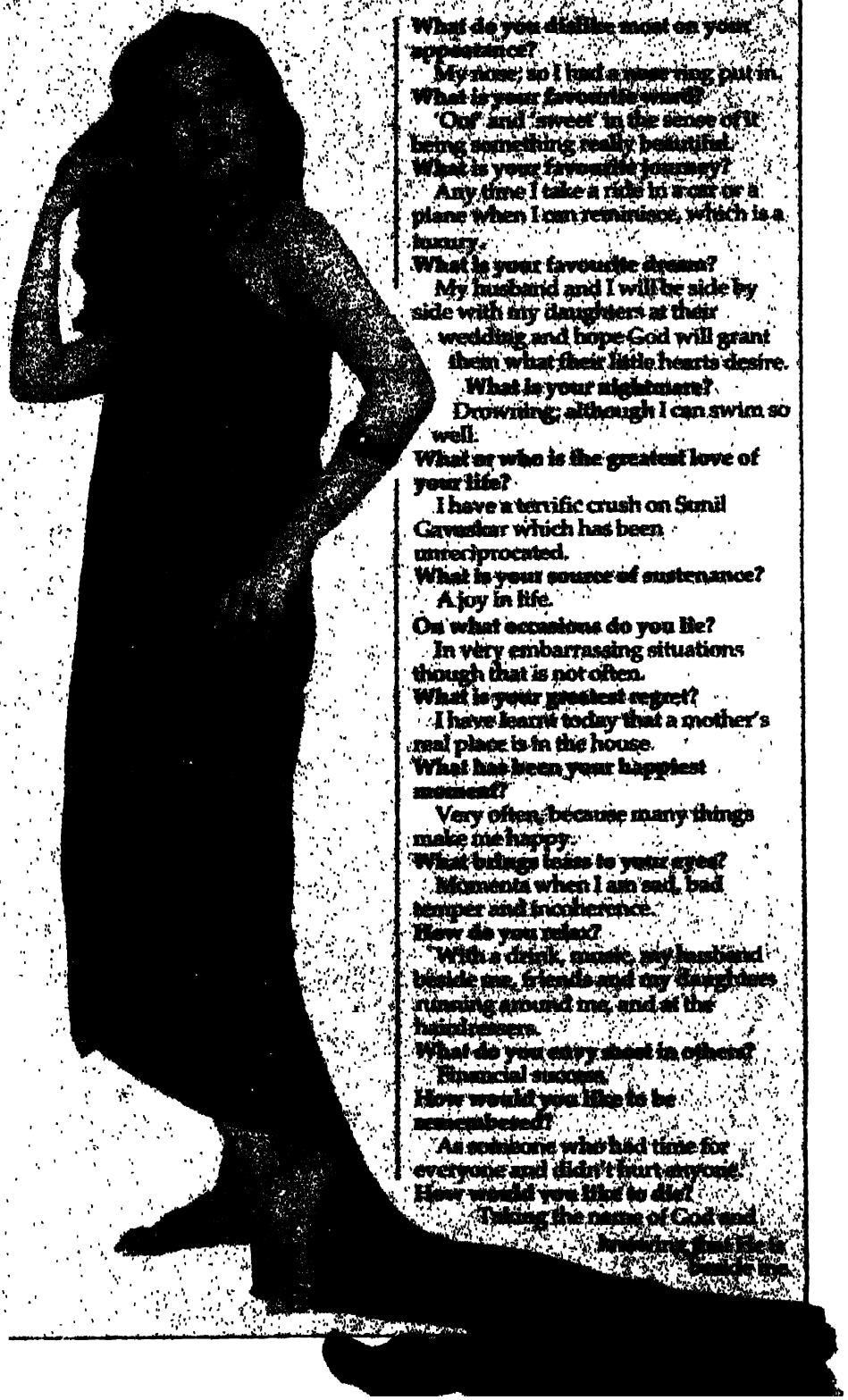
What objects do you always carry?

A pair of half-blind eyes without my contact lenses, moisturisers, excess baggage, my telephone diary and an open mind towards meeting new people.

> **What or who is the greatest love of your life?**
>
> **I have a terrific crush on Sunil Gavaskar which has been unreciprocated**

What makes you most depressed?

Staying away from home for too long, losing out on a nice programme and having my voice dubbed in Hindi. But most of all, the thought that my husband is no longer *in* love with me.



What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My nose; so I had a nose ring put in.

What is your favourite word?

'Out' and 'sweet' in the sense of it being something really beautiful.

What is your favourite journey?

Any time I take a ride in a car or a plane when I can reminisce, which is a luxury.

What is your favourite dream?

My husband and I will be side by side with my daughters at their wedding and hope God will grant them what their little hearts desire.

What is your nightmare?

Drowning; although I can swim so well.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

I have a terrific crush on Sunil Gavaskar which has been unreciprocated.

What is your source of sustenance?

A joy in life.

On what occasions do you lie?

In very embarrassing situations though that is not often.

What is your greatest regret?

I have learnt today that a mother's real place is in the house.

What has been your happiest moment?

Very often, because many things make me happy.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Moments when I am sad, bad temper and incoherence.

How do you relax?

With a drink, music, my husband beside me, friends and my daughters running around me, and at the hairdresser's.

What do you envy most in others?

Financial success.

How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who had time for everyone and didn't hurt anyone.

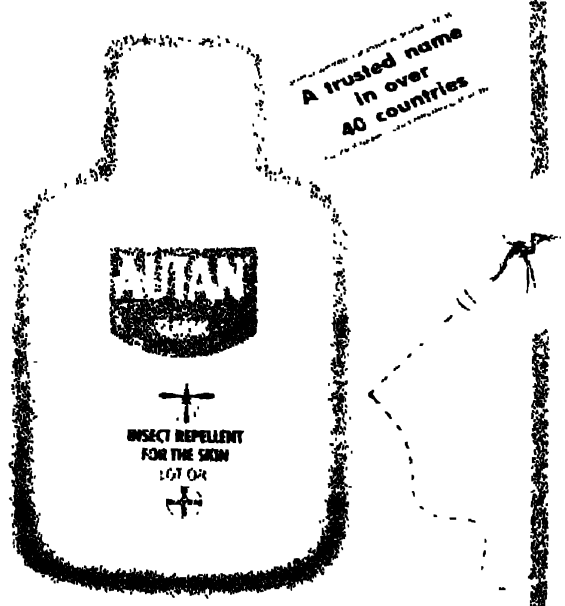
How would you like to die?

Taking the name of God and [illegible]

Presenting Autan. An international lotion with two gentle words for mosquitoes.

Bye-Bye

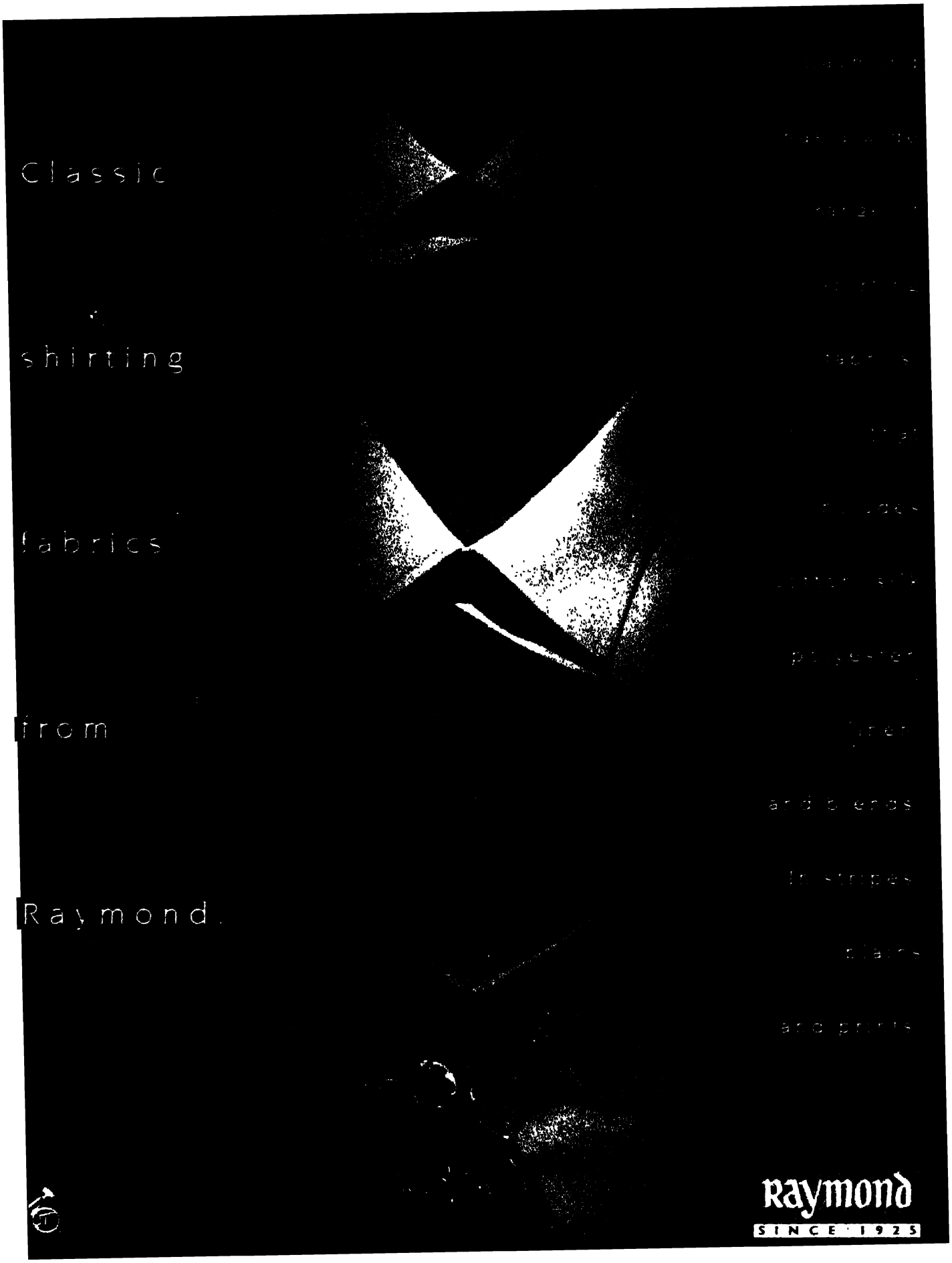
Autan is a non-greasy, non-sticky transparent lotion with a pleasant [illegible] **I**ts 'quick-dry' action works like an invisible shield against mosquitoes for upto 8 hours. **I**t's gentle on your skin and washes off easily. **A**cross the world, from Cologne to Calcutta, Autan is the most effective way to keep mosquitoes away. **G**et Autan today. **T**ry it tonight. **A**nd watch mosquitoes pack their bags and leave.



The pleasant way to keep mosquitoes away

Available in select cities

Bayer


Classic
shirting
fabrics
from
Raymond.
Raymond
SINCE 1925

IT BEGAN, OF COURSE, AS S
ay dressing in offices i

POST MORTEM

At Face Value

[illegible] February [illegible] [illegible] by his name. One or two flops will not really pull him down.

Similarly, the Suchitra Sen-Madhubala lookalike, Madhuri Dixit, is the undisputed number one of the Hindi silver screen. She worked her way up; she is talented no doubt but she has also laboured hard to achieve the kind of success she revels in today.

Unfortunately, age is not on her side and she may soon be forced to bow out of the [illegible] way for some nubile beauty.

Abhishake Kumar Saha, Ichapur (W.B.)

[illegible] dancer, a versatile actress and beautiful too; the necessary ingredients for a successful career in films. Newcomers will try to upstage her with their fresh looks and [illegible] appeal. [illegible] continue to draw [illegible] crowds and will be [illegible] top of the popularity [illegible]

[illegible] going on 20 and still at the top

of years or so.

M.S. Qurnishy, Calcutta

■ I was surprised you omitted the name of Jyoti Basu in your cover story although he is a key leader in national politics. Nearly two decades of rule in West Bengal and see where he has taken the state to.

We have had more industry coming to this state, communal harmony has never been disturbed, the chief minister and his ministers have a reasonably clean image with no financial scandals dogging their careers. This year should be an interesting year for the ageing chief minister considering that elections are slated to take place in mid-1996.

P.C. Dasgupta, Calcutta

■ Not a single writer, scientist, painter or sculptor was mentioned in the cover story although they deserved a place in 'the faces to watch out for this [illegible] it came to politics I fail to see why the name of [illegible]

What would she know of [illegible], living as she did in the shadow of either her mother-in-law or her [illegible]

■ Politics, media, business and films are not the only areas which arouse public interest. You should have mentioned the names of at least one or two sports personalities; Ajit Wadekar, Mohammad Azharuddin and Sachin Tendulkar, for instance.

Panchanan Baskey, Baripada (Orissa)

INSIDE

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GONE ARE the days of formal power dressing for the corporate executive. The accent is now on casual officewear that guarantees both comfort and class

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TALAT AZIZ returns after three years with a new album, *Shahkaar*

For casual wear

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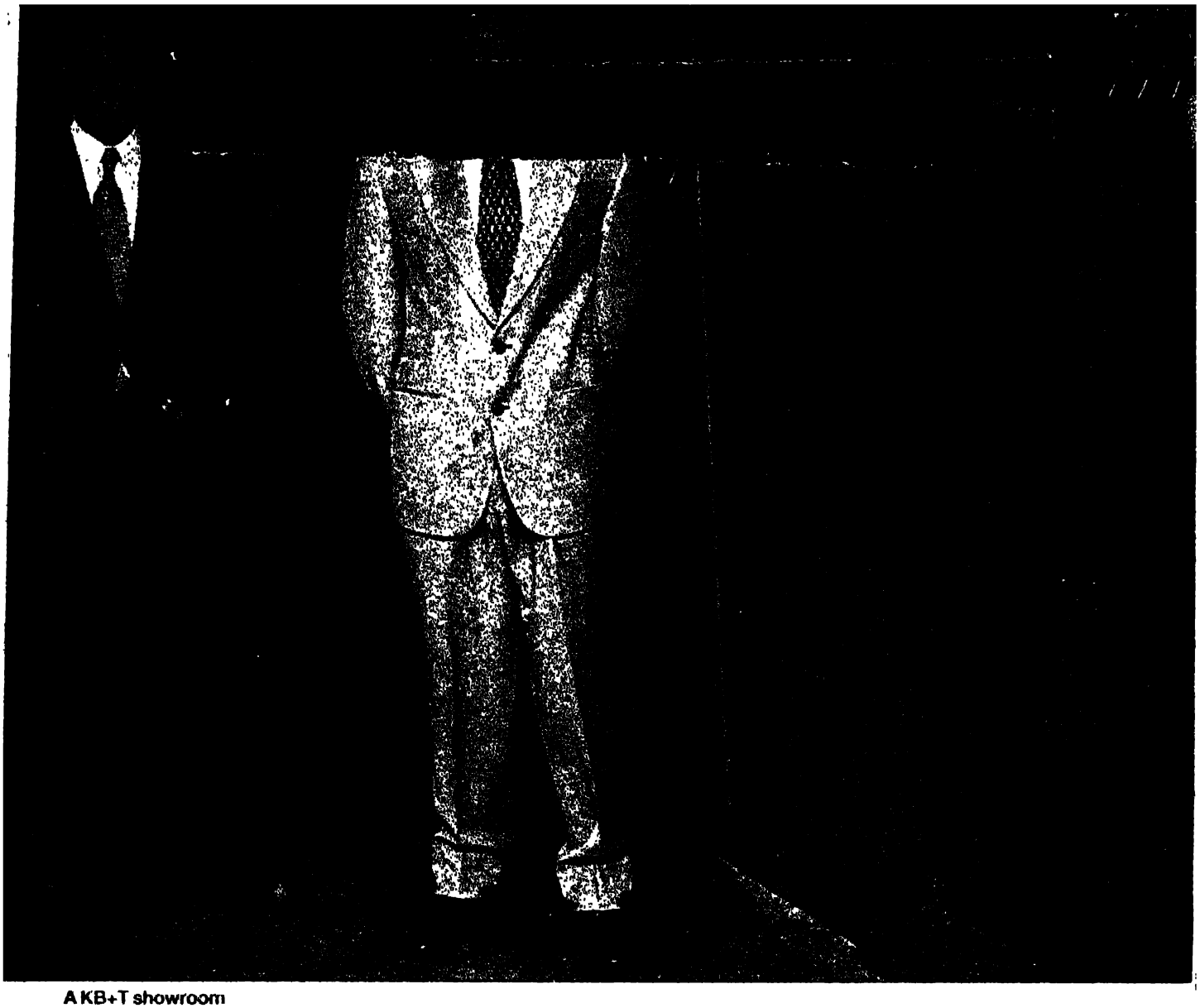
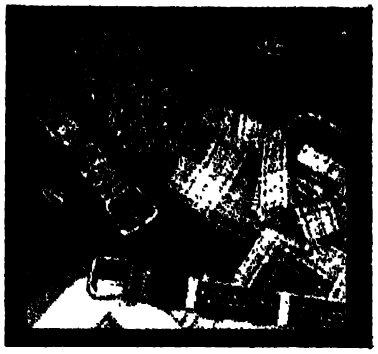


A KB+T showroom

COVER STORY

Friday Dressing

Relaxed formal wear makes its appearance in the Indian market— and in offices around the country



Allen Solly: The right accessories

IT BEGAN, OF COURSE, AS SATURDAY dressing in offices in Europe and America. Executives, who were tired of wearing the regulation suits and buttoned-down Brooks Brothers' shirts with a conservative tie throughout the week, prevailed upon the management to relax the dress code over the weekend. So, on Saturdays, they would come to work dressed in casual jackets, chinos, and even polo-shirts (though companies still frowned on jeans and round neck T-shirts).

But once long weekends came into vogue, with most companies giving their staff both Saturday and Sunday off, the new, relaxed dress code began to be implemented on Friday, and soon the term Friday dressing was being used as a generic term to describe all manner of relaxed formal wear that preppies could wear to work on that day.

Research showed that the new dress code had worked wonders for staff morale. And that people worked much harder and much better when they were allowed to wear what they pleased. But even as management was taking advantage of this new development, the fashion industry was also waking up to the birth of a new segment in the market: that of relaxed formal wear that worked as well in the office as it did for a weekend of golf, or even lunch with old friends.

But while the concept of Friday dressing took root in the West over the last decade, it is coming of age in India only now. With the entry of such labels as Arrow, Allen Solly or even Mexx and Lacoste in India, more and more Indian men are giving up on the ill-cut suits that served them so ill for so long, and going in for the more casual and less (badly) tailored look. Shirts done in wide — and wider — stripes are flying off the shelves, even as the colour palette gets more adventurous.

Not that Indian men have ever been enamoured of a dress code, anyway. As a people, Indians as a whole tend to dress more informally for office than their Western counterparts. But in the absence of a ready market of well-made, competently-tailored, ready-made alternatives, they had lit-

Allen Solly's casual officewear

Manga Kumar

Executives at Samsung opt for the casual dress code on Saturdays

tle choice but to buy Vimal or Raymonds and rely on the expertise of the neighbourhood *darzi*. Thanks to the new entrants in the segment of men's clothing, all that is changing.

The biggest beneficiary of this change is, of course, the English company, Allen Solly, which has entered the Indian market with its brand of formal shirts, trousers, ties and belts. The company, which helped popularise the term Friday dressing in India, described its clothes as being the new and international look for the workplace. The shirts had a broader silhouette, the trousers had a more relaxed fit, and the ties had more adventurous patterns than the ones available in Indian stores.

The prices, though not cheap by Indian standards, were reasonable enough. Shirts and trousers could be bought for between Rs 500-800, the belts retailed for Rs 395-695 and the ties cost Rs 495 to Rs 800. Accessories cost more than the shirts and trousers, but then the argument was that most men bought just a couple of ties and belts, but would splurge out on the staples of their wardrobe.

It is too early in the day to say whether this strategy will work in the long run, especially since there are several other companies that are providing tough competition to Allen Solly in this segment. Arrow shirts, for instance, have proved to be rather popular with the the Indian executive, though Van Heusen and Louis Philippe don't seem to have the same cachet with the middle-level executive.

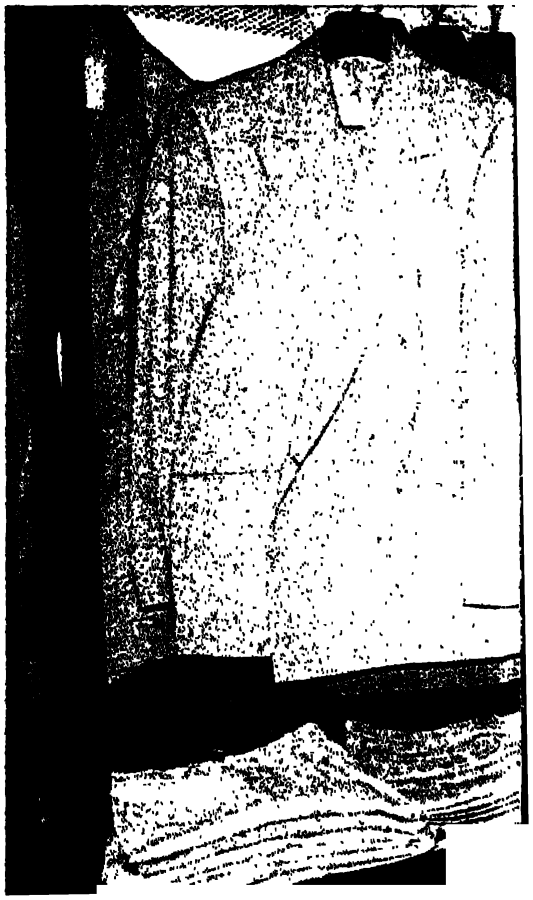
Middle-level salaries, however, don't extend to such other staples of Friday dresssing as the Lacoste polo shirt; these are the exclusive preserve of people on the upper-most rungs of management. But then, at a price of Rs 850, there aren't very many people in India who would buy them even if they could afford them. After all, when you can get designer shirts and jackets in the Rs 800 to Rs 2,000 price range by the likes of Jatin Kochar and Khurram Pasha, why would you spend good money on what is, after all, a T-shirt?

Lacoste polo-shirts that have become something of a uniform with the international jet set, with everyone from Wall Street bankers, Madison Avenue advertising executives, Hollywood stars and even such Presidents as Eisenhower and Kennedy, sporting the Lacoste logo on their chests (hence the bumper sticker, "Save a crocodile, shoot a preppie") But in India, sales have suffered because you can all too easily pick up a fake Lacoste from the pavement at a fraction of the price; and nobody wants to buy a garment that will be viewed dubiously at the office party.

The salesman at the Delhi outlet of Lacoste, however, has a different story to tell. "There are many customers," he says, "who have bought every one of the 36 colours introduced by Lacoste, and have left instructions that they are to be called as soon as a new colour is introduced." He admits, though, that most of these people are working for multinationals, and earning dollar salaries. So, they clearly have more disposable income than the average executive.

There are several industrialists who are Lacoste fans, though Keshub

Men's leisurewear from Contempo

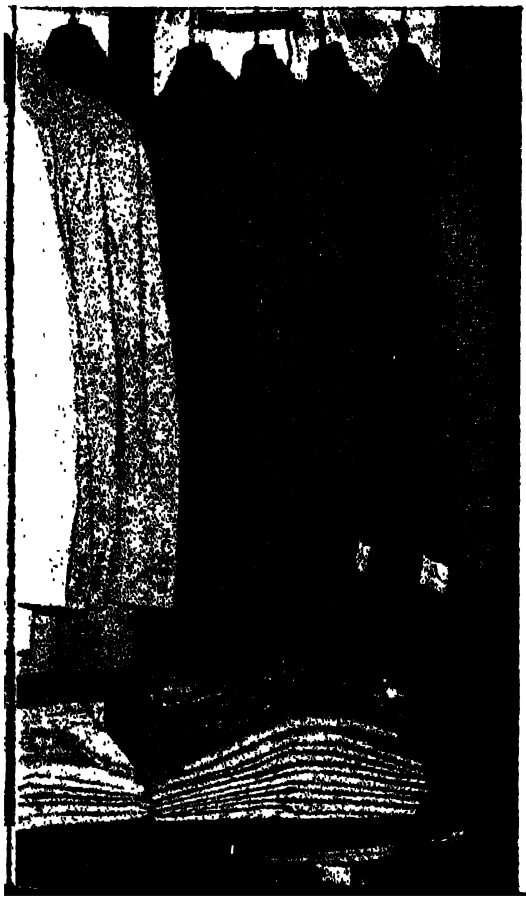


Mahindra, Ratan Tata and Parvez Damania are among those who have been spotted wearing the crocodile logo. H. Balasubramaniam of Modi Xerox explains this phenomenon thus: "With the greater opportunity for international travel and extensive exposure through the media, men are now insisting on quality in both garments and well as our lifestyle — which now includes more leisure time than ever before."

The Friday dressing rage has contributed — at least in part — to the growth in the leisure wear segment. Benetton, Mexx, Wearhouse and Weekender have all reported increased interest in their wares; as also larger sales. And with more and more Indian men opting for branded garments rather than doing their shopping at export-reject stores, these sales are likely to go even higher.

In Calcutta, for instance, Shakespeare Sarani (still called by its old name, Theatre Road, by most citizens) has been transformed into the city's High Street, with such stores as Mexx, Lacoste, etc opening shop next to one another. Says Kunal Kapasi, the manager of the Mexx store, "My customers are conscious of international fashion trends, they are regular shoppers abroad and are aware of quality and design. They are choosy and discerning and keen to experiment with their wardrobe."

Mexx shirts: Trendy and comfortable

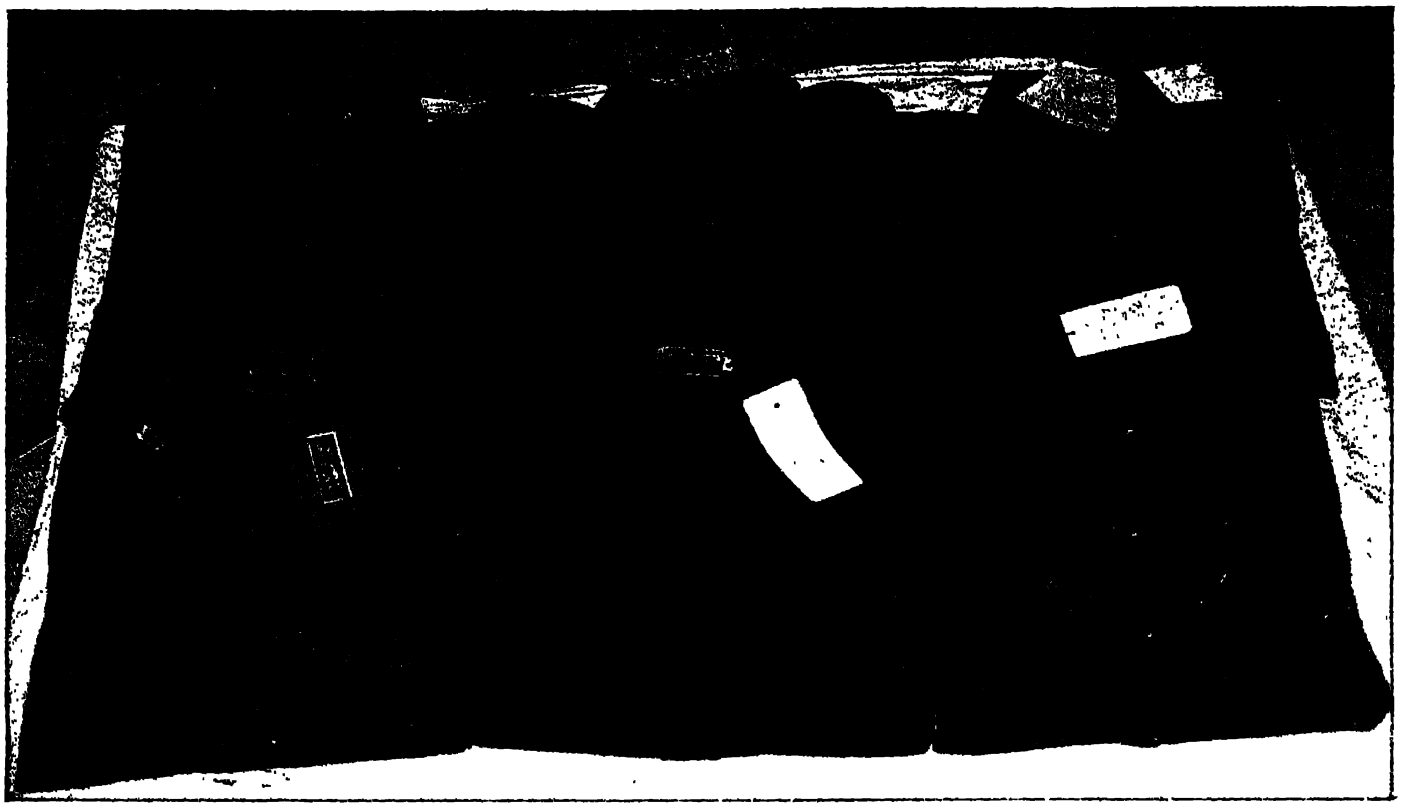


Kapasi also doubles as the manager for Allen Solly, where most executives and managers in Calcutta shop; or else their wives do it for them. Alka Bajaj, for instance, who is assigned the responsibility of buying clothes for her husband, thinks that the store is both reasonably priced and good value for money. "The clothes are both exclusive and comfortable," she says.

Weekender and Wearhouse provide more casual clothes for younger people, and are relatively cheaper. Wearhouse, the chain that began life in Bangalore, has caught on in Calcutta as well, mainly because its clothes are stylish and priced to suit smaller budgets as well. Wearhouse is yet to become as much of an institution in Calcutta as it is Bangalore, where everybody — from college students to fathers of four dress in Wearhouse clothes — but it has captured a significant chunk of the market.

In Bangalore, however, the chain has five stores throughout the city, all of them doing brisk business. The 100 per cent cotton shirts alone (which retail for Rs 275 onwards) account for a turnover of Rs 60,000 to 70,000 per day, and in the season (from September to January) it goes up to a lakh. The trousers, that come in three sizes — baggy, tight fit and regular — also sell well, with around 100 pieces of the regular fit alone being sold in a single day.

Says Sharada Kariappa, manager at Wearhouse, "The store is popular not only because of its range of shirts and T-shirts but also because of its price. It offers clothes, casual as well as party wear for students and executives



Benetton shirts: Colourful and wearable

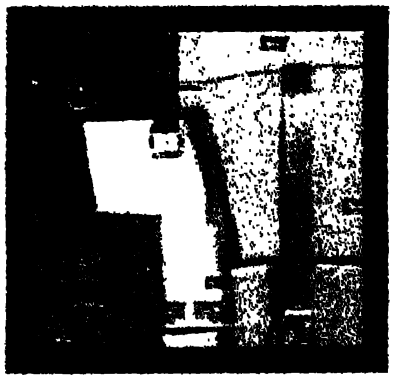
alike."

As does Mexx, which prides itself on epitomising a fun-filled approach to life. Says Saloni Walia of Mexx, "The name means more than just clothing to its customers. When they buy Mexx, they buy a lifestyle. The coordinated Mexx collections are aimed at those who care about how they dress and look. Mexx keeps them in touch with a young and modern way of life."

In this fast-developing scenario, one label that has held its own against the competition is the Indian Contempo range of clothes from Inter Shoppe, for which Indian designers have been putting together collections for the Indian male that he can actually relax in. Designs from Jatin Kochar, Khurram Pasha and Payal Jain have been finding buyers all too easily.

Says Pamella Hastu of Contempo, "Inter Shoppe is at par with other international brands available in the market. Some may feel that our range of clothes are priced on the steep side, but we are not short of customers and can get whatever price we want to fetch."

The reason for this is not difficult to fathom. As Praveen Walia, marketing manager of Good Year explains, "Earlier the choice was very limited and all we had to fall back on was the range from Raymonds. But now we can go to some place like Benetton where the prices are on par with or even less than that of other international labels. I can pick up a basic T-shirt for Rs 199 and polo shirts at Rs 299, which are the lowest prices in the market at the moment."



'Relaxed fit' trousers from Allen Solly

Not every company in India, however, has officially introduced the concept of Friday dressing — or Saturday dressing — to its work force. Among those who have is Samsung, where every Saturday power dressing is abandoned for the familiar comfort of jeans and a casual shirt.

Says Sudhir Singh, deputy general manager, HRD, Samsung, "Mostly, there are no meetings scheduled for the end of the week and a casual atmosphere is naturally more conducive to interaction between colleagues. Besides after work, most of us head for some place to relax or simply to party. It's more convenient being casually attired."

The same relaxed atmosphere prevails at the Modi Xerox office over the weekends. Says H. Balasubramanian, GM, MIS, "By the end of the week one is tired of the formal attire that is necessary for those involved in client servicing. The traditional straight-jacketed suit actually begins to get on one's nerves. So, all of us look forward to Saturdays when faded jeans and blazers are the official dress code."

Alas, not many executives in India are able to look forward to the weekend with such enthusiasm, as their companies have yet to adopt the Friday dressing concept. But with time that will change, as it has abroad. And when it does, the Indian executive will at least be able to overhaul his wardrobe.

Well, at least, he can take comfort from the fact that he will have no trouble finding the staples of his new look. The stores are already open, the merchandise is in place, and all he has to do is spend, spend, spend.

Reported by Samita Bhatia, Susmita Banerjee and Dipti Dave

SHORT STORY

TO GET THE SUN

This is the first prize-winning entry of ***Juhi Mehta*** *from Pensieve, a short story competition organised by the English Academy, St Xavier's College, and sponsored by* The Telegraph

"Hurry up Amma will be waiting for us at the door and I bet she is going to give us a good thrashing today," Shyam told his little brother Sanjay, but Sanjay paid no attention to his words. He trudged behind his brother with weary half-hearted strides, stopping after every few steps, turning around and staring in amazement at the little prints that his feet left behind in the sand.

The flickering glow from the setting sun reminded Sanjay of an apple and that made him wonder whether he would get anything for dinner or whether he would be sent to bed after a good hiding from his drunken mother.

"Why does she hit us so much, *bhaiya*? Doesn't she like us? Why doesn't she like us, *bhaiya*? Will she give us dinner tonight? What does she drink that makes her mouth stink so much? Why doesn't she give us dinner when her mouth stinks?"

"Because the rotten dinner will make our mouths stink too," Shyam snapped at his brother.

Sanjay could go on and on with his questions and this irritated Shyam because he could not answer them all.

Sanjay was about to start rambling again when he realised that they were home.

"Oh! My darlings, so you are home at last." Their mother was standing at the door of their shack. There was something strange about her and as far as Sanjay could tell she was certainly not drunk. What Sanjay could see was the rage in her eyes. What he, in his childlike incapacity for hatred, could not comprehend was the pure, scorching despair lurking behind that black rage.

"Come in," she continued, "come in, dear sons. So what did you bring for your Amma? Nothing? No stars, no moon, no sun? Well, well, that's just like your father.

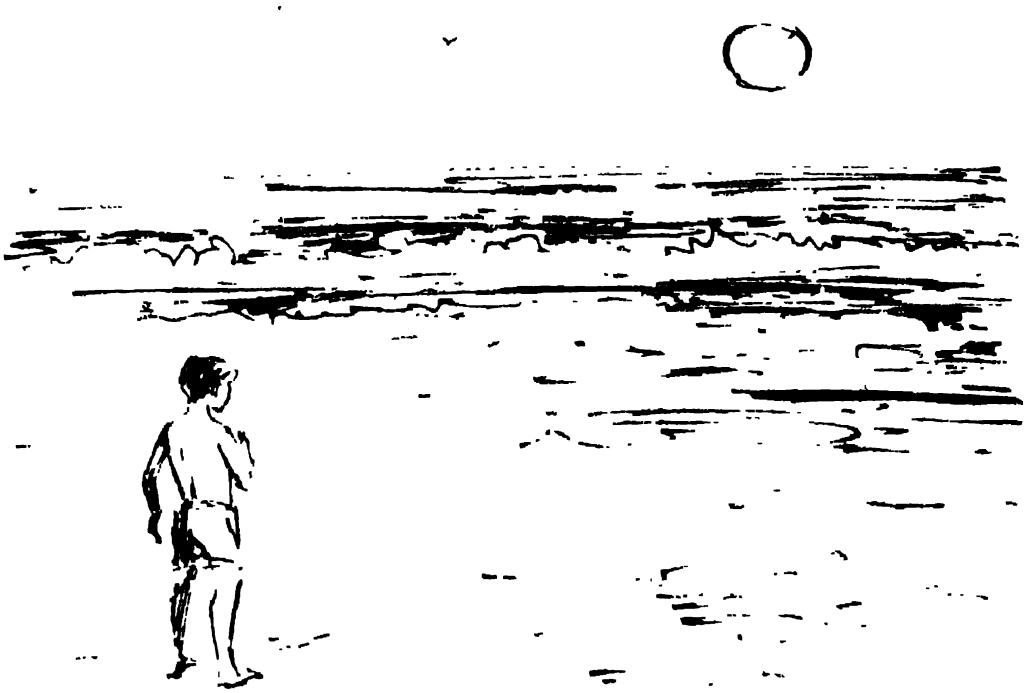
He had promised me the moon and do you think he didn't keep his word. In fact, that's the only thing he ever gave me: the moon. So, now that I've already got the moon and the stars why don't you gift me the sun." Her voice had been reduced to a hoarse whisper. She turned around and walked into the shack. After sometime the boys followed her inside and quietly retired to their corners.

Everybody was asleep within an hour: everybody except Sanjay. He lay awake throughout the night, his little mind trying to sort out the complexities of his mother's words. After hours and hours of pondering, he turned around, shook his brother and started talking.

"*Bhaiya*, will Amma be happy if I got her the sun? I can get it for her. It's just across the sea and I can swim a little. In fact, if I go right now, I'll be able to catch it before it rises completely over the water and be back before Amma is awake. If I go now, promise me you'll not tell her."

Shyam muttered something sleepily and Sanjay taking it for his brother's consent got up and crept noiselessly out of the room.

Four days later when the sun was just rising, the waves washed ashore the swollen fish-eaten body of Sanjay. ■



THE FINISHING TOUCH

***Vaishali Honawar** reports on the finishing schools that are helping young men and women to better themselves*

Anooradha Patel: Teaching etiquette

Earlier, when anyone mentioned finishing schools, you thought of elegant chalets in Switzerland, where young ladies, from moneyed / aristocratic backgrounds, spent a year or two before they officially 'came out' in society

They learnt how to eat dessert with the right fork, which glass was used for white wine, and how they should address invitations to divorced women. Once the course was complete, they flew off to London, Paris or New York to find themselves husbands who were as rich -- if not richer — than their fathers and lived happily ever after

These days, however, finishing schools are an entirely different ball game; well, at least, those institutions that go by that name in India are. They don't just cater to the rich and the famous, and their progeny. They are places where the upwardly mobile among the middle classes can go and improve their lot. After all, in an age where personality and grooming is rapidly becoming everything, everyone wants to update their self-image.

Of course, the definition of a finishing school too has undergone a major change to keep up with the times. Actress Anooradha Patel, who along with Amrita Tahil set up the Orchids Finishing School in Bombay, emphasises at the outset that hers is not just a finishing school as in a Swiss finishing school but a personality development and grooming programme designed to create better people "What we try to do is work on the strengths and whittle down the weaknesses of every individual so that a final, stronger personality can emerge," she says.

Aishwarya and Sushmita: Well-groomed models who made it big in international pageants

Not surprising then that men too have been enrolling for these finishing school courses in "surprisingly large numbers," as Sonal Parekh, who runs the Oasis Finishing School in Bombay, puts it

"We started out as a women's programme but have been a co-ed school for the past year," says Patel She too claims to have had a "good response" from males. Orchids has also attracted students from all over the country and some from abroad as well, mostly children of non-resident Indians

Patel, a successful Hindi film actress and grand-daughter of veteran actor Ashok Kumar, decided to start a finishing school "because my mother thought it would be a good idea and would keep talking about it." With Amrita Tahil, wife of actor Dalip Tahil, she opened Orchids eight years ago. So successful was the idea that they have are now producing the first Indian serial on grooming and personality development in the country, *Pehchaan*, which is to be aired on Sony Television.

Sonal Parekh of Oasis has her own ideas on why finishing schools have become more popular over the years According to her, it all began with the advent of satellite television in this country. The kind of programmes shown emphasised the importance of grooming And, she adds, "Given our success in beauty pageants, people started showing more interest in finishing schools, which would help them look better and deport themselves with elegance and style "

As recently as last year, says Parekh, she had taken a stall at a career fair, and most of the visitors had no clue as to what a finishing school was "But this year too," she says, "we had a stall at the fair, and so many people came up to us expressing an interest in joining our finishing school "

Parekh, herself a business management graduate from the US, has been running a counselling centre for students keen on studying in the US for the past four years and the idea of starting a finishing school came to her when she realised that many of the people who came to her — both students and their parents — found it very difficult to open up and talk about any problems they might have. "It was only after they had come a few times and we knew each other better that they would speak out," she recalls

Last year she set up Oasis Finishing School with a partner and says that "while we had some teething problems, we are doing quite well now," adding that she has designed the course along the lines of similar courses in the US.

Adil Choudhury, a student of MMK college, decided to join Oasis because of his mother who was worried that he wasn't quite a good communicator and his spoken English wasn't good "Also, I didn't have many friends and felt the need for all-round development in my personality," he says

He says that the course has made him a far more confident, well-spoken teenager and today he is happy he enrolled "It has really helped me," says the once-shy boy who was chosen

runner-up at the Mr Oasis contest for his batch

The fees for such courses, as can be expected, are high, but not so high as to be out of the reach of the middle class Adil did not find them too high, besides, as he says, "the overheads are high too " The classes are conducted in five-star hotels and the teachers are highly qualified professionals in their respective fields

Orchids charges Rs 6,900 for an entire course conducted over eight Sundays in Hotel West-End and Hotel Guestline Oasis charges Rs 5,250 for its 35-hour course conducted over five Sundays in Hotel Oberoi and Hotel Leela Kempinski.

There are also some other, cheaper finishing schools in the city such as Elegance run by Davar's College which charges just Rs 2,455 plus registration fees of Rs 150 for a course of two months' duration with classes held every day of the week on its premises.

According to Dr Madon who coordinates the course, "We are the oldest finishing school in the city, though Orchids keeps laying claim to that position."

But what exactly is taught at a finishing school? A course at Oasis, for instance, would begin with a lecture on the importance of a good, firm handshake followed by a talk on the importance of personal hygiene and another on English conversation where a student would be taught all about speech delivery, accent, grammar and even groomed on how to take the TOEFL exams which most students, keen on studying abroad, are expected to go through by foreign universities This is followed by classes on the art of conversation, development of poise, body language and the importance of humour in a conversation.

On the following days, other communication and social skills such as salesmanship, persuasion, telephone manners and dress codes are taught The Oasis course includes a class on aerobics "as we felt our students had to learn the importance of exercise," and nutrition There is also a class on cooking and another on make-up which is for the women students Men, meanwhile, are taught the importance of body-building and how to cultivate looks appropriate to various occasions

The course at Oasis includes a talk on AIDS awareness which Parekh thought imperative "as our youngsters are so influenced by Western culture yet are not aware of the problems it brings along " There is also a class on ballroom dancing and a programme of psycho-analysis where each individual is assessed for his strengths and weaknesses and told how to work on them At the end of the course a certificate is awarded to the students and a test is carried out to pick out the most outstanding students who are then crowned Mr and Ms Oasis

The programme at Orchids is similar in some aspects. Here students are trained in ballroom dancing, deportment, etiquette, entertaining, planning parties, using crockery and cutle-

A model being trained in a finishing school

ry, make-up and skin-care (only for women), personality development and communication skills

The teachers include such people as Sunita Prasad, who owns a restaurant in London, who teaches etiquette and entertainment, Dr Lata Shetty for communication skills, Shahnaz Anand for dance, Anooradha Patel for make-up, Amrita Tahil for deportment, Dr C Shah for health and hygiene and Nishita for hair care

Orchids usually takes 25-30 students in each batch and has had among its students aspiring models

Pooja Bhatt: Product of a finishing school

and actresses such as Pooja Bhatt Oasis has had a Channel V veejay among its students and many, many aspiring models, though Parekh insists that there are many housewives and career women, too, who enroll simply because they want better personalities

"I would put the proportion of housewives to career women attending Oasis at 50.50," says Parekh "I have had housewives among my students whose husbands have come to me after the course and told me that their wives have really changed after coming to us, that they've realised their own potential"

Mridula Sharma, a housewife whose husband is in the army, leads a very hectic social life and felt the need to attend a finishing school because "I'm very outgoing but sometimes I would just not feel confident enough" She admits she has benefited tremendously from the course and is now a far more confident person

Indeed, her confidence is quite amazing and it is difficult to see her as a woman who was once not quite sure about herself. So, even if the Indian finishing schools don't quite produce young girls who will go on and become Duchesses or the wives of captains of industry, they are still fulfilling a valid purpose They are helping ordinary men and women — from every class of Indian society — realise their full potential. And some would say that this is as noble an objective as any ■

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This week: Indian whiskey

Whiskey? Why whiskey!: Because it is what all the fuss is about these days

Don't be ridiculous: No, it's true. You'd be surprised at how crucial whiskey is to the Indian middle-class male's definition of his own identity.

Nonsense. Nobody defines himself by Solan No.1: No, no, you have to take a lateral look at the issue. Broadly, there are two kind of drinkers in India: those who pride themselves on only drinking Scotch and those who are happy enough with Royal Challenge and lots of ice.

So?: Well, here's the rub. Even those who think that they are drinking Scotch are actually drinking Indian whiskey. Research has shown that 90 per cent of all whiskey sold by smugglers in India as 'Scotch' is fraudulent. Usually, it consists of 20 per cent of Scotch and 80 per cent Indian whiskey.

That can't be true: But it is. Ten years ago, the Taj Group of Hotels sent a dozen bottles of Scotch bought from various places in Bombay—including the airport duty-free shop—to Scotland to find out which was the real thing.

All 12 were bogus. Including the bottle from the duty-free shop?: Yes. You see, what happens is that when a bootlegger is raided, his entire stock is confiscated and then given to ITDC to dispose of. As this stock is fraudulent, ITDC ends up selling desi whiskey as Scotch at duty-free shops.

Can one get the genuine article in India?: Not from a bootlegger, on the whole. More Johnnie Walker Black Label is drunk in India than the total production of Johnnie Walker in Scotland.

But can't people tell the difference? Of course not. Most Indians have forgotten what genuine Scotch tastes like. When they go abroad they always feel that the whiskey is a bit off.

The Taj used bottles for its test that had been submitted by Bombay fat cats who

claimed to be great experts on the subject. They were all proved to be drinking Solan No 1 out of Black Label bottles.

Can't you get the real thing in the shops?: Aha, this is the difficult question that newspapers and magazines never answer for fear of losing liquor advertising. (And here, *The Telegraph* pauses modestly to take a bow because of our courage/foolhardiness or whatever.) But we'll tell you the truth.

The way it was supposed to work was this: Indian made foreign liquor (IMFL to the trade) is basically flavoured alcohol. *Real* whiskey (or real gin, or real vodka or whatever) consists of the original ingredients (malt, barley, peat, etc.) that is fermented and aged.

The foreign companies came into India promising to import real liquor as against indigenously produced IMFL. To an extent, this has happened: Seagrams 100 Piper, Black Dog, etc. But then the liquor multinationals realised that this was a waste of time and money.

The average Indian drinker couldn't tell the difference between IMFL and the real thing.

So, what did they do? They made IMFL. Take Gilbey's Whiskey, a huge commercial success. Gilbey's is a well-known brand of British gin. But in India, they used the name for whiskey. People buy it thinking that it is Scotch (though it doesn't actually say so on the bottle), and never realise that it is IMFL. The difference between this and Solan No 1 is only a matter of degree.

And this is true only of whiskey?: Nope. Take Smirnoff, an international vodka brand. Abroad it is the real thing but Indian Smirnoff is plain IMFL, no different in generic terms from Red Czar or anything else made in India. It is hard to imagine the manufacturer daring to sell Indian Smirnoff to an American consumer as the 'real' Smirnoff.

So basically, it is a rather dodgy business! Absolutely. The moral is: if you aren't very rich and very knowledgable avoid being a whiskey snob. You'll only make a fool of yourself. ■

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says take time by the forelock and make it work for you. Challenging time if you are looking for perfection. A lot of energy can be devoted to finance, romance, family and work, and that's quite a terrific range to run through. This is the time when you can indulge in massive socialising.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Quality control will now go to the extreme if you are in business, sales and production. Others are likely to offer help from behind the scenes. Travel is a strong possibility. Workers and friends will work their magic from closed doors for you, Taureans. Big shots spend money for publicity.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Lay the ground work and be clear about finances. You could well be at the right place at the right time. Groups headed by important persons could back you. If you don't have clout, get someone to bat and bowl for you. This is a great time for those who are innovative and most Geminis are just that.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The tricks, dear Cancerians, is to break through old thinking patterns because Mercury, intelligence, trines Pluto, giving a new zest for living. Do capitalise on your reputation, or take help to pull off something totally new. It is clearly action time and news, views, letters, call should make your day.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Your ideas can be fantastic, but your execution must be perfect. You will be in a mood for grandiose schemes. Active preparations for travel, publicity, ceremony, collaborations, will definitely be made. Your individuality will show. Be a creative entrepreneur. A time to fulfill your secret desire.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

You must recognise that it is time, in fact high time, for new relationships, new things, new tidings and new work. Gentle and diplomatic negotiations can improve communications and forge links. Loans, funds, joint bank accounts form a foundation the next 23 days. Therefore you should attend to it.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Partnerships and links is the current trend for you. Pride and ego can push you to do strange things unless you are careful and reserved. Also check the budget and gauge your financial risks. You are in a period of total transition and the next three months will decide many things for you.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha claims that job, work, social welfare, sanitation, public health, loans and funds will take up much of your time. This is a good time for commitments and plans to become firm and more concrete. Be your own mystic but rely on others for practical suggestions in day to day living.

Sagittarius
November 23 - December 20

Fantastic week. Unexpected misunderstandings and confrontations are possible. But so too are happy alliances, sweet romance, good business, joy through children and grandchildren. Speculations and game of chance, find an admirer and fan in you. The house comes in for attention.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

You can keep up with the neighbours, make the necessary changes in your home and despite some flak and opposition, keep a steady course, have a treat and get your work done. Just remember, that health will not be of the best and you may have to make do with adjustments.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

Good time to move on, be it career, job, business, personal relationships. Take a chance if you feel so inclined. A journey, a contract makes you happy in the long run. Calls, letters, messages, ads, the media in short, will play an important part in your life and you must gear up for it. Use your wits.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Buying, selling, leasing, funding, shopping, take top priority. Do host parties and do make it a point to go to one if invited. Good appearances may cost you a fortune, but it is worth it. It is also time to be introspective and let your intuition decide for you. Your dreams will be quite prophetic.

BIRTHDAYS

March 24: Ganesha says, Sun-Neptune sextile, gives you victory over rivals, keen thoughts, sharp intelligence, and others will trust you with money.

March 25: Mercury trine Pluto means artists, artisans, craftsmen, scientists, managers, editors and sportsmen come into their own.

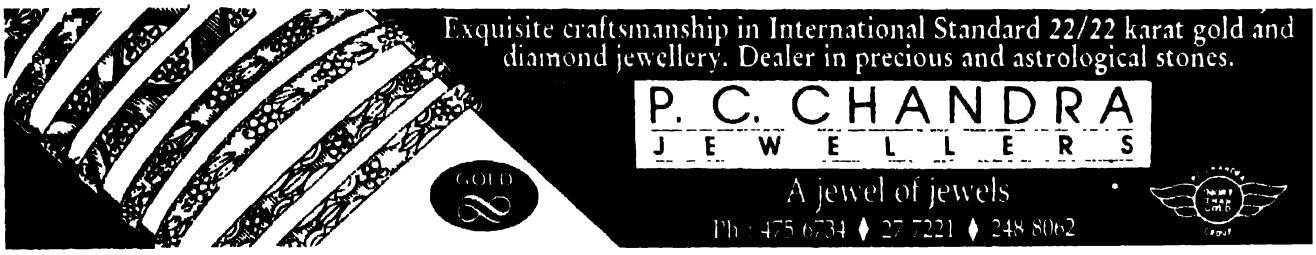
March 26: Mercury sextile Uranus means do not count your chickens before they are hatched. Success is possible. Health of elders may cause concern.

March 27: The moon's first quarter makes you sympathetic, adventurous, artistic and exceptionally responsive. Those in politics, arts, publicity, industry will gain the maximum from it.

March 28: Mars trine Pluto is excellent for artists and scientists. You have worked hard and now is the year for happy rewards.

March 29: Mars sextile Uranus gives you greatness and energy, charm, imagination, innovativeness and charisma. Trips and ties are possible.

March 30: Moon, Mars and Saturn conjunction means despite hurdles, you are bound to be successful and happy, say by September this year.



TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4 THURSDAY 5 FRIDAY 6 SATURDAY 7 SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
BOMBAY					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GOA					
GUWAHATI					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
HYDERABAD					
IMPHAL					
JAIPUR					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SHILLONG					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
AMSTERDAM					
KL-876	0420	7	KL-875	0235	
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0850	2 6	KB 106	1020	1
BUCHAREST					
RO 075	1200				

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 096	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG 097	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG 090	0830	[illegible]	BG 091	0810	[illegible]
BG 092	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG 093	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-094	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG 095	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-094	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG-096	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 096	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG-096	[illegible]	[illegible]
DOHA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
LONDON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PARO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0810	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abna Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	18.20	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulakruma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	14.[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Expres [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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FASHION

THE SUMMER OF '96

***Seema Goswami** on the Indian woman's fashion options*

The feeling is familiar to all of us. That of throwing open our closets, examining the clothes hanging desolately on their hangars and exclaiming, "Oh God! I have nothing to wear!" And the summer—specially the Calcutta summer, which can get very, very humid indeed—makes matters much worse. After all, in the winter at least, we can get away with covering up even the most diabolical of fashion disasters under a particularly fetching jamevar shawl.

So, what *does* one wear this summer? Should we go along with the usual mulmul salwar kameezes that Rohit Bal and the fashion duo of Abu Jani and Sandhip Khosla have been making a fortune out of (even two years ago, they retailed at around Rs 5,000)? Or even the crisp cotton saris that have been the staple of Indian wardrobes over the last 30-40 years, usually worn with sleeveless blouses even by middle-aged matrons who could well be advised to cover the yards of flesh they leave bare? Or should we try and update our wardrobes in line with the mood prevalent in the international Nineties.

If you're the adventurous kind, we at *The Telegraph* have some suggestions for you. But remember, these are not meant to be followed to the letter. Pick up those elements and colours that appeal to you and using these as basics evolve a style that is yours, and yours alone.

If you're young and thin, the possibilities are, of course endless. You could, for instance, experiment with the sleeveless cotton/linen slip dress that has been a staple of the collections of most Western designers for the last couple of years. Calvin Klein, for one, has made it his own, producing versions in satin for evening wear and letting the hemline—which usually hovers on or around the knee—down to the ankle for formal occasions.

Yes, yes, we know what you're muttering darkly to yourself. Which young Indian girl could possibly

walk down Park Street, wearing what looked her best piece of underwear, and escape the attentions of every roadside Romeo within a 200 yard radius. But remember, what we said at the outset? You're only supposed to pick up the essential ideas and mutate them in ways that best suit your lifestyle.

In the case of the sleeveless shift, the possibilities are endless. You could tailor it in the best quality linen or cotton available in the Indian market, and pair it with typed churidars, rounding off the outfit with a contrasting dupatta of the finest chiffon for a luxurious look that would seem right both during the daytime and at night. As far as the colours are concerned, you can get as daring as you want, pairing

magenta with lilac or even dark blue with military green. After all, didn't Diana Vreeland, the legendary editor of Vogue once say, "Shocking pink is the navy blue of India?"

If discos and nightclubs play a large part in yor life, well then discard the churidars and the dupatta look, and wear the shifts on their own, showing off your bare (and exfoliated, we hope) limbs to best advantage. To add a touch of piquancy to your outfit, you could drape a brightly coloured scarf around your neck, but that is optional. What is not, is regular exercise. If you're wearing this outfit, you simply cannot have even a hint of cellulite on your upper arms and thighs. If you do, well then, it's off to the gymn for hourly workouts every day, preferably with a trainer who knows what your goals are.

If that's too much trouble, well then you could always cheat by throwing on a transparent chiffon skirt (in a contrasting colour for the maximum effect) over the shift. As they say, fashion is the art of the possible.

But what does one wear to office? Ah, that is a tough one. You could always play safe and stick to SEWA salwar kameezes, with *chikan* work on them, or even buy the usual rubbish that sells out of the so-called designer boutiques that litter the city.

Not a very exciting prospect, right?

There are options though. You could experiment with loose baggy trousers, paired with long kurtas which look as good with dupattas as they do without them. Or if you look the tailored look, then pair the trousers (or salwars, if you are more comfortable with them) with structured kameezes that hug the contours of your body. For the Sixties - Sadhana, Asha Parekh look, you could wear the tailored kameezes with churidar kurtas rather than with loose trousers or salwars. One advantage of these kinds of outfits is that they have an incredibly slimming effect, specially if you steer clear of pastels and beiges that could make even Sonali Bendre look a little heavy around the hips.

Some offices, of course, have a fairly strict dress code. You simply have to wear saris, or else. In that case, you should have no problems in Calcutta, which has the greatest variety of cotton saris available anywhere. There are the Bengali *taats*, of course, the Kotah cottons which are a great hit among Marwari women, and for those who have the money, there are *tangails* which often retail for a couple of thousands, if not more.

But instead of going in for the rather boring Indian habit of wearing plain cotton blouses of the same shade as the sari, try and see how a contrasting colour looks, or even embroidery and mirror-work which often makes even the most restrained outfit come alive.

For those who are lucky enough to work in such places as advertising agencies and in the media, and are allowed to come as they please, the possibilities are, immense. If you're the jeans and T-shirt type, then you could dress up your outfit with colourful waistcoats. If you prefer to wear chinos and a loose shirt, then wear a faux Hermes (few of us could afford the real thing) scarf slung across one shoulder for the casual, chic look. You could even try knotting a linen tie loosely around your collar, *a la* Diane Keaton.

Skirts are tricky though. If you wear them too short, you could end up being regarded as the office floozy. Wear them too long, then you look far too matronly for comfort. One acceptable compromise is to go for the mid-calf length but have a slit on the side running right up to your knee (but be careful that the slit doesn't ride up when you sit down.) Not only will this help you take

longer strides when you're walking from your desk to the xerox machine, but it will also impart an international look to your outfit.

After all, it was Donna Karan who first popularised the tight-fitted jersey skirt which buttoned down one side, the length of the slit depended on how many buttons you choose to leave loose. One advantage of this was that you could wear the skirt both to office, looking as decorous as the mousey brunette at the next desk, and then unbutton it up to your thigh to make an impression at the wild party you were going to that evening. No wonder they say that Karan's clothes work very hard indeed.

In the Indian summer, however, jersey could never be the fabric of choice. Instead go in for linen that seems all set to become the fabric of the season. Already such stores as Colour Plus and Walter Johnson are

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Wavelength 96

WE SHOW MORE, YOU PAY LESS. CHECK OUT & BOOK.

stocking linen shirts, trousers, skirts and even light-weight jackets that are suitable for the evening. And it won't be long before such shops as Weekender and Wearhouse succumb to this movement.

One advantage of linen in the summer is that it allows the skin to breathe, and that is very, very important in the humid Calcutta heat that leaves you feeling completely strung out at the end of the day. Another plus point of using this fabric is that most qualities of it can be washed at home, so you save on dry-cleaning bills. (But remain warned, most upmarket shops like Colour Plus will insist that you dry-clean their merchandise.)

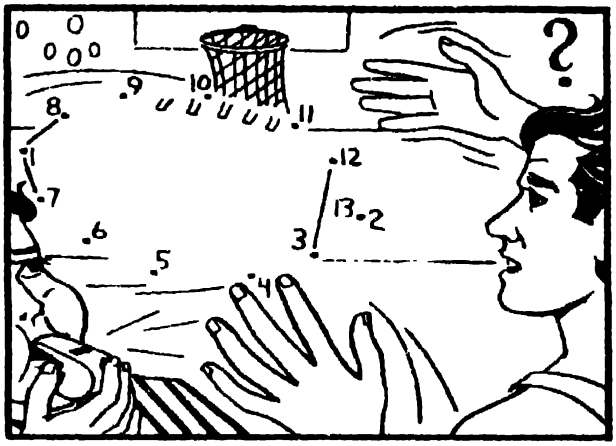
If you feel that linen crumples too soon (though there are crease-resistant varieties in the market) and leaves you looking ragged even in the middle of the day, then just starch the clothes lightly when you iron them. They will look fresh much longer, but you must go slow on the quantity of starch used. If you overdo it, not only will your neck itch like mad, you'll also end up looking like an out-of-work politician. Then, of course, there's the most important element of all colour. What colours should you wear in the Indian summer if you want to beat the heat?

There are some who insist that light colours (white, cream, yellow, beige, pink, powder blue etc.) make the most sense. Not only do you look cool, but you also feel it. And anyway, it is the height of foolishness to wear strong shades under the blazing sun of Calcutta. Clearly, those who say this have never visited Rajasthan, where the women are resplendent in bright oranges, yellows, maroons and navy blues even as the desert heat threatens to overcome them. If you want to play it safe, by all means stick to the paler than pink shades. But when you go out to choose fabric before that visit to your friendly neighbourhood *dari*, remember that across the Atlantic the colours that will be in vogue this year are orange, saffron, verdant green, tangerine and hot pink, sometimes all used in the same outfit.

So it's up to you really. Would you rather be safe in pastels or stand out in pistachio green? And when you make your choice, remember it's not just your wardrobe you are deciding on; it's your entire attitude to life. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN



COURT CASE! Hey, I thought we were here to play basketball What can you draw to complete the picture? Connect dots.

PLANET EX!
A certain planet discovered by Wm. Herschel in 1781 was originally called Georgium Cidus, George's Star after King George III. By what name do we know it now?

SOURCE: SEE BOTTOM

PIECE CORE!
A curious, do-it-yourself jigsaw puzzle is suggested for your amusement below: Remove and discard one corner of a cardboard square (dotted lines of Figure 1). Cut remaining portion (Figure 2) into four equal sized L-shaped segments. Scramble these pieces and ask someone to use them to reform the original square

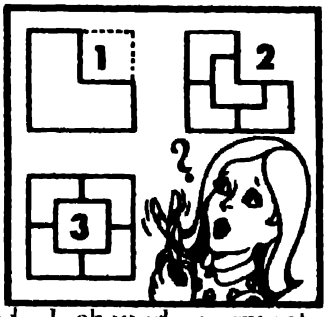
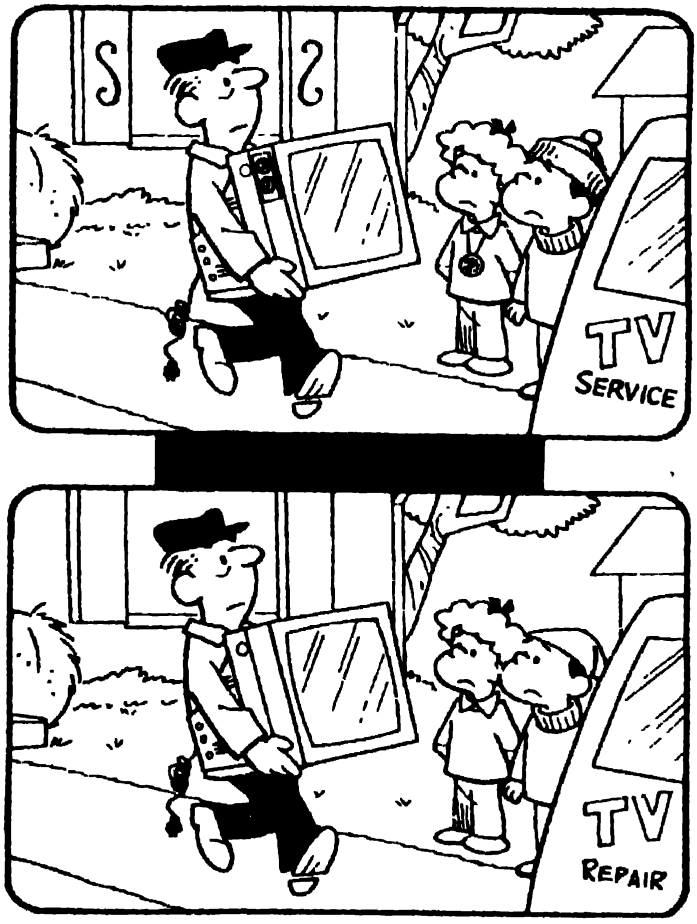


Figure 3 shows how pieces may be deployed for a hollowed out version of the original.

HOCUS-FOCUS



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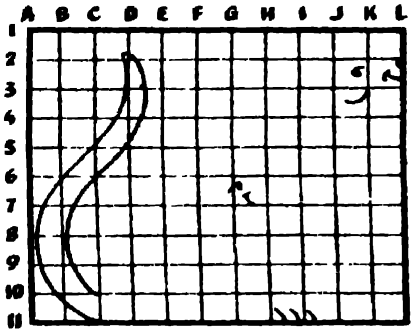
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Scrolls are missing. 2. Controls are missing. 3. Cord is shorter 4. Locket is missing. 5. Cap is different 6. Word is different



HOP-SKIP-JUMP DRAWING CARD

ALL ABOARD for a hop, skip and jump drawing lesson. Simply draw lines in the diagram at left in accord with the following letter-number coordinates:

Draw from 11-C to 11-D to 9-F to 11-G, 11-J, 10-G, 7-G, 7-H, 6-G, 5-H.

Add 6-G to 7-F to 7-E.

Draw from 7-F to 8-G, 6-I, 6-J, 7-K, 5-J, 4-K, 3-K, 3-L, 2-L, 2-K, 1-L, 2-J, 3-J, 4-H, 4-F, 6-C, 10-C.

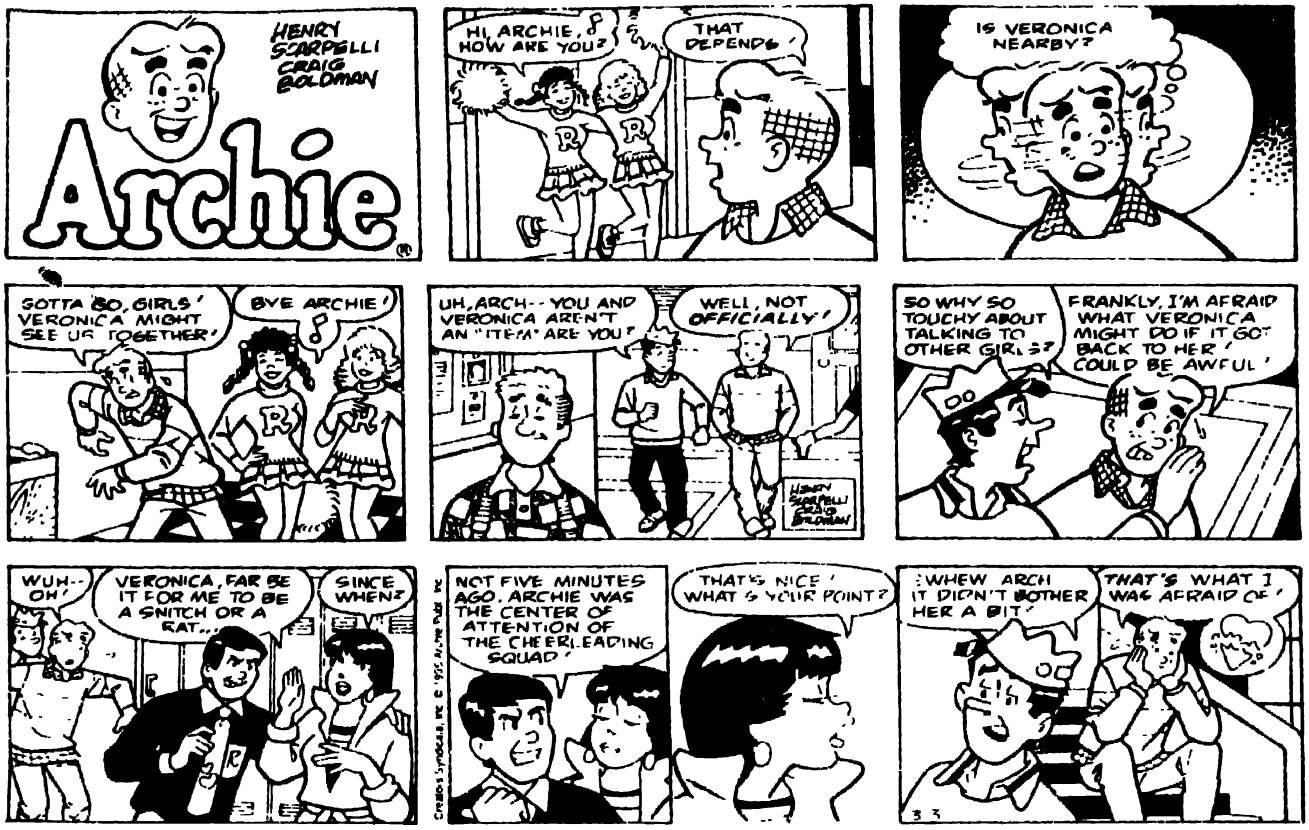
Use a sharp pencil, draw straight lines

Be sure to draw in accord with number and letter coordinates.

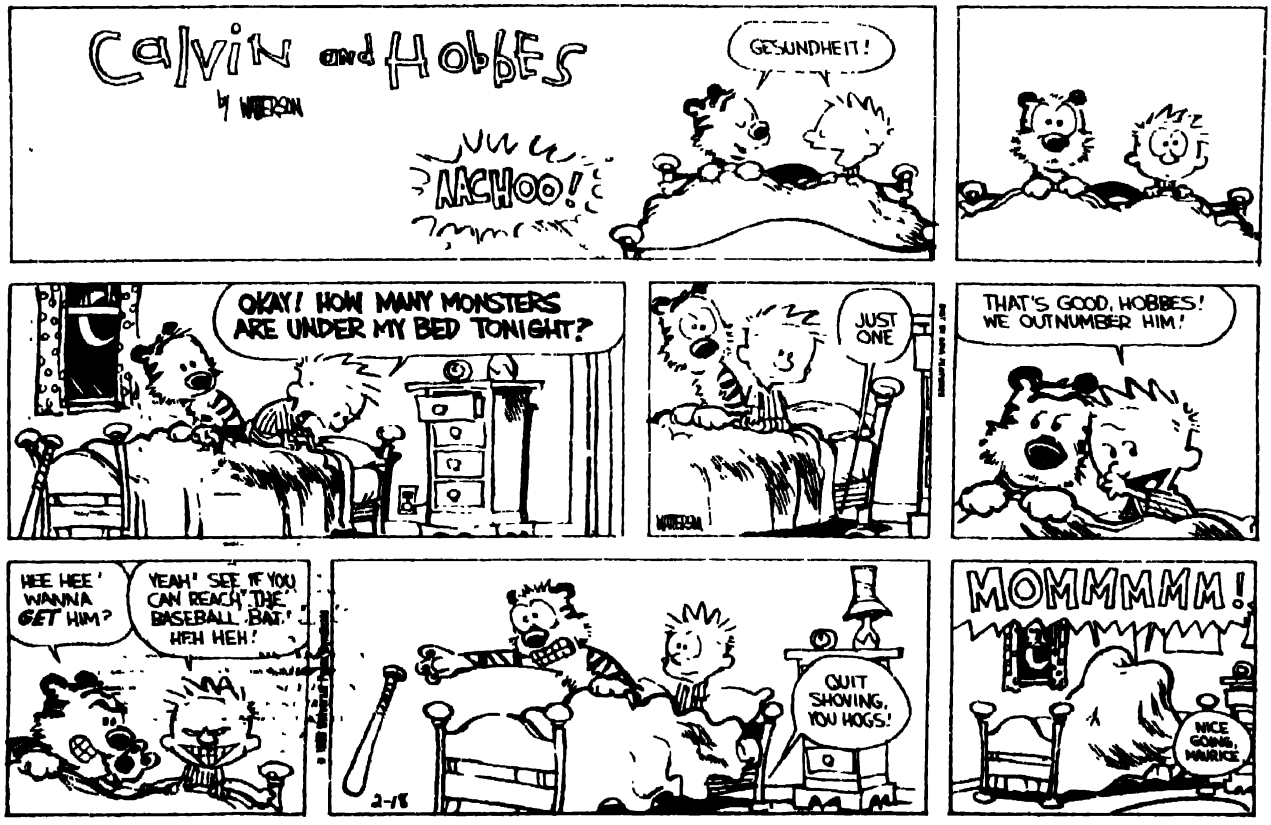
Add a colour or two, if crayons are handy.

COMICS

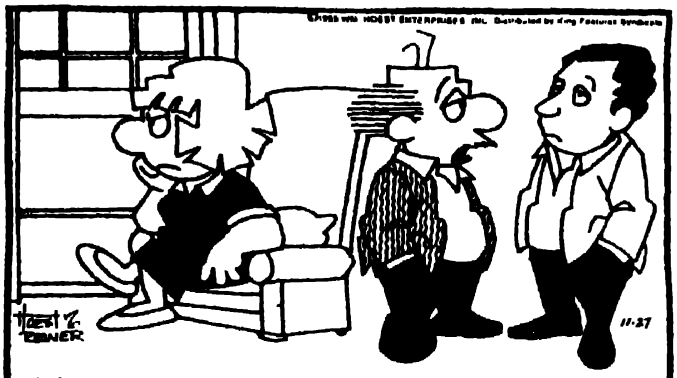
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES : WATTERSON

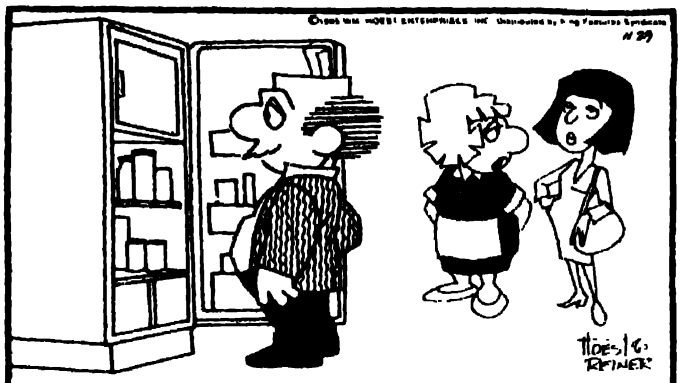


THE LOCKHORNS

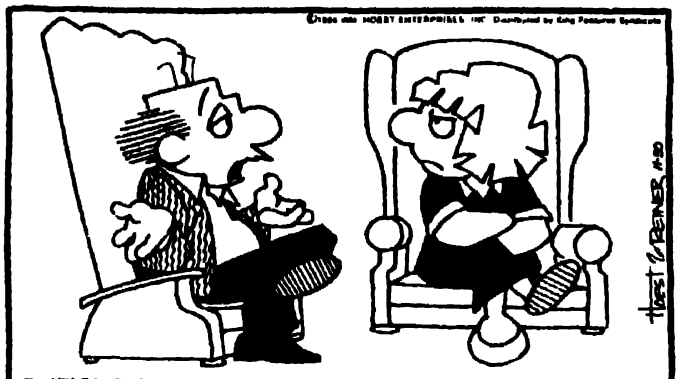


"LORETTA IS GIVING ME THE SILENT TREATMENT ... SHE HASN'T SPOKEN TO ME FOR FIVE MINUTES."

"GOOD NEWS, LEROY! THE MARKET IS UP TODAY IN HEAVY TRADING!"



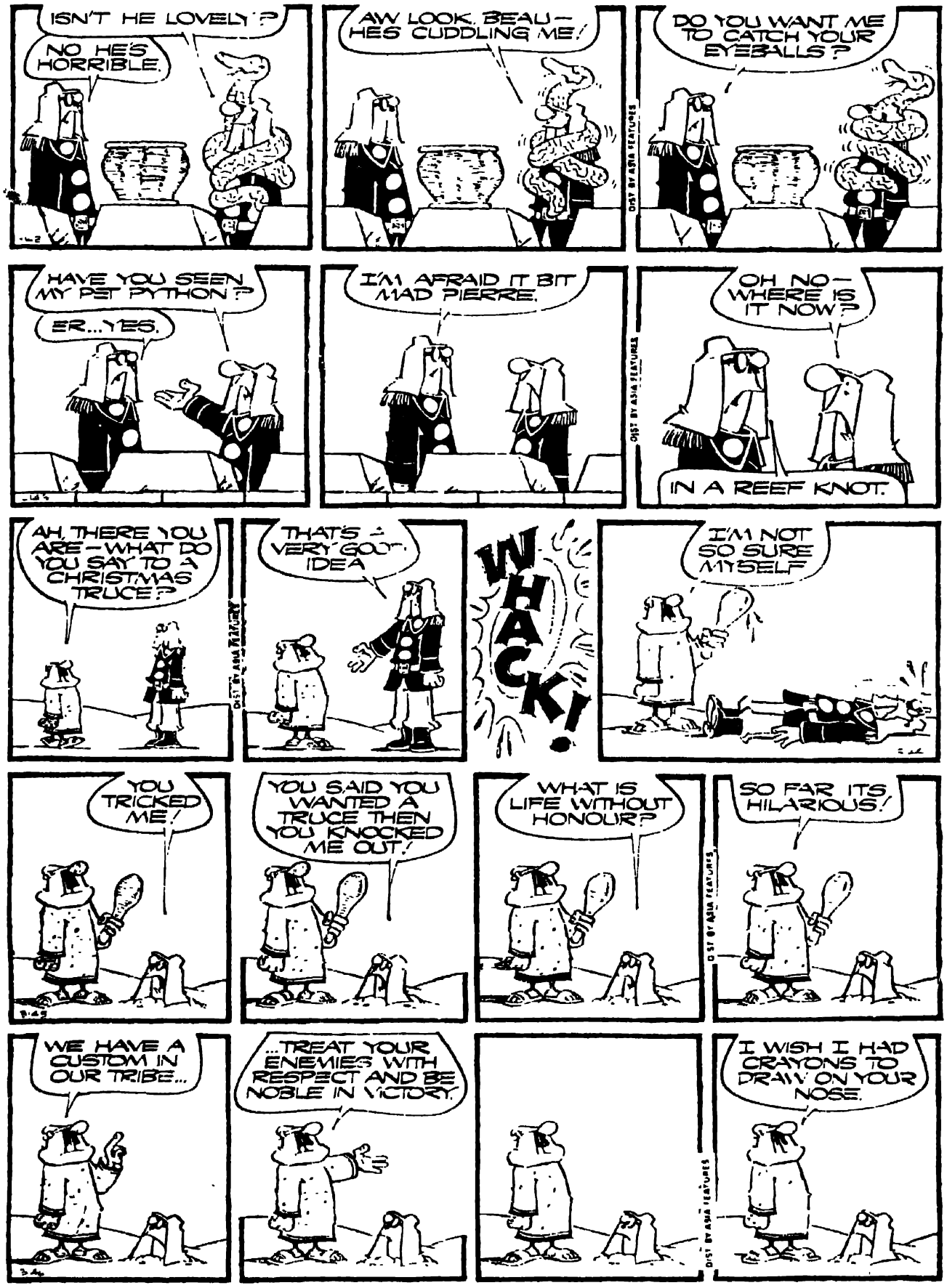
"THAT'S LEROY'S HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTER."

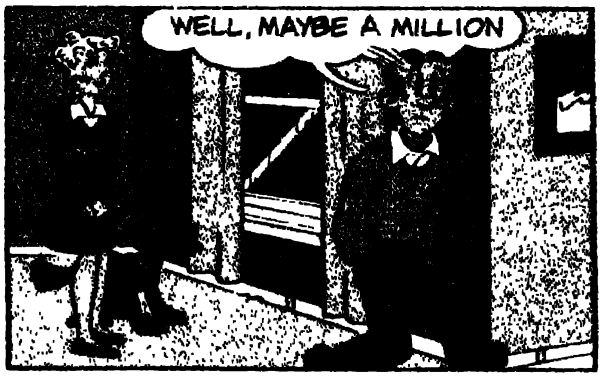


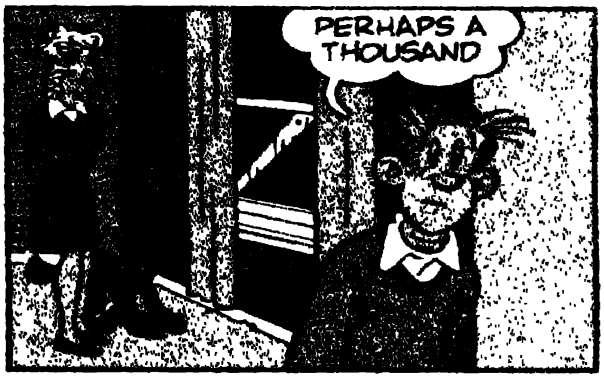
"WE'RE EVEN, LORETTA .. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME, AND I DON'T LISTEN TO YOU."

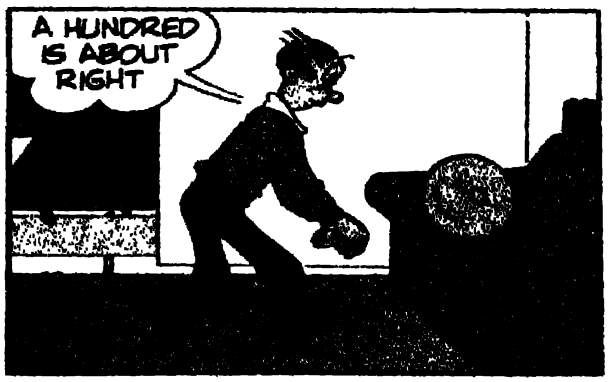
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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MARKETING

THE METAL RAGE

The Gold Council is attempting to restore some order to the gold market in India, reports ***Samita Bhatia***

It's alluring. It's enduring. It's dressed up. It's stripped down. It's sensual. It's soulful. It's gold, and its appeal is forever.

Now try this for size: "Think about gold jewellery as you would about clothes. In both cases start with great basics that will give you a lot of wear and style!" The suggestion, coming as it does from the World Gold Council (WGC), has caught the fancy of women around the 24 countries where the Council operates. Further, it has convinced many that, "Today the only thing that is certain is uncertainty And gold."

Funded by the world's mining community, the WGC's natural objective is to promote the 'consumption' of gold jewellery. Thus, its gameplan for the Indian market --- where it has successfully launched Gold Clubs in Delhi, Madras and Bombay with Calcutta high on its list of priorities — is not much different It's to make you buy, buy and buy more gold ornaments.

Despite the fact that Indians are expected to consume nearly 500 tonnes of the precious metal this year, the Council feels that sales need to be pushed up further. In case you hadn't noticed, the yellow metal is threatened by serious rivals. According to G.S. Pillai, manager (north), World Gold Council, "With the flush of consumer goods in the market, the sale of gold jewellery has stagnated. Sophisticated electronic gadgets, state-of-the-art cars (which are today's status symbols), investment in the share market and real estate have given people an alternative. Those who were buying gold earlier now prefer to go for the latest toy in the consumer goods market."

The Council is up against some other heavy odds in a country where gold is a way of life, and which is the world's largest consumer of the metal. The quality of the gold one buys is never free of suspicion even if purchased from a premier store. Walk-in clients in jewellery stores are few and far between as the casual shopper is intimidated by the aura exuded by the large stores. But, the Gold Council hopes to change all this by streamlining the trade in a systematic manner and increasing sales substantially.

To speed up the sales of gold the WGC has many innovative plans in store, some of them akin to those they tried in the Middle East. Against the background of traditionally high levels of gold consumption, the Council identified and developed a new niche market -- gold jewellery for children. Little golden Ninja Turtles were created and advertised and lured little girls to raid the gold souks with their parents, triggering off sales of 300 kilos of gold!

Don't be too surprised then if innovative marketing and creation of niche products in India sees a deluge of interesting collections targeting specific clients. Gold jewellery for working women, *mangal sutras* that go with both jeans and sarees, jewellery for children, or ornaments for men may just become the order of the day.

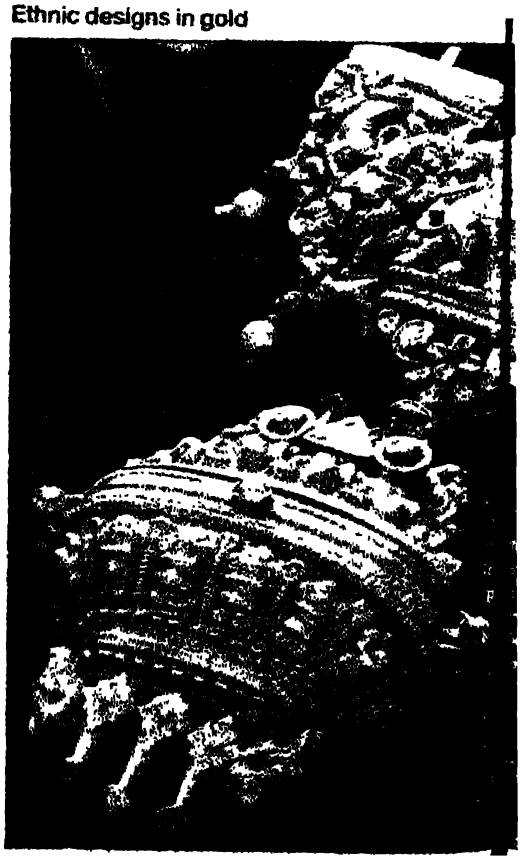
While securing a foothold in the Indian gold industry, and making lofty plans for it, the WGC is gathering its flock of jewellers into Gold Clubs. The gold fraternity --- manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and the bullion dealers --- has been invited to form these Gold Clubs with the objective of providing them with a common forum.

Says Deepak Mehra of Mehrasons, leading jewellers in the country, "The industry has welcomed the WGC and has supported the idea of the Gold Clubs whereby traders can work jointly, exchange ideas, address issues and identify opportunities for the industry. Besides, trends indicate that the customer is demanding better designs and superlative quality."

A multi-pronged strategy is in the making, just waiting to be unleashed to bring together this fragmented and unorganised sector Improvements to both the design and the physical quality of gold jewellery needs to be tackled first.

Pillai's grouse is genuine, "Though

Ethnic designs in gold



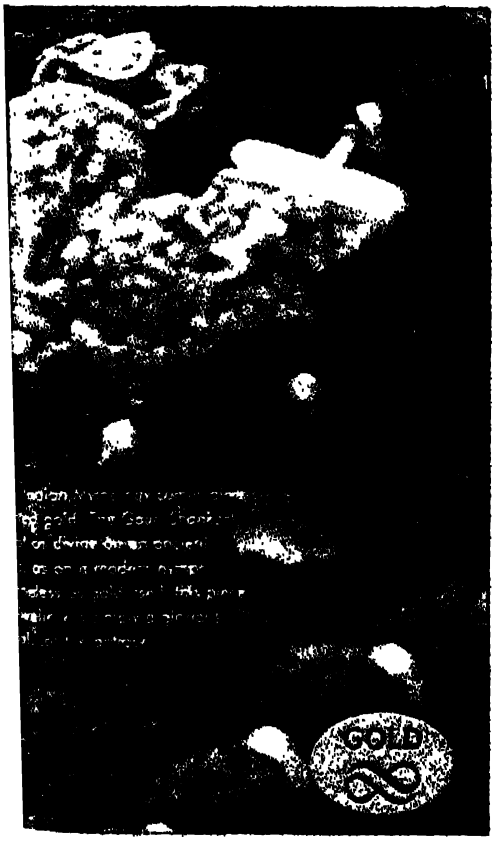
there have been so many new entrants in the industry there have been no changes whatsoever over the past 40 years in the manufacturing techniques or marketing the product. Though a large part of Indian jewellery is hand-crafted it could do with sophisticated tools and a better work environment for the 'karigars'. Hallmarking is non-existent so how can a customer be sure of the quality of the 22 karats he buys?"

With the Council going hammer and tongs at it, hallmarking gold jewellery may just become a trend in the India market. So too professional jewellery designers. "Hallmarking jewellery is a very positive approach," observes Mehra. "While jewellers will have to become very cautious of the quality of the gold they sell, the customer will be the one to benefit in the long run." He explains that if customers want to sell gold ornaments today they get a better price if they sell to the shop from where the piece was originally purchased. "But when the product is hallmarked it becomes acceptable to any jeweller."

In this arena the Council's trend books, researched by designers, may soon provide jewellers and manufacturers with the directions they need for the development of new products. The Council is currently in the process of bringing out its third Indian trend book. Says Pillai, "The idea behind the trend book is to stimulate jewellery manufacturers and designers to create ornaments in keeping with the changing moods of the market." Getting into the act with the Council is the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) that has farmed out 25 of its accessory design students to different jewellery centres of the country to study trends.

Says Jatin Bhatt, chairperson, Accessory Design Department, NIFT, who is among the faculty members involved in creating 'Gold Trends India 1996-97', "Through interaction with the retailers and customers in the different parts of the country we want to arrive at what the market is demanding, the aspirations of the buyers. It is these observations that will get translated into popular jewellery patterns and designs."

As the market will demand professionals in the field of designing jewellery, training institutes will not find it difficult to find placements for them. On Mehra's rolls is a designer who is currently engrossed in sketching jewellery designs for young women aged between 18 to 25 years. Says Mehra, "Fashion and jewellery are the two sides of the same coin. And with qualified professionals on the job, options can be given to today's woman to ensure that gold jewellery remains an inherent part of her life." ■



ESSENTIAL TIPS

How to take care of your jewellery; and how to choose it

Many elements determine the price on that little, non-descript tag. Once you understand them, you'll be able to judge whether a particular piece of gold jewellery offers the value you are looking for.

- Karats count, as you already know. Generally the higher the karatage (the percentage of pure gold) of the piece, the higher the price. But price is also determined by the total weight of the piece.
- Naturally then a larger, heavier piece is likely to be more expensive than a smaller, lighter one. Ornamental detailing such as engraving or a diamond laser finish or a special matte or Florentine finish also adds to the cost. Hand-crafted jewellery is obviously more expensive.
- A gold wardrobe, some jewellers suggest, includes five essentials: a necklace, a bracelet, a pair of classic button-style earrings, a pair of hoop earrings, and add on pendants for a quick change of looks.
- Give your gold jewellery just a little care. Gold's worst enemy is chlorine. Repeated exposure can weaken the structure of the piece, and will eventually lead to breakage.
- Keep gold jewellery away from all sorts of chlorinated cleaning products and out of swimming pools.
- For cleaning, use a jeweller's recommended solution or lukewarm, soapy water. Rinse with clear water then dry and polish with a soft cloth. Rings and intricate pieces which are hard to clean can be steam cleaned.

All that glitters...

TUNING IN

Talat Aziz releases a new album, Shahkaar, *after a three-year hiatus, reports* ***Shameem Akthar***

Talat Aziz's wife Bina is cribbing good naturedly "We have been married for years now and he has never composed a ghazal with me in mind" But if Bina hopes that things will improve after this rather public rebuke, she is wrong After the recent release of his latest audio-cassette, *Shahkaar*, her soulful ghazal singer husband will find even less time do any in-house singing

In fact, Aziz has little time these days to do any singing at all His first music album after a three-year hiatus has set off a media frenzy that is driving him quite crazy. His normally clear voice has grown nasal with acknowledging congratulatory messages and conducting interviews The music and regional language channels are inundating him with requests for an appearance and his peaceful afternoon siestas have been transformed into an interviewee's nightmare He is getting hysterical trying to cram quickie television scripts for various countdown shows and music programmes like the *Sa Re Ga Ma*.

Meanwhile, his infant son, feeling left out, clambers onto his knee tearfully, insisting that he will drink his glass of milk only from papa's hands Clearly Aziz shares a special relationship with the boy, but this bespectacled Amitabh Bachchan look-alike, is keen to play down the devoted father bit. He still nurses an ambition to make it to the big screen as a star, even though his first film, the Mahesh Bhatt-directed *Dhun* (co-starring Sangeeta Bijlani) appears to be jinxed

Still fresh in memory is the media mess-up of his quotes that seemed to make Mahesh Bhatt out to be the villain behind this jinx. There were rounds of clarifications and counter-clarifications that cleared up the air between the director and the 'star' But the movie did not benefit from all this. "The cans are still lying in my house Some distribution problem," mumbles the ghazal star, when asked about this ill-fated venture. And anyway, he seems to have decided that if the big screen doesn't work out, he will settle for the small one. He has lined up a few television serials (courtesy the Cinevista group) and is happy to be dabbling in grease paint and squinting before the powerful lights of the TV camera. Obviously, he is not comfortable talking about the big screen ditch. There are too many unhappy memories there. There was the jinxed *Jannat* with Juhi Chawla (when she was just an aspring starlet) and Aditya Pancholi which was re-released in an unrecognisable TV format with a tongue-twisting name that sunk, mer-

Talat Aziz

cifully for Juhi, without a trace. Yet another film, called *Char Deewari* remained, as Aziz observes sadly, within the four walls of the studio. Of course, he was not intending to run around trees or clutch onto starlet *pallavs*. "I would not do anything ridiculous. It would have had to suit my age. But anyway, leave these talks about my movie attempts aside, *yaar*. I do not like to see my ghazal-singing image diluted by all this," orders the singer.

Nor will he talk of his initial tryst with cricket or his student days slogging for a commerce (Honours, those days) degree. Happy memories, but he is in the present and now. Digging around in the past is not for him, unless it be in his lovelorn lines of his ghazals. Mention the silly rumours that dogged him down when he was touring America and he is equally uncomfortable. In the aftermath of the Bombay riots, when invited by foreign sponsors for a ghazal-singing spree in the States he left only to find the gossip columns take off about how 'he had run away from the riots' and returned 'only after peace returned to Bombay, after three years'.

"Nonsense," snorts Aziz. "I left for the States in February 1993 and returned to India after a few months. I did not run away. I was shifting home, I had my two babies whose childhood I wanted to be part of and was doing my foreign tours."

Meanwhile, his contract with HMV fell by the wayside, not to be renewed despite a few half-hearted promises initially from the audio group. "I am very vague, you know, and had not kept in mind the period of contract expiry," he smiles in between numerous phone calls.

Talat would much rather talk about his new album. "*Shahkaar* means something extraordinarily good, super. But," he adds quickly, "it does not mean that this word has anything to do with my performance. It is just the title of my audio-cassette."

"Ghazal composition needs extraordinary discipline, control over the words and the creative flow of thoughts," says Azis. "A lot has been said about my 'cultural background' and my parents' literary inclinations. But my father was a high-powered executive and my mother, Sajida Abid, an Urdu short-story writer. But there was nothing extraordinarily or obsessively creative about my parents. On Saturday evenings, the white *dhurries* were spread out and friends were invited

Sangeeta Bijlani

for an evening of Hyderabadi get-together. These *mehfils* were wonderful experience, yes. But they did not make me a ghazal writer overnight. That came after years of practice."

When asked to explain what he meant when he said that he laid great stress on *gayaki*, he rolls his eyes tiredly, "Oh, that will involve complicated explanations," he sighs. "But I meant that my singing took the path on which both the exponent and the amateur met. My singing appealed to both the ordinary people, uneducated in music and the expert musician. The tightrope of balance had to be achieved. And it is for my listeners to say if I have managed to achieve this."

He has often been criticised for simplifying the language of the ghazal. But, he retorts, criticism is the inevitable reaction to anything innovative and novel. "Mirza Ghalib was criticised in his life-time. He died a pauper's death. People criticised him also for making the ghazal a popular art form," he says in his defence. "Not that I would compare myself with greats like Ghalib, but criticism cannot stop us from popularising it."

He reminds these critics how when his double album *Tasawwur* in 1987 was made into a video many purists were outraged at his attempt to picturise poetry on the screen. "I told them then that there will be some to whom this form may appeal. If there are even a few who like it then my attempt would be satisfying," recalls Aziz. "Also, today everybody is doing videos of songs. First attempts will always draw such flak."

Strangely, the song that he did not quite like singing — the gravelly tone that he rendered as Farooque Sheikh's voice in *Umrao Jaan* — made him a household name. Before that, of course, he had already tasted success with debut album, *Jagjit Singh Presents Talat Aziz*, which had been a hit in 1979. His training stints with Ustad Samad Khan of the Kirana *gharana*, Ustad Faiyyaz Ahmed Khan and 'the maestro of ghazal renaissance Mehdi Hassan' improves his voice even further.

His first album was composed by ghazal-singer and friend-mentor Jagjit Singh whose gentle prodding had drawn the singer into the world of pretty music and prettier words that enhanced and appealed to music aficionados. "Ghazal comes from a word that means 'deer'. It implies grace. It graces romance," explains Talat, in an attempt to explain why the music form appeals to the young and old alike.

Perhaps, romance is an outdated concept in today's fast-pace world? "No," insists the singer, "it may have limited appeal. But this appeal is enduring." As, indeed, is Talat Aziz himself. ■

ANITA RATNAM, *dancer, choreographer and India's first contemporary [illegible] venues in India by her multimedia [illegible] performers in India and abroad. [illegible] and architects, this dancer's [illegible] Indian business has become what it is.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Riding the waves on a catamaran with my kids and a laptop.

What is your greatest fear?

Violence, my country.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

The lessons of life.

What do you dislike most in others?

Mediocrity and myopia.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

Excessive generosity and inability to go for the jugular when the situation demands.

What is your most precious possession?

My sense of humour.

What objects do you always carry?

Photos of my kids and a *yantra* of the *Sri-chakra* around my neck.

[illegible] most [illegible] in your life?

[illegible] and [illegible] on [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible]

What is your favourite [illegible]?

[illegible]

What is your favourite [illegible]?

Anyone.

What is your favourite [illegible]?

On a plane: Day of the Lion [illegible] to Sri Lanka [illegible] Queen by my side all the way.

What is your favourite dream?

To have Friend Dominic.

Happiness and things of greater [illegible] on my [illegible] tombstone.

What is your nightmare?

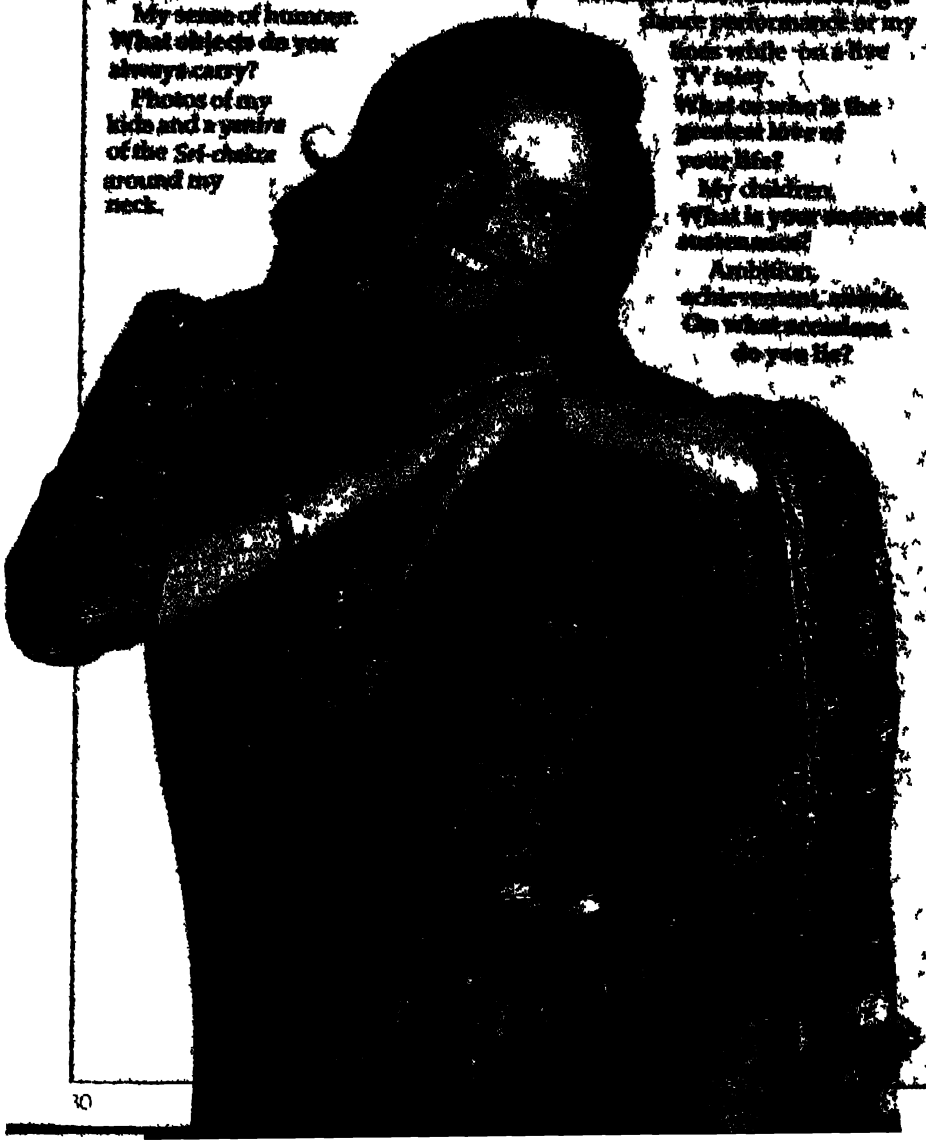
To forget a movement during a dance performance or my lines while [illegible] a live TV [illegible].

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

My children.

What is your vision of [illegible]?

Ambition, achievement, [illegible]. On what [illegible] do you lie?



What brings tears to your eyes?

Pollen in New York and smog in New Delhi

To extricate myself from a sticky situation.

What is your greatest regret?

Not knowing the two renaissance women in my family, great-grandmothers Rukmini Ammal and Lakshmi Sundaram Ammal.

What has been your happiest moment?

Saying "no more" to my dead and decayed marriage.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Pollen in New York and smog in New Delhi.

How do you relax?

By sailing, dozing on a hammock, listening to Mozart, Miriam Makeba and Madurai N. Krishnan.

What do you envy most in others?

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My non-nose and Ajanta hips

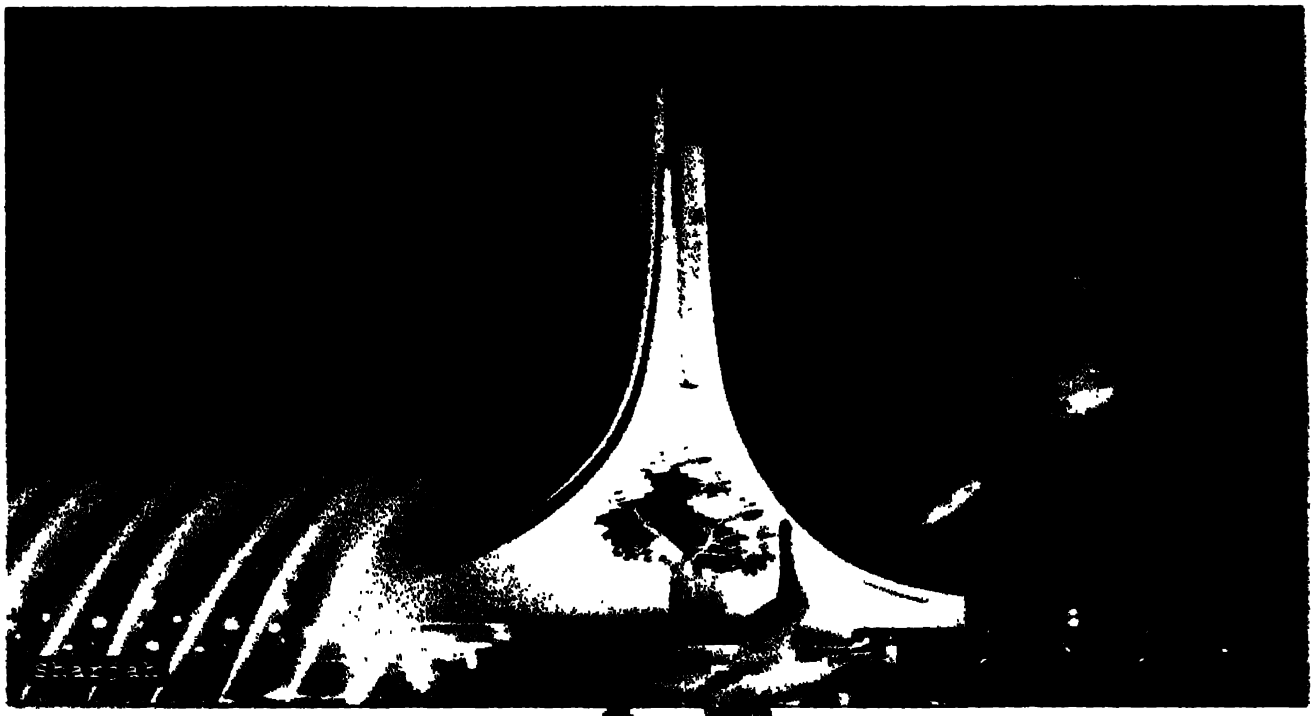
Thick coarse [illegible].

How would you like to be remembered?

As a woman with [illegible] and savage [illegible].

How would you like to die?

A free-like dancer, [illegible] without [illegible] from [illegible] soul resident and my [illegible] Yama, can have [illegible] if he can find me [illegible] my [illegible] schedule.


Sharjah

[illegible]

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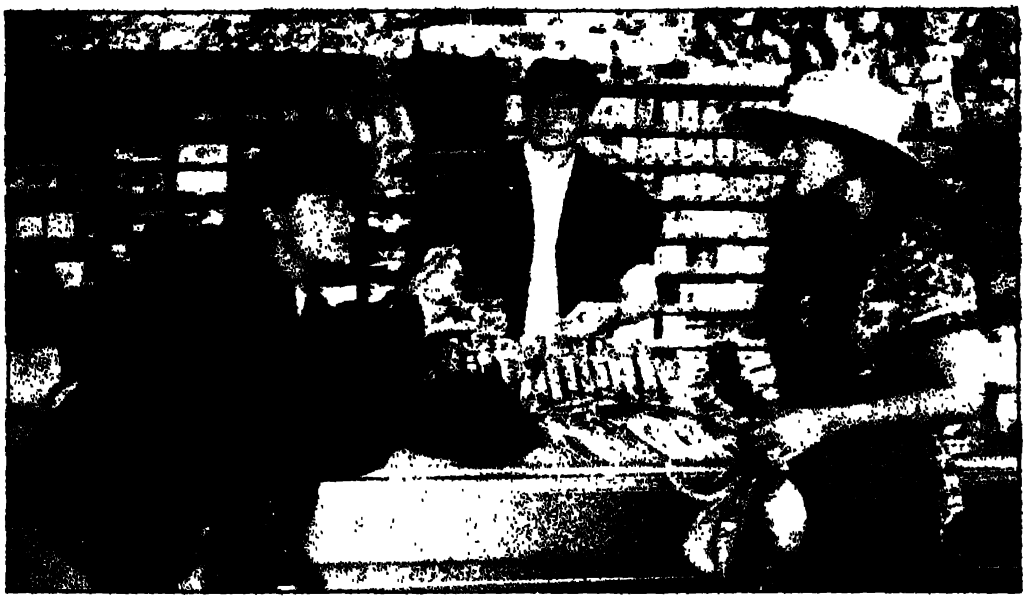
31 MARCH 1996

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Who's the Number One?



Kajol in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*

■ It is unfair to compare Madhuri Dixit with Kajol ('Kajol!' February 11). Madhuri has reached the number one position after years of slogging in the industry. She is sincere, hard-working, professional and above all very, very talented.

This, of course, does not mean that Kajol has none of these abiding qualities. But she is a newcomer who still has a long way to go to prove her worth.

In the three/four years that she has been in the industry, she has given not more than three hits and this does not make her a contestant for the number one slot.

Suddhasattwa Bose,
Cooch Behar (W.B.)

■ Madhuri and Kajol are both beautiful and talented. It would be a difficult task for Kajol to reach the top slot. Urmila Matondkar is the only actress who can give Kajol a run for her money.

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ Of the stars who have introduced their daughters to films, Tanuja and Bobita have been most successful. Mala Sinha introduced her daughter, Pratibha, amidst much fanfare but the newcomer could not make much headway.

Even Dimple, whose daughter, Twinkle Khanna, made her debut in *Barsaat*, has doubts about her daughter's career.

Kajol has really been lucky although she started her career with a flop film. But it would be wrong to presume that Kajol would take Madhuri's place; for Kajol is yet to be marked as a good dancer like Madhuri.

Even choreographer Saroj Khan has praised Madhuri for her natural dance movements on the strength of which she has given some of the biggest hits in tinsel town.

Partha Pratim Moduk,
Howrah (W.B.)

■ Born and brought up in a family of filmstars, it was only natural that Kajol would pick up the traits of her family members.

She definitely has an edge over her rivals because of her liveliness, charm and vibrancy. She is beautiful in a careless kind of way which makes her irresistible to her admirers.

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ Three generations in the film industry: Shobhna Samarth, Tanuja and now Kajol. Acting, has of late, become a dynastic profession in Bollywood. Look at Karishma Kapoor. Who would have thought that she would break the Kapoor family taboo and enter films.

Of course, she had much to thank her enterprising parents who did not come in the way of her ambitions.

Sukla Das,
Jamshedpur

INSIDE

Mohammad Azharuddin

PAGE 4

INDIANS ARE used to the idea of cricketers — both from here and abroad — having short-lived affairs with Indian actresses. Some of these have culminated in marriage and some have not. So, will Azharuddin and Sangeeta finally tie the nuptial knot or will the relationship fizzle out?

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COVER STORY

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS

Sangeeta Bijlani

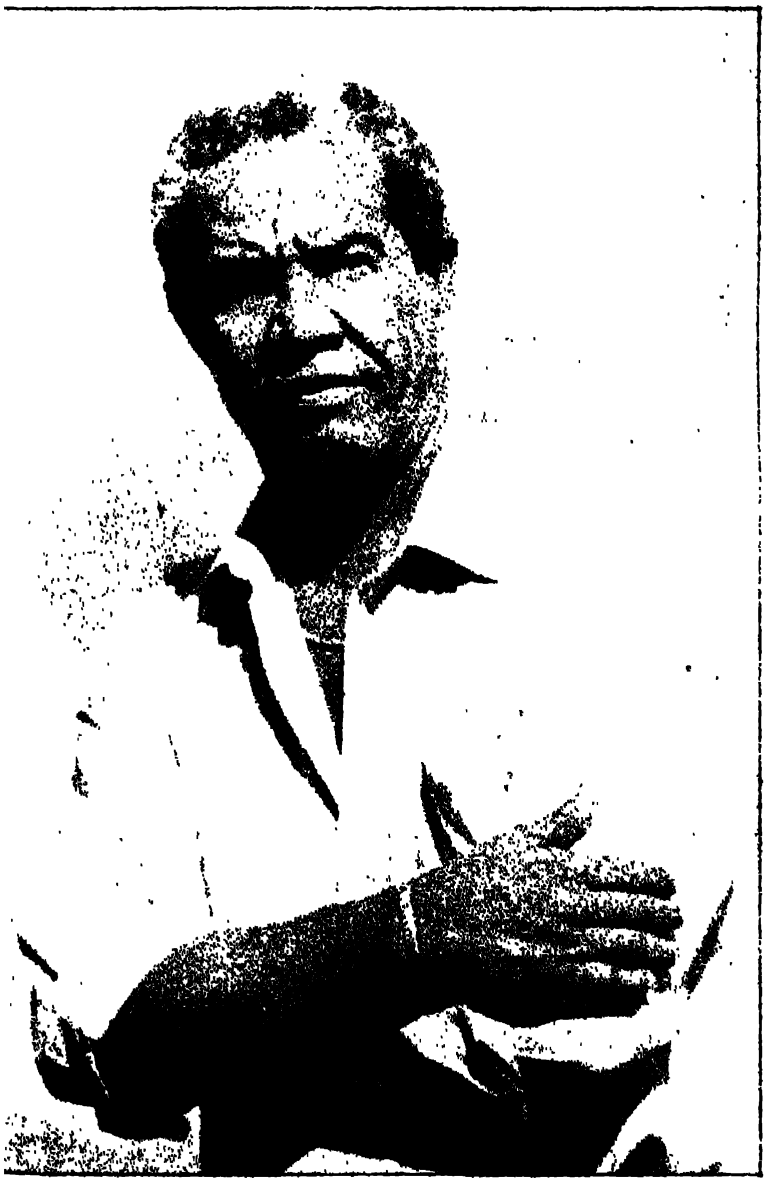
Alpine Mitra

***Vaishali Honawar** details the irresistible attraction between film actresses and cricketers*

IF YOU WEREN'T LOOKING FOR IT, YOU MIGHT WELL HAVE MISSED IT. IT TOOK MOST NEWSPAPERS only a few column inches to announce that India's Test cricket captain, Mohammad Azharuddin, had divorced his wife of nine years, Naureen. But most people were looking out for such an announcement, anyway. Ever since, in fact, the first rumours of a dalliance between model-turned-flop actress Sangeeta Bijlani and Azhar had begun doing the rounds.

They began as hushed whispers last year, when Azhar and Sangeeta were spotted dining in various trendy Bombay restaurants, and holding hands in the lobby of Hotel Lexington (the Taj property in New York) while on holiday in America. Those who dismissed this as gossip were convinced when Sangeeta and Azhar arrived in Bombay together; to be greeted at the airport by Salman Khan, Sangeeta's ex-boyfriend, who was intent on bash-

Gary Sobers



Anju Mahendru

Sharmila and Pataudi

ing the cricketer's face.

Still, there were those who insisted that the affair was merely a figment of the media's overworked imagination After all, they asked, what on earth could Azhar and Bijli (as Sangeeta is popularly known) have in common? Sangeeta was the hip Bombay girl, who loved wearing short skirts and grooving the night away in discos. Azhar, on the other hand, was the scion of a lower middle-class orthodox Muslim family from Hyderabad, who despite his extensive travels abroad, still spoke very dodgy English He may have moved to the upmarket area of Banjara Hills, but the sophistication that was so much a part of Sangeeta's charm was completely lacking in Azhar.

So, what on earth could she possibly see in him? All this talk must be just that: talk.

Not quite. Just when the stories were beginning to die down, Azhar and Sangeeta themselves gave the gossip a fresh lease of life, making headlines while on a visit to Bangalore. The couple were photographed while they were on a romantic walk in one of the tonier neighbourhoods of the city, and the story made it to all the newspapers But no, there weren't any pictures accompanying the story, Azhar had grabbed the camera, torn out the roll, and landed the photographer a couple of hefty blows for good measure.

The divorce announcement was the final word on an issue that was already exercising the public mind. Clearly, this was no one-night stand, dirty weekend or even a holiday romance. This was the Real Thing, and Azhar intended to make an honest woman of the girl he loved.

Now that *was* unusual. The Indian public had become used to cricket players — both from here and abroad — having short-lived affairs with actresses. But it was only a minuscule number of these alliances that actually resulted in marriage.

Take the Imran Khan-Zeenat Aman affair, for instance. This, of course, took place when Imran was still the star of the Pakistani cricket team, and was known as the Loin (no, not Lion) of Punjab, rather than an upholder of the Islamic faith. He arrived in India, very keen to meet Zeenat, who was then the reigning sex symbol of Bollywood.

Things didn't go too well, initially, though. Imran was reportedly mortally disappointed when he first set eyes on Aman at a film party."You mean *that* is Zeenat Aman?" he is said to have asked incredulously.

Matters took a somewhat more fortuitous turn after that, though, and Aman ended up spending a few months living with Imran in England, while he was playing county cricket. But the affair ended soon after. Imran, who was then involved with Emma-Sarjeant, didn't want anybody back home in Pakistan to know that he was dating an Indian actress And in those days, he was still insisting that he would only marry a Pakistani virgin choosen for him by his mother.

Not every Pakistani was quite so particular, though Mohsin Khan, for instance, who married Reena Roy after a short and tempestuous courtship. Reena had just come out of a disastrous relationship with Shatrughan Sinha, and was keen to settle down, and Mohsin was, apparently, dazzled

Neena Gupta

Amrita Singh

Vivian Richards

Rashbehari Das

Ravi Shastri

by the glamour associated with a Hindi film actress. Also, his cricket career was ending, and he was hoping to make it in the Bombay film industry. So, it didn't exactly hurt to have a wife who was well clued in to that scene. And since Roy had a Muslim father, there were no problems of a religious nature, either.

Things began well enough, but problems cropped up in the relationship when it became clear that Mohsin was never going to make it in Hindi movies. The couple drifted further and further apart, until finally Mohsin upped and left for Pakistan, taking his baby daughter Jannat with him. As things stand today, Reena has begun acting in movies again, and hasn't seen her daughter for years.

This irresistible attraction between actresses and cricketers isn't a recent development, though. The first such alliance was that between Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, then India's foremost cricketer (now editor of *Sportsworld*, a sister publication of *The Telegraph*) and Sharmila Tagore, a descendent of India's most famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore

But Sharmila and Tiger (as Pataudi is popularly known) had more in common with one another than later actress-cricketer pairings. Both had more or less similar backgrounds: they came from upperclass homes, which were modern, Westernised and subscribed to liberal values. They were famous in their respective fields of work, and were, therefore, not intimidated by each other's celebrity. And such was the strength of their union that it survives to this day, at a time when most marriages end up being mere shams or arrangements of convenience

But the Khans are an exception to the rule; most cricketer-actress relationships have proved to be less than enduring. There was the famous engagement between Anju Mahendru,

Imran Khan

Zeenat Aman

then a small-time actress and Gary Sobers, the West Indian captain, who was then touring India as the head of his team. Anju was a regular fixture at all the matches and the couple celebrated their engagement with a big party to which all of Bombay was invited.

The relationship, however, lasted only as long as the tour itself. No sooner had Sobers flown off home than it was announced that the engagement was off, leading people to speculate that it had only been a publicity stunt, anyway, and soon after, Anju began an affair with Rajesh Khanna, who was then the number one hero in Bombay. The couple remained together for many years, until Rajesh ditched Anju to marry Dimple after a whirlwind courtship.

More recently, another West Indian cricketer has been involved with a small-time actress, though this relationship has had more than a whiff of scandal surrounding it. Viv Richards and Neena Gupta were an item a few years ago, when the West Indians were touring India. And when Gupta announced soon after that she was pregnant, there was much speculation about the identity of the child's father. But even as rumours flew around that Richards was the man in question, Gupta refused to either confirm or deny them.

But some of her decisions in the following months told their own story. Neena named her daughter Masaba, which apparently means African princess, thereby indirectly confirming the child's parentage. And one particularly enterprising magazine got hold of the baby's birth certificate, which had Viv Richards named as the father.

Neena, for her part, maintained a discreet silence even as she entered into a series of relationships. The most famous of these was, of course, with a bearded Delhi journalist, who was a good friend (and a Doon and Cambridge classmate) of Rajiv Gandhi. But none of these seem to have worked out, for now Neena and Viv appear to be back together.

What's more, these days Neena and Viv have thrown all discretion to the winds. Richards reportedly visits India once a year to see his daughter, and the couple take her on holiday regularly. And recently, Neena and Viv were seen sitting next to each other at a function held in connection with the release of Asha Bhonsle's new cassette, *Rahul and I*. What's more, Richards even spoke to a television crew at the event, quite unconcerned about the fact that Neena would be seen smiling over his shoulder on small screens all over the country.

The best-documented of these relationships was, of course, the Ravi Shastri-Amrita Singh liaison. For one thing, this was one affair that was conducted in the full glare of media publicity, with both Shastri and Singh making no secret of the fact that they were seeing each other. And for another, both of them were very serious about making a go of things; they had even got officially engaged and hoped to get married in time.

That wasn't to be, however. Nobody is sure why exactly the relationship ended, but soon after Amrita was seen painting the town red with Vinod Khanna. This time, too, Amrita announced that she planned to marry, but all such plans collapsed as her family raised objections to the vast age gap between Khanna and her.

But then, Amrita had never had much luck with men. Her first relationship— while she was yet a school girl —with yet another cricketer, Kirti Azad (son of the Congress politician, Bhagwat Jha Azad), also ended badly. And Amrita decided to leave Delhi to try and make it in the movies in Bombay.

She managed to achieve a measure of success in her film career, but Amrita never succeeded in marrying a cricketer. In the end, she had to make

THE ONES WHO GOT AWAY

Detailing those relationships that escaped too much publicity

Shilpa Shirodkar

Sachin Tendulkar

Long-lived affairs may be a different story. But there have been several short-term romances between cricketers and actresses that haven't really made the headlines.

No, we're not talking about the affair between yester-year cricketer Sandeep Patil and Bengali actress Debashree Roy, which most people seem to have forgotten about. Patil and Roy had become an item when they starred together in a movie — Sandeep's first — but nothing really came of the relationship.

Instead, in a couple of months' time, Patil's name was linked with yet another of his co-stars, Poonam Dhillon, who is now happily married to producer Rajesh Thakeria.

More recently, Sachin Tendulkar was said to be seeing Shilpa Shirodkar — this was before he married his doctor girlfriend, — and the actress' grandmother, Meenakshi, had even expressed a hope that the two would wed as they made "such a cute couple" There had also been rumours of an affair between Ajay Jadeja and Pooja Acharya, who stars in the television serial, *Akbar The Great*.

While the Wills World Cup was on, a Bombay daily had claimed that Dutch cricketer, Bas Zuiderant, had been smitten by Raveena Tandon's clean-cut good looks. And Vinod Kambli, whose marriage is said to be on the rocks (a divorce is, apparently, in the works) is said to be dating starlet Ruchika Pandey, and even played host at her birthday party recently, putting a semi-official stamp on the relationship.

But Neena Gupta refuses to see a pattern in this. As she says dismissively, "It is because the people belonging to these professions are always in the public eye that one notices these relationships. Also, both get invited to the same kind of parties and tend to interact more. But there are many cricketers who aren't married to actresses, aren't there?"

Debashree Roy and Sandip Patil

do with the son of one Saif Ali Khan, the eldest son of Tiger Pataudi

But Amrita's relationships, at least, were serious ones, in which marriage was a real option. The same cannot be said of the short-lived affair between Kapil Dev and Sarika, which took place long before India's most famous all rounder settled down with Romi. Or even Manoj Prabhakar's brief dalliance with Farheen, a small-time actress who made the most of her striking resemblance to Madhuri Dixit

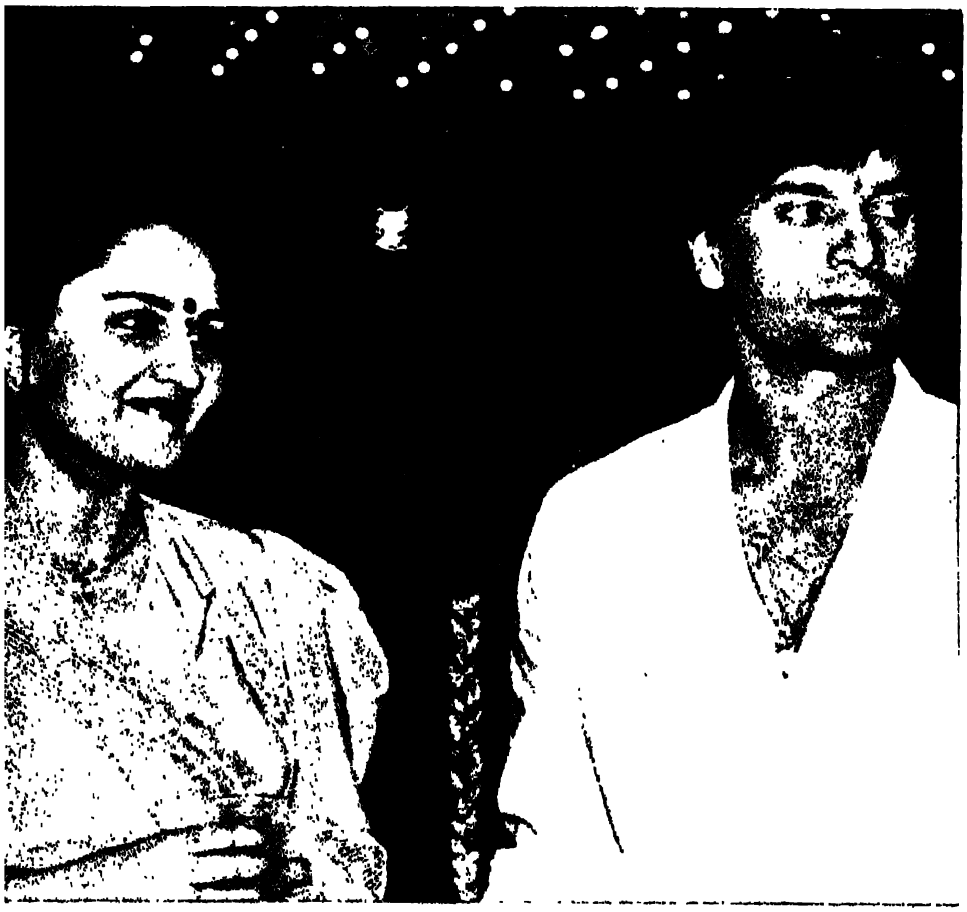
But none of these relationships have attracted the attention that the Azharuddin-Bijlani liaison has commanded. When Azhar played a reckless shot and gifted the ball back to the bowler at the now-notorious World Cup semi-final in Calcutta, the crowd seemed to think that the captain's foolishness was caused by his relationship with the actress

Sangeeta left Eden Gardens immediately after Azhar left the crease, but the crowd was in no mood to forgive the duo. "Salman Khan's career went through a bad patch because of her

Sarika

Kapil Dev

Reena Roy with her husband Mohsin Khan



and only improved when she moved away," said one bitter cricket fan "And now she is bringing bad luck to Azharuddin."

This is certainly too harsh and completely unfair Would Sangeeta have been given the credit if India had won the World Cup? So why blame her for a defeat?

But this hysterical over-reaction shows how difficult it will be for the couple to survive the gossip and scandal surrounding their relationship. For the record, though, Sangeeta's secretary maintains that the two have no plans to get married This is widely believed to be a consequence of the controversy surrounding the break-up of Azhar's marriage Clearly, Sangeeta doesn't want people to say that he's left his wife and children for her.

But unless something goes very wrong, it seems clear that Azhar and Sangeeta are going to be a couple for the forseeable future. Perhaps this spell of bad luck will pass and so will the controversy. And who knows, they might just become the Tiger and Sharmila of the 1990s ■

EXTRACT

Talkies from TOLLYWOOD

Looking at Bengali cinema through the years. An extract

Cinema in Bengal as an organised endeavour will complete 75 years in 1994, a date that broadly coincides with the centenary of cinema in the world. But film activity in Calcutta as a sporadic exercise is as old as the present century if we take into account the attempts at actuality shooting or film viewing in tents, in commercial theatres; hotels and private places. In 1895 itself, a few months after the Lumiere invention was publicly demonstrated in Paris, film strips were shown in Bombay's Warson hotel. Soon, the select groups in Calcutta were exposed to the marvels of the new scientific invention. A few intrepid souls made their foray into the unexplored territory, cranking a camera at the turn of the century. Hiralal Sen of hallowed memory tried his hand in recording stray events happening around. Some commercial theatres of North Calcutta soon entertained their audience by projecting actualities as additional attraction. Unfortunately, no material of that period survives to give us a first hand account of the endeavour. However, reports and advertisments in some contemporary newspapers bear evidence to the activity: the movement against the first Partition of Bengal in 1905 is reported to have been filmed, as was the Delhi *durbar* of 1911.

Showhouses for exhibiting films from abroad started being built by the Madans. The first film audiences were excited by the very fact of seeing moving objects projected on screen by a machine. As the medium came to be commercially exploited, people gradually got used to the wonders of the motion pictures exhibition of imported films in tents by travelling showmen, the building of permanent picture palaces, followed by local production, laid the foundation of the film industry in Calcutta in just over a decade.

The ambience was cosmopolitan. Films were imported for exhibition and equipment, and so was raw stock. Actors, actresses, technicians from

Kanan Devi and Pramathesh Barua in *Mukti*

Extracted from** Rasa: The Indian Performing Arts in the Last 25 Years, Volume II, Theatre and Cinema,* ***Edited by Ananda Lal (Theatre) and Chidananda Dasgupta (Cinema); Published by Anamika Kala Sangam Research and Publications, Calcutta; Price Rs 1,500

Suchitra Sen and Uttam Kumar: The fifties' romantic duo

other parts of India came to Calcutta to seek their fortune. Even in the colonial period when the fruits of invention were primarily to the entertainment and commercial needs of the minute minority of foreigners living here, a new vista arose, both for creative use and commercial exploitation. The aspiration of a people in bondage found expression in the new medium as the spirit of emancipation soared in successive waves of the freedom movement.

The pioneers started forming organisations with their evitable word 'bioscope' attached to the names of companies. Hiralal Sen's Royal Bioscope, an early venture was followed by Madan's Elphinstone Bioscope. Elphinstone Picture Palace was built by Madan in 1907. A decade later he owned 12 of the 13 showhouses in Calcutta. In the entertainment world of the time the Parsis had a strong presence, both in production and exhibition. Both the first feature film *Billwamangal* (1919) and the first Bengali talkie *Jamai Sasthi* (1931) were produced by Madan. Till 1931 only silent films were made in Calcutta though sound films had come to India a couple of years back. The silent films often had titles in more than two languages. Nearly 130 silent films were made here in the 12 years between 1919 and 1931.

As in Bombay, mythological and religious themes dominated the early period. But in Bengal, the tradition of literature and theatre influenced the outlook of the filmmaker right from the beginning and 'social' emerged in no time, thanks to the time-tested popularity of Bankimchandra, Rabindranath and Saratchandra. The latter two were in the fullness of their creative life in the Twenties and Thirties and their presence was itself a source of inspiration. Literary material was considered 'safe' as the audience was supposed to be familiar with the big names and perhaps the contents of the stories and novels and the milieu in which most stories were woven. The middle class audience lapped up the screen versions of famous books.

From an average of 10 silent films in the Twenties, production peaked at 20 in 1931 when the curtain on the silent period was finally rung down. The Madans had a headstart which continued for near. two decades, but as more producers took the field in the beginning of the 'talkies' and more showhouses came to be built, the Madan empire shrank. Even in the early Twenties, the new medium attracted a sizeable number of bright and adventurous members of the elites of Bengal. Apart from those who had made their mark on the stage like Sisir Bhaduri and Naresh Mitra, others like Dhiren Ganguly (DG), Niranjan Pal, Modhu Bose, Nitish Lahiry and later, Nitin Bose, Debaki Bose, P. C. Barua and B. N. Sircar gave the cinema in Bengal a distinct appearance and a name. Thus, to the entertainment world of Calcutta dominated by theatre and music performances on the one hand and circus and football on the other, the new dimension of cinema was added more than seven decades ago.

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In the Thirties and the Forties, thanks to the studio system spearheaded by New Theatres, a body of work in Bengali cinema was created which, despite the hangover of a theatrical tradition and the literary influences, was able to cater to the audience's need. Even Satyajit Ray commended the technical competence in camera work, sound, editing and laboratory work of the New Theatre's technicians in the Thirties and observed that in contemporary (late Seventies when he wrote the piece) Bengali films, one hardly noticed that kind of skill. From the devotional religious films of Debaki Bose in the Thirties through the music based films of Madhu Bose, Nitin Bose's *Desher Mati* and Barua's *Adhikar* (a shade different from the standard middle class themes and roles), to Charu Ray's *Bangalee*, Bimal Roy's *Udayer Pathe* and Hemen Gupta's *Bhuli Nai* and '42 (Political content), in less than two decades Bengal traveresed its path, with some recognisable films about contemporary mores. The harvest was not poor. A certain angst informed the films.

Nevertheless, crisis has always been endemic in Bengali film industry. The studio system which gave the industry a measure of stability, ensuring steady production, regular releases, fair return and occasional all-India

exposure, was showing signs of the debility from the early Forties. The war years pumped in a lot of money and some clever ones injected part of the wealth into filmmaking. Many actors and actresses were lured out of the studios to work for independent producers for the big money they offered. Hordes of independents entered the field of production. Studio-produced film production came down alarmingly. As in Bombay where heavy inroads were made by unscrupulous moneyed section, Bengali film industry could not withstand the onslaught. Since the end of war a shifting of workplace by directors from Calcutta to Bombay was witnessed over the years. In a few years, directors like Bimal Roy, music directors like S.D. Burman, technicians, even actors and actresses left for Bombay (Nimai Ghosh went to Madras in the Fifties) for more secure working conditions.

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In 1951, Nemai Ghosh made *Chhinnamul*, on the appaling conditions of the displaced poeple from East Pakistan. As a cameraman he knew how the tragic situation should be filmed and he turned a director to make that reality a vivid account of the political and social upheaval that engulfed Bengal. This was followed by *Nagarik* by Ritwik Ghatak, a second attempt to capture the devastations of Partition. The film was not released at the time. These were intrepid attempts at filmmaking in Calcutta which swam against the prevailing current in Tollygunge.

The mainstream Bengali industry continued to be affected by the shrinking market. Like in Calcutta, Bombay industry also did away with studio system due to the thrust of black money and the new class of producers. The star system evolved as funds were used less for the production per se but to placate the stars who with their good looks, song and dance and extravaganza would capture the public. The lowest common denomination of taste of the audience was aimed at and much of this crap was lapped up.

Bengali films were hardpressed by the dominance of such Hindi films. In the face of such adversity two new stars were born in Tollygunge. Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen, formed the star couple in accepted sense. From the early Fifities onwards they became the mainstay of commercial Bengali cinema for more than a decade. The industry gained a little confidence. The stars could rescue them when the going was really tough.

But the lack of foresight became evident in the industry's extraordinary reluctance to invest in toning up the infrastructure — better laboratory and equipment facilites and production in colour. The result was reflected in shoddy local production and the avoidable dependence on unnecessary trips to Bombay and Madras for making films in colour.

Satyajit Ray launched his career in filmmaking in circumstances well known. In 1955, *Pather Panchali* was released. The audience seemed too overwhelmed to react in the first few weeks, and the detractors viewed it with mild derision. But soon people came to realise that they were witness to momentous hapening in the creative arena. Yet the visual excitement came from the much used tool in the Bengali cinema — the translation of a literary classic to the screen. Only this time it was a transformation, using untried technicians, mostly non-professional actors and actresses, Ray created a transcendence. In a trice the picture of rural Bengal was laid open to a world with a universal story. People with men, women and children portrayed in glowing human terms. The atmosphere is authentic and the tone lyrical. The story is the timeless saga of a family struggling for a modest living in a small place. Ray went on to create an impressive chronicle of Indian society for nearly four decades. He himself observed that he did not like to be typed as a filmmaker. That explains his experimentation in fantasy, comedy, children's stories, social commentary. He was an *auteur* in best sense, exercising personal control over his films more than any other major director. His own film stories had special qualities — *Kanchanjangha* (1962), the first colour film, *Nayak* in which he cast the matinee idol of the Bengali screen Uttam Kumar, *Pikoo*, made for the French television, *Shakha Proshakha*, a French production *Agantuk* his last film and *Uttaran* which he wrote but could not take up as death intervened. All of them bear the typical Ray stamp in conception and execution. The sequal to *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*, *Sonar Kella* and *Jai Baba Phelunath* also exude a certain charm and are favourites of all age groups. "The supreme humanist of the world's directors" never faltered in his conviction and easily spurned offers of filmmaking even from Hollywood as they did not meet his terms. The consummate artist also lived the life true to his conscience. His prodigious output of 36 films, including documentaries in as many years is a testimony to his single mindedness. Even when portraying the depth of

Anil Chatterjee and Supriya Chowdhury in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*

Sharmila Tagore and Uttam Kumar in Satyajit Ray's *Nayak*

poverty he never allowed his vision to be clouded by pessimism He lifted Bengali cinema out of the morass of sloppiness and half baked ideas about the medium that had relegated it to the backwaters His influence on the cinema of other regions of India inspired new movements in Karnataka and Kerala. Later the new wave in Hindi cinema in the early Seventies started largely with funds from the government agencies also owed its inspiration to the pathbreaking work of Ray. In Calcutta itself, it created an ambience, in the late Fifties, not only in the form of better taste for good cinema, but in the urge to experiment. Some producers saw it was easier to find commercial outlet for a new type of film of modest budget without the forbidding presence of actors and actresses of higher financial range and invested in such films Apart from his two major contemporaries, Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen who also could perhaps breathe a little freely in the otherwise stifling atmosphere of Bengali cinema, others also thought of making their foray into filmmaking There were some who joined feature filmmaking only to make one film, like Barin Saha, Chidananda Dasgupta, Bhupendra Kr. Sanyal and O.C Ganguly. It would not have been possible for them to make a start if the situation had not been radically altered by the overwhelming presence of Ray.

Two characteristics of Ritwik Ghatak for which he stands out among other filmmakers are his originality and his daring His association with IPTA must have imbued in him strong social awareness which is the hallmark of his filmmaking Himself uprooted by the Partition of Bengal, he cried out with deep feeling against the politician who brought Partition and endless misery to the people of Bengal

After his first film *Nagarik* (1952) failed to be released, he made *Ajantrik* in 1958, an unusual story of the relationship of a taxi driver with his car attributing human qualities to the machine The response to the film was sensational for the initiated audience which was gradually taking shape by that time when Ray had already made three films and the vigorous film movement was in full swing It was clear that another filmmaker of outstanding talent had appeared on the horizon.

Of the eight films made by Ghatak in two decades, the three in a row, *Meghe Dhaka Tara, Komal Gandhar* and *Subarnarekha* were on the theme of Partition, to which Ghatak was never reconciled. The tone is often harsh, the tenor uneven and the dialogue theatrical The characters take on archetypal traits which Ghatak often underlined. He made a highly emotional film *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam* after Bangladesh had been liberated. The long, meandering, sometimes clumsy course of the film reflects life itself in its myriad moods. His last film *Jukti Takko Gappo* discourse on the state of contemporary society even though he never gave up hope.

The strength of his feelings and his unused theories have often blurred his accomplishment as a craftsman. Most of his films failed at the box office or were not released at all even though in his lifetime he became a cult figure. His untimely death, perhaps brought about by a tempestuous life created a sudden void. Recent years have seen a new interest in his work in some foreign countries.

Mrinal Sen started in 1956 with a film which even he does not care to remember now Next year with *Neel Akasher Niche*, based on a story by Mahadevi Varma, he became well known as a director. *Baishe Sraban* (1960) established him as a frontrank filmmaker. Deft portrayals of reality and command over the medium made him one of the three new masters of cinema in Calcutta. His association with the cultural movements of the Left and the film societies gave him the additional right to be one leaders of the new cinema movement But like Ghatak, he also did not find favour with the ordinary filmgoer and even low-budget films he made in the early Sixties depicting man-woman relationship in everyday milieu in middle class house failed to click In *Akash Kusum* (1963) he dabbled in devices like freezeshots and jump cuts, *a la* Truffant and was promptly accused of gimmickry.

Despite his restless nature he has always been a resolute filmmaker He made a film in Oriya in 1964 which shows his grasp of the medium and sensitive handling of character and situations His real break, however, came through with *Bhuban Shome*

Naseeruddin Shah in Gautam Ghose's *Paar*

(1969) in Hindi with funds from the Film Finance Corporation. The new wave of Hindi cinema has its origin in the films and state funding as a matter of policy got a shot in the arm. The eventful but uneven career of Sen took a new turn with *Interview* (1971), *Calcutta 71*, *Padatik* and *Chorus* made in quick succession. The period was of political turmoil, the Leftist forces were trying to consolidate and Sen was trying to be commentator and chronicler of the political scene and at the same time tried to find new forms of expression by breaking with the new narrative mould.

By the Seventies he had attained maturity as a filmmaker with a cause. His experiments continued, he made a fine film in Telugu (*Oka Oori Katha*), in Hindi (*Mrigaya*), till he changed track in *Ek Din Pratidin*. He finally left behind the strident message bearing exercises, mellowed enough to look inward and to study the foibles of individuals caught in the web of society.

The film scene in Calcutta was covered with glory by Satyajit Ray, for the entire period since Independence, by Ghatak for just over a decade, Sen for over three decades in a crusade he continues. There were others who attempted at steering a middle course. Tapan Sinha, a contemporary of Ray with a solid technical background chose to make films on a variety of themes. He commands a sizeable audience to stand by his large output. Tarun

A scene from Mrinal Sen's *Akaler Shandhaney*

Majumdar too is a good filmmaker who has often struck it rich at the box-office. Filmmakers like them have sustained the industry with their thorough mastery of the craft combined with a keen sense of the audience. Asit Sen stated off dramatically with *Chalachal* (1956) and followed up for sometime but soon found himself changing gear to head for Bombay. Rajen Tarafdar's *Ganga* (1960) had also a strong audience following for his earthy, virile, rich-in music, presentations. There was Harisadhan Dasgupta, a pioneer documentary filmmaker, trying his hand in a couple of features, fluid and elegant, but somehow the foray has not been repeated. Purnendu Potree and O C Ganguly commercial artistes like Ray and Tarafdar, began with promise but could not survive the tough conditions in Bengali film production. Barin Saha, a cameraman trained in Europe came with high hopes, made *Tero Nodir Pare*, but found himself left in the lurch. Chidananda Dasgupta after a few shots, made *Bilet Pherat* (the same name as DG's film, the first 'social' in India), a tryptych with striking originality and a certain freshness. But the experiment has never been repeated. The path of Bengali cinema is littered with many genuine inventive exercises disrupted by an unthinking industry and an unfeeling audience who failed to support these attempts.

Even technicians of the calibre of Subrata Mitra and art director Bansi Chandragupta found themselves outsiders in the hidebound and moribund atmosphere of Tollygunge. Actors like Soumitra Chatterjee and actresses like Madhabi and Aparna have survived by their sheer professionalism. Despite the towering presence of Satyajit Ray, the Bengali film industry could not pull itself up from its morass. The number of showhouses did not rise, studios and laboratories failed to effect investment in better facilities and equipment. The market was getting less attractive even in West Bengal itself, audience taste gradually changed in the face of the Hindi films with their dazzling colour, and their extravaganza with dance and songs galore. There were no training facilities; barring a handful, filmmakers were treading the beaten path. Decline set in with alarming rapidity.

The state government stepped in to the breach in the late Seventies with a policy of loan, grant, direct production, and investment in infrastructure like taking over of a loss making studio and later, setting up a colour lab. A film centre was also set up in the mid-Eighties. This could not stem the whole rot but provided for the flowering of new talents in the late Seventies and the beginning of the Eighties. Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Gautam Ghose, Utpalendu Chakraborty were supported in their filmmaking career and acquitted themselves creditably. A measure of stability in production was the immediate fallout but the basic inadequacy of release houses could not be met by the state agencies. Meanwhile, more and more show houses were lured into the Hindi distribution outlet to make matters worse for Bengali cinema in its own habitat. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MUMBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]	1230	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	0630	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	0630	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ-185	1435	1	RJ-184	[illegible]	1
AMSTERDAM					
KL-876	0150	[illegible]	KL-875	0125	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	TG-415	1240	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BUCHAREST					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC-225	0800	1	IC-226	1020	1
BG-698	1730	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
DHAKA					
BG-093	0850	4 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC-223	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-224	1520	1 2 3 5 6
BG-091	1905	[illegible]	BG-095	1825	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG-092	1410	1	BG-094	1330	4
BG-096	2100	[illegible]	BG-095	2020	1 5
DOHA					
QT-061	1345	5	QT-060	1900	2
DUBAI					
BI-107	2000	1	BI-108	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
BA-214	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA-213	1055	1 7
IC-217	1110	1 2 4 [illegible]	IC-216	1445	1 2 4 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA-142	2115	3 7	BA-143	1515	3 7
MOSCOW					
SU-538	1755	4	SU-537	1555	4
PARIS					
KB-106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2 5
KB-106	1335	5			
SINGAPORE					
SQ-015	2345	2 5	SQ-016	2230	2 5
BI-106	0830	7	BI-107	2000	6
SOFIA					
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ-503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI-306	1910	5	AI-305	1820	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1530	4	IC-228	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	7 55	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via Allahabad	13 00	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express via [illegible]	7 00	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express via [illegible]	18 15	3008
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	15 30	3059
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	11-55	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	5 00	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	6 30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	21 25	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	10-30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	8 45	3036
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	6 30	3032
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	12-40	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	[illegible]
1171	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr [illegible] Wed & [illegible]	7 55	[illegible]
3327	14 30	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	4 50	3328
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7-55	1182

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	Darjeeling Mail	8-45	3144
3111	20 15	Lal Quila Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	[illegible]	Gour Express	5-15	3154
5663	20 40	Katihar Express	4 15	5664
3151	11 20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15 50	3152
3133	20 [illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express via SBC Loop	12 30	3134
3105	18 20	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10 25	3104
5085	12 10	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr Tue Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	[illegible]	Madras Mail	6 55	6004
9001	19 20	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	12 30	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	15-25	2859
2021	6 10	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8033	20 40	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	8033
8029	11 20	Kurla Express via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14 05	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	12 10	2842
7003	8 10	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express Dep [illegible] Tue & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	16 40	7004
6311	22 [illegible]	Bangalore Express Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 [illegible]	6312
8013	17 30	Tata Steel Express	10 20	8014
8111	6 [illegible]	Iapat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8112
8005	[illegible]	Tilagarh Express	[illegible]	8006
8015	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	6 10	8016
8001	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	5 30	8003
8409	19-30	Jagannath (Puri) Express	8 30	8410
[illegible]	6 [illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	22 0	2822
8045	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	8046
[illegible]	16 45	Purulia Express Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	8018
1029	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via Howrah Sunday only	16 10	
—	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via Howrah Saturday only	10 4[illegible]	2422
6327	22 35	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express Monday only	[illegible]	
	14 05	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express Saturday only	[illegible]	6321
	14 05	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	13-4[illegible]	6311
6314	22 45	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	—
6316	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	1[illegible]	6315
6320	22 3[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
—	14 05	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	[illegible]	6319

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-64 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37

Rashbehari Das

ALL THAT JAZZ

***Ananda Lal** on how he first discovered Herbie Hancock; and then ended up meeting him in Calcutta*

Some of us owe our love of jazz to Herbert Jeffrey Hancock. Take my case. During my school and college days in the late Sixties and early Seventies my father often went on lecture tours as a visiting professor to American universities. Steeped in Sixties rock, I used to give him lists of albums unavailable in India to bring back for me. Above and beyond the call of paternal duty, he'd not only procure those LPs but ask some of his more far-out students to tape their favourite records for my collection.

That's how I first heard legends like Jerry Garcia and Frank Zappa (may their souls rest in peace), long before peers in Calcutta had even heard *of* them. I protected all those cassettes like anybody else would guard gold and— though the ferric oxide is wearing out now and the plastic hubs are snapping away in rhythm—they still survive. Worse for wear, they've grown old with me.

In this eclectic hoard one year, there arrived a TDK C-90 with Stevie Wonder's groovy *Fulfillingness' First Finale* on one side and Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* on the other. Who was Herbie Hancock? Or maybe I should ask "Who are the Headhunters?", I remember thinking at that time. The typical American scrawl on the cassette didn't distinguish between title and band. Naturally, I heard Stevie Wonder first, loved it, and heard it again and again.

But one day I decided to give the B-side a listen. I never recovered from the impact. Since then, I've listened to *Headhunters* so often and initiated so many friends into it that the treble response on the tape has dulled and one channel has gone out of balance with the other. Never mind, I still love it.

I'd never faced anything like the massive bass riff in "Chameleon" before—pounding away like a single-file convoy of elephants slightly inebriated on *mahua* and smashing through the jungle in step. Strangely enough, for many years, I never knew the titles of the numbers or the personnel on this 1973 best-seller because the American undergrad who'd taped it must have been too freaked out to list these little details on the inlay card. I got hold of the names much later.

The music, I recall noting then, was instrumental (I was into rock songs at that time), yet it didn't sound like jazz. I'd heard jazz before, on AIR, and I hadn't liked the brassy, somewhat discordant effect. But this I liked. (No wonder: Hancock used a Fender Rhodes, a clavinet and two Arp synthesizers on it. Yet there was something vibrant, sensual, in it; not the artificiality associated with electronic instruments now. That's

probably why Hancock is *still* rated the top musician on synthesizer by the readers of *Downbeat*, the most prestigious jazz magazine.)

So I wanted to hear more of Hancock after that. *Thrust* and *Man-Child* followed. These belong to Herbie's "soul funk" phase; he explains, he was "incorporating jazz and funk into a very happy marriage. . It gives the music a character that is broad, vast, yet in touch with the people." I could appreciate that: it's how he had appealed to me in the first place. But these next few albums didn't create the magic for me that *Headhunters* had. I didn't much care for pure funk, I found its beat synthetic and monotonous, whereas the rhythm-and-blues influence on "Chameleon" or the snaky meandering on "Watermelon Man" (so reminiscent of Indian street hawkers' cries) were far more subtle.

Meanwhile, I'd begun tuning in to the soloing on *Headhunters* (whatever little there was, according to purists). I found the concept of improvisation intriguing, since I'd started listening seriously to Indian classical music too. There was something adventurous, challenging in the idea that every performance of the same composition could be quite different from the last.

I was hooked. My quest for jazz commenced. With a couple of fellow enthusiasts whose musical tastes were moving in the same direction, I joined Calcutta's only jazz club, established under the aegis of the American University Center in 1972. Guided by the unfailing process of self-education, I began systematically seeking out recommended records by jazz masters as well as looking into the past work of Herbie Hancock.

Tracing him one phase back to the mid-Sixties when he played in what many regard as the finest jazz combo ever, led by the late Miles Davis. Herbie was one of the key figures in Miles' band, innovating with modes (raga-like scales, instead of the conventional chord-based patterns in jazz), collective improvisation (rather than solos by turns), changing rhythms in the same piece, and writing his trademark lyrical compositions like *The Sorcerer* (1967).

It was Miles who suggested that Herbie shift from acoustic to electric piano, leading up to the sensational plugged-in keyboards trio of Hancock, Chick Corea and Joe Zawinul all on *In a Silent Way* (1969), the origins of fusion, which scandalised critics so much that one commented, "It was like finding a raised lavatory seat in a nunnery." Herbie contributed immensely to the revolutionary transformations wrought in jazz by Miles.

Going back even further to Herbie's early career, when he recorded under his own name for the trendsetting Blue Note label. Discovering for myself why he had built such a reputation already in this period for composition—melodic, rhythmic tunes with a gospel flavour and also for improvisation—characterised by dense chords against light arpeggio runs—culminating in the classic album *Maiden Voyage* (1965). I began to comprehend why Herbie now says, "the acoustic piano is what I do best." The purity and incandescence

Rashbehari Das

Herbie Hancock

of his sound and touch on it are unparalleled.

Realising this deep attachment with the acoustic medium, Herbie returned to it in 1976 by reuniting most of his *Maiden Voyage* crew (trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, bassist Ron Carter, drummer Tony Williams) and adding saxophonist Wayne Shorter (all colleagues under Miles), to constitute the supergroup VSOP which featured on two brilliant double albums released in 1977, *VSOP* and *The Quintet*. This back-to-roots move returned me, now a straight-ahead jazz fan, to Herbie's current music again. In 1982, he revived this band in another incarnation, replacing Shorter and Hubbard with young Turk Wynton Marsalis on another superb twin-LP titled *Quartet*. And in 1986 he scored the sound track for the jazz movie *Round Midnight*. (Another great Hancock sound track was for Antonioni's *Blow-Up* in 1966.)

So, by the time I was sitting awestruck next to the 55-year-young Herbie in Calcutta watching him autograph my copy of *Crossings*, his 1972 record where he first experimented with electronics, I knew pretty much all about his music. But I didn't know about some other things. What does "Mwandishi", the African name he adopted on *Crossings*, mean? "It means 'composer' in Swahili. The percussionist Mtume gave it to me. As supporters of the Black Power movement, we were all into searching for an Afro-American identity." Why doesn't he use it any longer? "It's not that. I don't put it on my discs, but I'll still respond if you call me Mwandishi!"

But at the same time he converted to Nicherin Shoshu Buddhism. "Yes. One night I was tremendously moved, spiritually inspired, by a set that (bassist) Buster Williams played. I told him, whatever makes you play like that, I want to know about it. He introduced me to this Japanese Buddhist sect, which is now called Soka Gakkai. It clicked with my personal beliefs. Other religions gave me more questions than answers. This has taught me that life is eternal, that strength comes from within, that you create your own life through karma and need not just be a victim of external circumstances."

Does he still practise it? "Sure. I believe, I meditate, we chant a Japanese version of lines from the *Lotus Sutra*." How does it influence his music? "I hope my music is a positive inspiration to listeners. You see, music is medicinal in the broadest sense." I began to understand where Herbie's humility, good humour and openness came from. Unlike many a star, he has no ego or hassles whatsoever. Although beset by a tight schedule, he virtually had to be dragged away to lunch, otherwise he'd have gone on talking.

At the Oberoi Grand concert, a schoolmate of mine who now teaches in St Xavier's School reminded me that I'd taped *Headhunters* for him 20 years ago. It struck me that another close friend—now a Bombay-based executive for India's largest-circulating English monthly—who actively shared and continues to share my enthusiasm for Herbie, was surely trying to communicate with me telepathically. From all of us and many more across the world, Mwandishi Herbie, thank you for the music and for helping our generation to cross over into jazz. ■

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says it news and messages are delayed, lost or misplaced do not worry overmuch On and after April 4, it clears up New ties and partnerships are on the anvil to say the least House will need your attention, so will parents and old folks This is a week of pressures and pulls

Taurus
April 21 -- May 20

Take care of the pennies and the shillings will take care of themselves This time you will have to be a tight wad, parsimonious and lean to save Another outstanding trend will be trips and ties, rendezvous and meetings April 1-2, 5-6 are the days when such things will happen

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Chances to improve your station in life Friends and job opportunities will come your way Your emotions will be deeply aroused and care must be taken in relationships, matters to do with children and speculation Luckily, on and after April 4, Venus helps you in love, comforts and finances You could plan a trip now

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The moon's first quarter focalises your personal problems, health, attitudes and opinions Be tolerant and outgoing and do not judge others on insufficient evidence On the positive side, you will make a headway in your work and should have a position of responsibility or trust

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Time to reach out to people though it will have unforseen complications. Be optimistic, do your duty and rest assured things will work out by May There is a strong concentration on collaborations, ties, contracts, contacts, letters, calls and ads Romance is definitely in the air. Health may pose problems

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

The accent will be on joint finances, loans, mortgage, buying, selling and service before self, so to say This last aspect of service will win friends for you For finances April 3-8 will be crucial It would be a wise policy to entertain and be friendly Children and house moving have your attention

Libra
September 23 — October 22

While there could be some opposition to plans/ideas, you could steer around it be charming and conciliatory and thus get work done It is not an impossible situation Your friends well wishers, sweethearts will stand up to you, assures Ganesha April 3-4 will be pointers to the week

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Do not be impressionable and allow people to sway you, because your job/profession is very much at stake here You need to clear up a few misunderstandings First two days is best for getting on with the work Pets and your own health do need immediate and very careful attention You face many responsibilities

Sagittarius
November 23 -- December 20

You will feel unduly optimistic and could have a totally different way of doing things Children, ideas creative use of things, inventions, schemes to get rich quick are what the week is all about A few false starts should not be allowed to bother you Go ahead Trips and ties are forefold

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

You will have to be upbeat and most certainly, put in a lot of extra effort and that will tire you out, causing a different set of posers Push, relax, push, relax is your best bet for success Family matters could bog you down, unless you are careful and diplomatic April 1-2, 6-7 are important

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

Do not go in for 'shady stuff', running with a disreputable set of people or angling for the unlikely and the dangerous News, views messages ads, publicity ventures contacts should play a lead role for you Trips and contracts the signing of documents and a touch of romance forefold

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Listen to both sides if you can let go of the unessentials however exciting, learn to buy and sell by taking expert advice is the astro message for you All agreements and settlements may not be fair Rather they may be inevitable You may have to divide up the money or business or associations Health safeguards essential

BIRTHDAYS

March 31: Moon square Venus means overindulgence, expenditures, lack of judgment, buying and selling. It could be a problem handling them.

April 1: Moon trine Jupiter leads to housing, work, love and family. Loans, funds and new jobs are on the anvil. Health will improve.

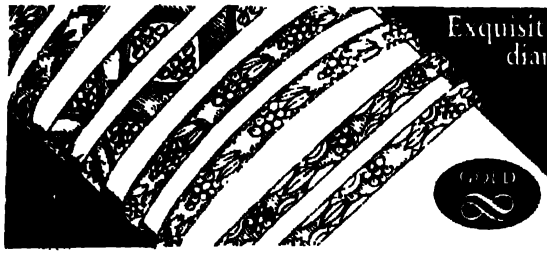
April 2: Moon-Neptune trine helps musicians, lawyers, writers, enterpreneurs, industrialists, astrologers and all those who live and enact before the limelight of publicity.

April 3: Venus sextile Saturn formation brings in money and honey which will both be yours. A chance marriage or business partnership is possible. A year to advance and enjoy life in general.

April 4: This full moon helps you to develop contacts, have friends, go on a journey, face difficult and tough situations and come out of a light spot.

April 5: Moon square Uranus does show radical changes and perhaps a different lifestyle altogether It may not be simple and easy to do it.

April 6: Moon Jupiter sextile means opportunities, so be happy. These will be in the form of finances, work, romance and marriage.



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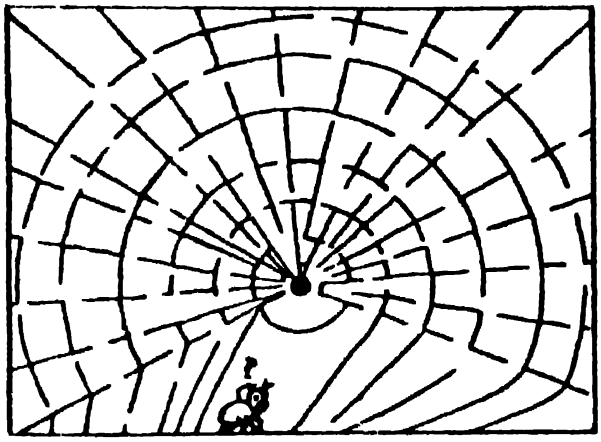
JUNIOR WHIRL

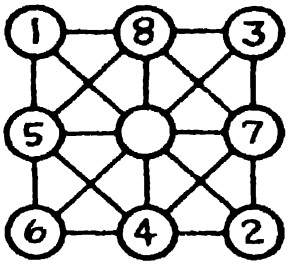
HAL KAUFMAN



WEBWARD HO! Follow that bug — see if you can make your way through openings in this spider web to black dot at center.

PITCH IN! Find Ed, Dan, Stan, Flo, Ron, Al and Sue among consecutive letters of the following sentence. We need both concern for, and an understanding of, lots of environmental issues. Time limit: two minutes.

PULL SWITCH!

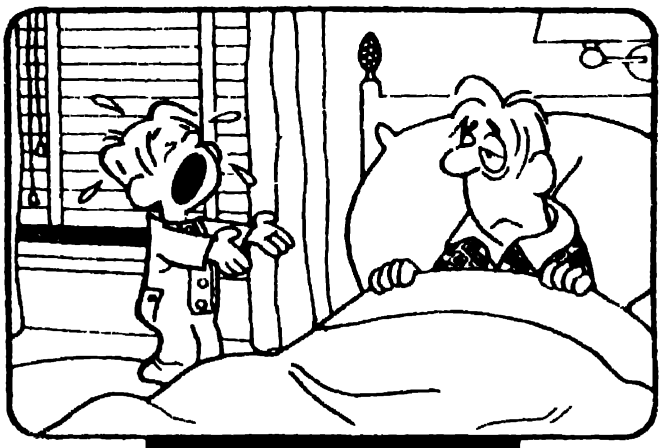


Observe that numbers shown (1-8) total 12 on each of the four sides at right. It is possible to move these numbers one at a time, using empty circle to start, and in nine moves attain a total of 15 per side. How it's done?

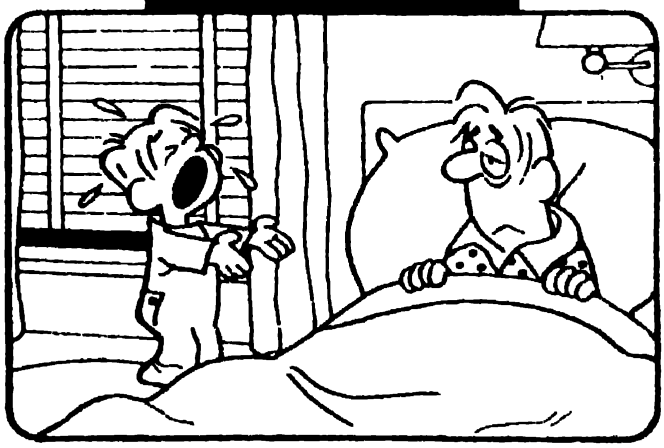
P.S. Use of numbered disks will facilitate moves.

[illegible]

HOCUS-FOCUS



HOCUS-FOCUS



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Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

DIFFERENCES 1. Blind cords are missing. 2. Buttons are missing. 3. Bedpost is missing. 4. Hand is moved. 5. Pajamas are different. 6. Sheet fold is different.

HIDE AND SEEK WILD LIFE

FIND a creature — animal, bird, insect, etc — listed below to complete the name of each of the following flowers and plants (Ex: No 1 is a lion).

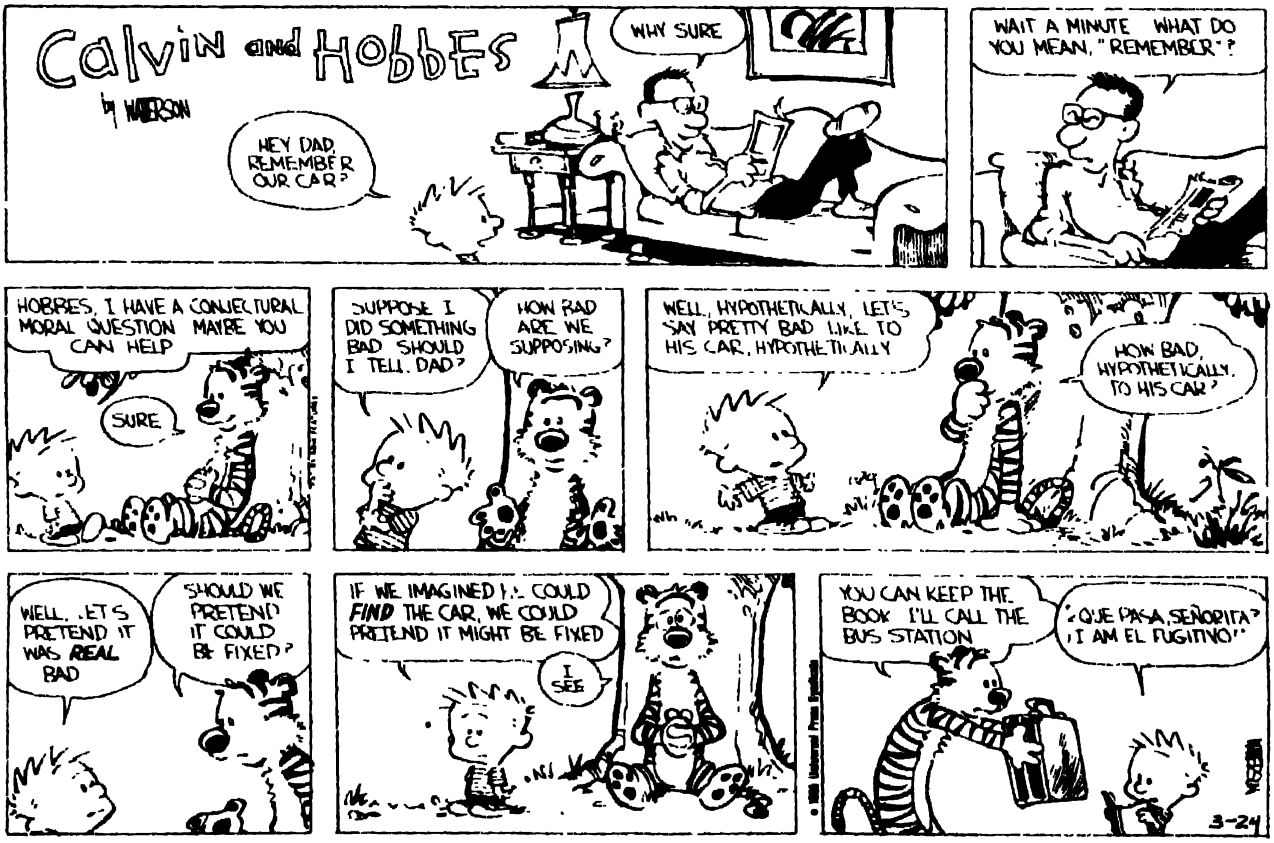
1. Dande _____.
2. _____lily.
3. _____glove.
4. _____balm.
5. _____grass.
6. _____bane.
7. _____flax.
8. _____spur.
9. _____tail.
10. _____berry.
11. _____root.
12. _____cabbage.

Creatures: Cat, snake, lark, fox, goose, skunk, bee, tiger, flea, crab, lion, toad.

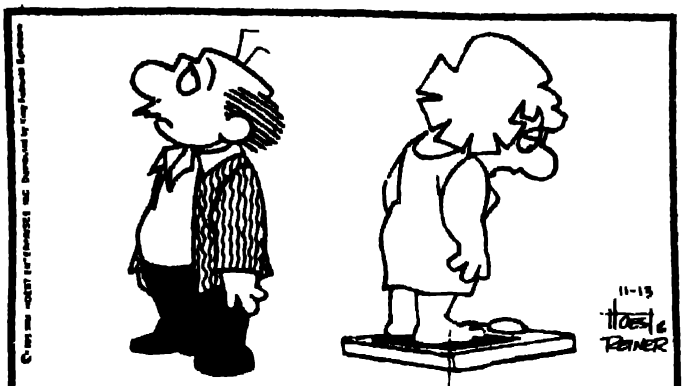
[illegible]

ARCHIE

HENRY SCARPELLI / CRAIG BOLDMAN
Archie
WATCHA BEEN WORKING ON, DILTON?
NOTHING TOO INTERESTING! SOME PHYSICS STUFF... SOME QUANTUM MECHANICS STUFF...
...SOME HAIR-GROWING STUFF...
HUH?
CHEMISTRY LAB
A HAIR-GROWTH FORMULA? DOES IT WORK?
MY INVENTIONS ALWAYS WORK! IT'LL GROW HAIR LIKE CRAZY!
DILTON'S A GENIUS! HE'S NEVER FAILED YET!
I'LL LET YOU BE THE GUINEA PIG!
WELL-- IN THE INTERESTS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE!
PROF FLUTEGNOOT TRIED MY FORMULA! WHY?
THAT SHOULD BE AS OBVIOUS AS THE SHINE ON HIS HEAD!
THERE'S SOMETHING HE MAY NOT UNDERSTAND!
I DO NOW!
HENRY SCARPELLI CRAIG BOLDMAN
3-24
IT GROWS HAIR YOU'VE GOT, NOT HAIR YOU DON'T!

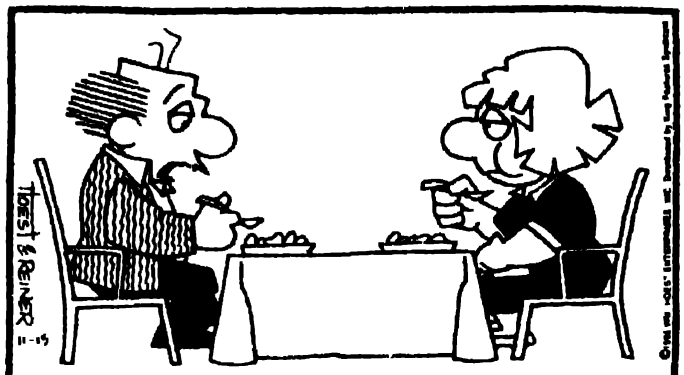

Calvin and Hobbes
by WATTERSON
HEY DAD, REMEMBER OUR CAR?
WHY SURE
WAIT A MINUTE WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "REMEMBER"?
HOBBES, I HAVE A CONJECTURAL MORAL QUESTION MAYBE YOU CAN HELP
SURE
SUPPOSE I DID SOMETHING BAD SHOULD I TELL DAD?
HOW BAD ARE WE SUPPOSING?
WELL, HYPOTHETICALLY, LET'S SAY PRETTY BAD LIKE TO HIS CAR, HYPOTHETICALLY
HOW BAD, HYPOTHETICALLY, TO HIS CAR?
WELL, LET'S PRETEND IT WAS REAL BAD
SHOULD WE PRETEND IT COULD BE FIXED?
IF WE IMAGINED IT COULD FIND THE CAR, WE COULD PRETEND IT MIGHT BE FIXED
I SEE
YOU CAN KEEP THE BOOK I'LL CALL THE BUS STATION
"¿QUE PASA, SEÑORITA? ¡I AM EL FUGITIVO!"
3-24

THE LOCKHORNS

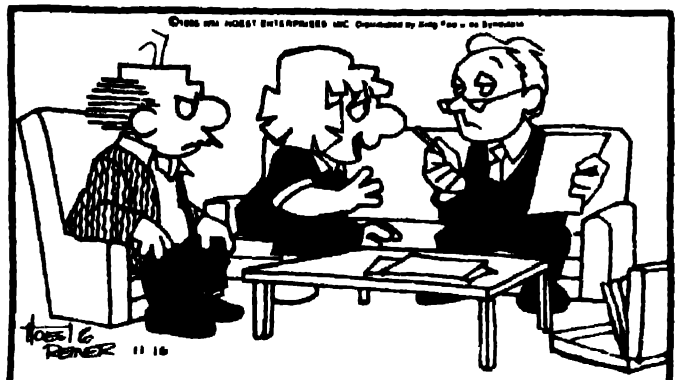


"I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO LOSE, NO MATTER HOW MANY FAT-FREE COOKIES I EAT!"

"OF COURSE, WHEN WE MARRIED, YOU DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE WATCHING TV EVERY NIGHT ... BACK THEN, THERE WASN'T ANY TV."

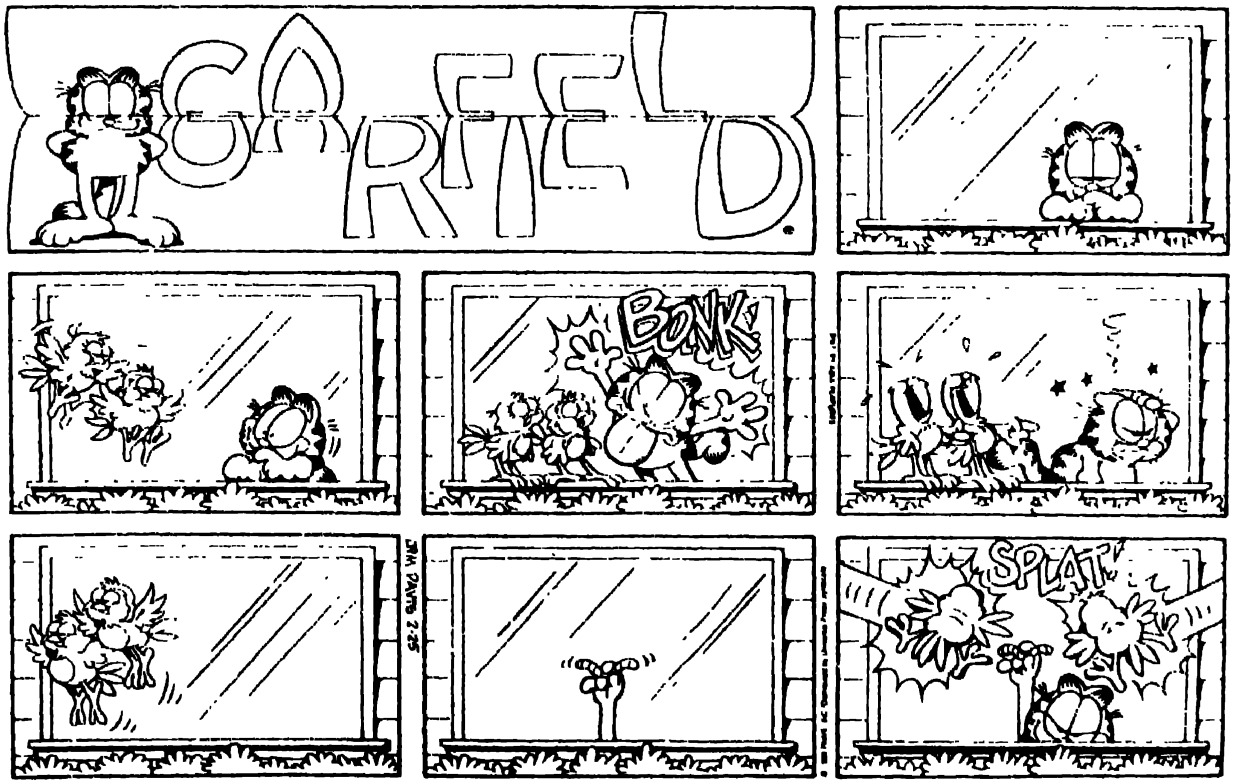


"IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YOU MADE THIS WITHOUT THE USE OF A CEMENT MIXER."

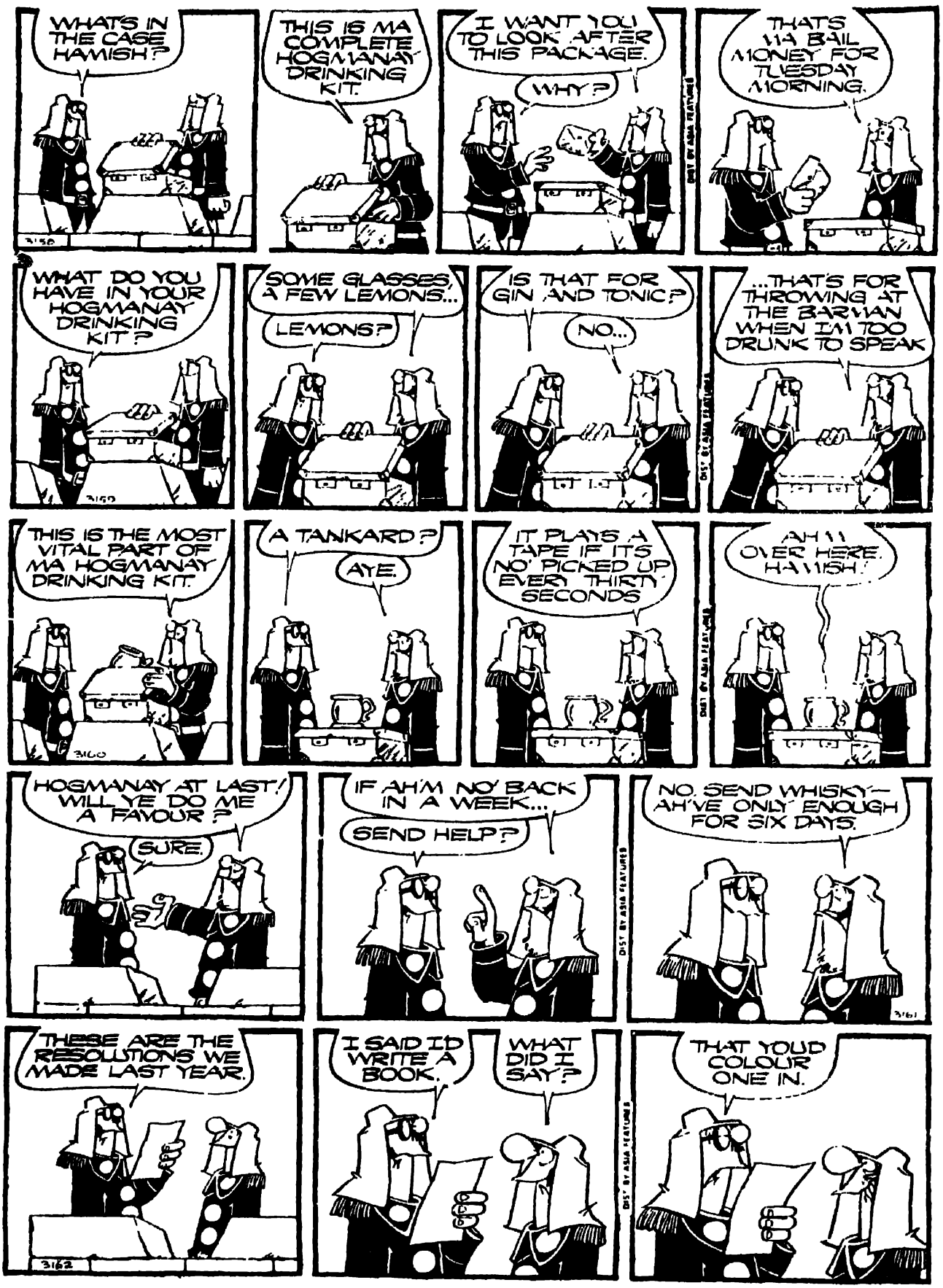


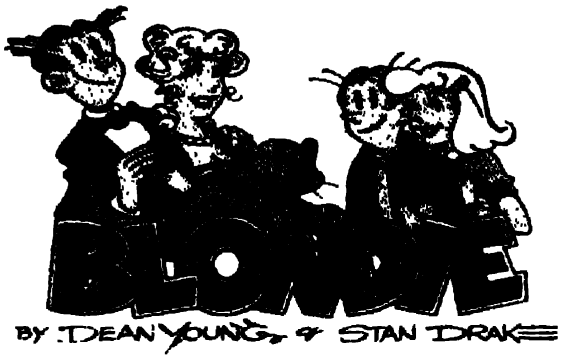
"I LIKE THE DOUBLE INDEMNITY PART. WE'LL TAKE IT!"

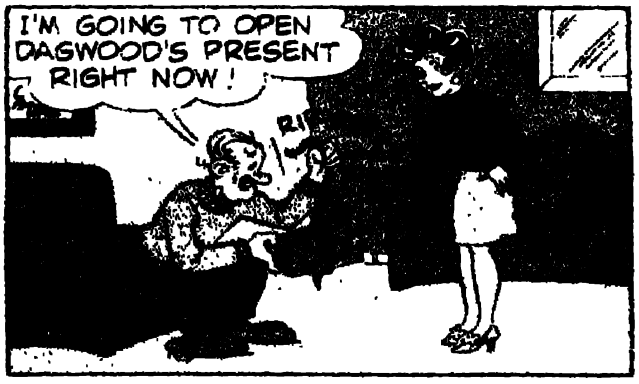
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

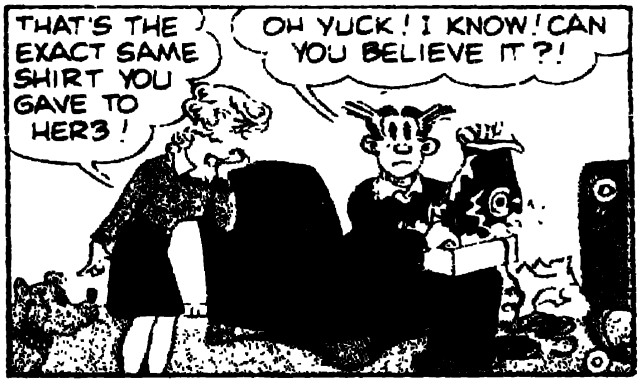


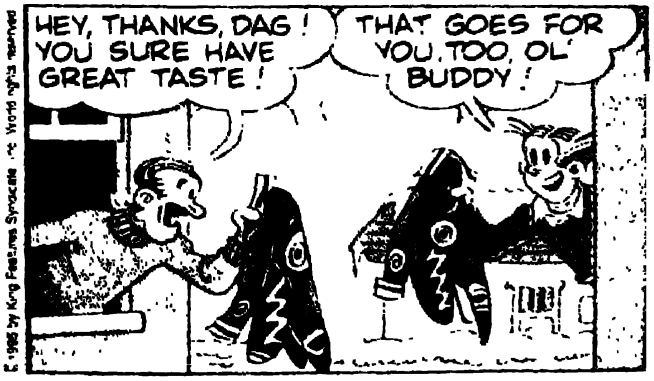
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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FOCUS

WAITING FOR SUU

***Vir Sanghvi** stands outside dissident leader Suu Kyi's house and watches Burma's version of political activism*

Suu Kyi, flanked by bodyguards, addresses the crowd

The vigil begins at lunchtime. Every Saturday and Sunday at 4 pm, Aung San Suu Kyi appears at the gate of her house on Rangoon's University Avenue and speaks to whoever wants to listen for an hour. Because Suu Kyi is not allowed to address public meetings, she cannot step out of the gate. The Saturday and Sunday lectures are the closest she can get to public meetings.

And so at lunchtime, the crowds begin to gather. There are no chairs, no benches; there is no place at all to sit. So, thousands of ordinary Burmese bring pieces of newspapers and crowd on the pavement (some sitting at the edge of an open drain) outside the University Avenue building.

The Junta's police force is there to ensure that traffic is not disrupted and to guarantee that the afternoon talks do not degenerate into full-fledged political rallies. Barriers are put up on both sides of the road to prevent the crowd from spilling over and normal traffic proceeds along the road that divides the crowd into two.

Because the crowd swells by the week, nobody is sure of finding place near the gate where Suu Kyi will appear. Hence the decision to come early and bag a piece of ground under the hot Rangoon sun. Perhaps because of the police or perhaps because the Burmese are polite people on the whole, the crowd is extraordinarily well behaved. There is no shoving and pushing and foreigners are welcome. Consequently, the Saturday and Sunday *darshans* have become tourist attractions and White faces mingle with Burmese.

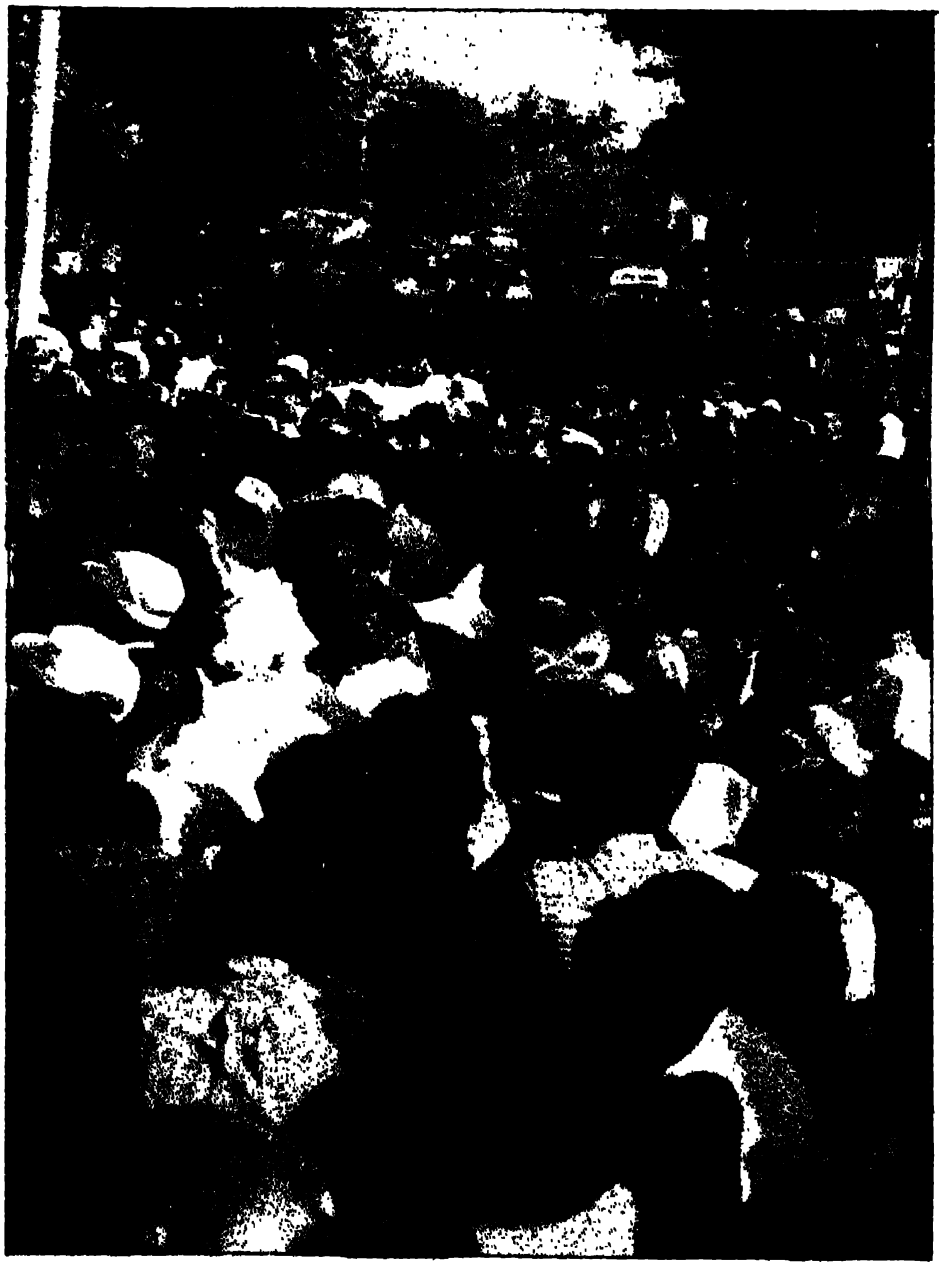
At five minutes past four, Suu Kyi appears. Half-an-hour before her

arrival, her volunteers, in white shirts and dark lungees (all Burmese wear lungees; nobody wears trousers) have taken up position in front of the gate. And when Suu Kyi climbs up to ensure that her face is visible over the top of the gate, two volunteers stand with her, their eagle eyes scanning the crowd for signs of Junta-inspired trouble.

In person, Suu Kyi is far more attractive than she appears in her photographs. She is beautiful but there is a certain strength to her face that the camera never captures. Her speaking voice embodies the same qualities; it is mellifluous but there is a steely determination to her tone.

Guards outside Suu Kyi's house

The crowd begins to gather two hours before Suu Kyi appears



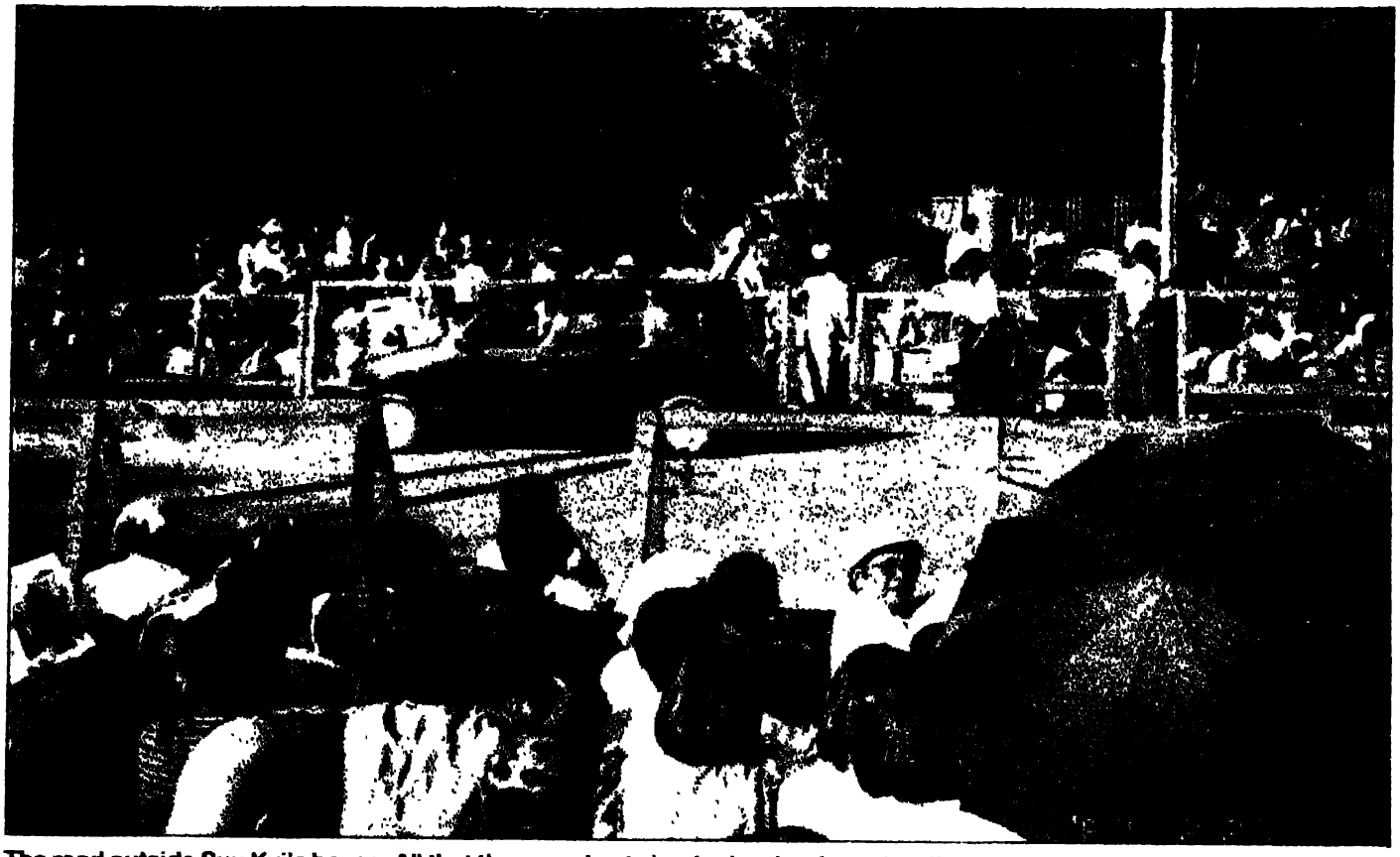
Her talk to the crowd consists of answers to questions that people have sent in. First she reads out the question and then after a smile or a little laugh, she answers at length. Most of the questions have to do with democracy. Since the isolationism of the Ne Win era, most Burmese have had little contact with the outside world. They are dimly aware that America and England exist but they assume that they are military dictatorships as well. Suu Kyi tries to tell them what the world is like and to explain that democracy is their right.

Some speakers inspire crowds with their fervour. Suu Kyi is not like that. There is no hysteria, she never raises her voice and the crowd does not resort to slogan shouting. Rather, she educates her people. And most listen attentively, their faces pictures of devotion.

At the end of the talk, she switches to English in response, she says, to requests from the many foreigners who have gathered at University Avenue. Her English betrays few traces of her Burmese origins, it is the diction of an Oxbridge educated person, not even that of somebody who went to Delhi's Lady Sriram College (as Suu Kyi did).

The English portion of the talk has two principal components. The first is to warn tourists not to be misled by the Burma they see on the streets of Rangoon. The Burma of the villages is a very different place: poor, primitive and deprived. Nor are things getting better. "Educational standards are not just low, they are falling," she explains.

The second component is to dissuade foreigners from investing in Burma. Things are changing very fast, she says. There is no guarantee of how



The road outside Suu Kyi's house. All that the crowd gets is a look at her from this distance

long this regime will last. And investment in a society that is undergoing a transformation may not be wise.

She is not against investment or prosperity, she explains "But a society that is prosperous when its people are unhappy or oppressed, is not a successful society," she insists

In the Burmese part of her speech, she has given the example of Singapore — one of the principal investors in today's Burma — as a society that denies political freedom to its citizens. She does not repeat this in English but the message is unmistakable.

Then, almost as suddenly as she has appeared, Suu Kyi smiles and disappears into the bungalow The crowd disperses silently under the watchful eye of the police Many will come back the following day for the Sunday talk. But there will also be thousands of new listeners.

Nobody can dispute Suu Kyi's sincerity. She has suffered considerable hardship for the sake of her people. Equally, it is as clear that in Rangoon at least, she is astonishingly popular. It takes guts to assemble outside her house and yet thousands of Burmese are willing to squat on open drains just to hear her voice

But none of this is to say that her struggle will necessarily succeed. It is difficult to assess the extent to which her message has penetrated to the villages. And while the Burmese government does not respect human rights or democratic niceties, it is still not a repressive regime in the Lon Nol or Pol Pot class; hence, it is difficult to predict how eager the people are to overthrow the government.

Moreover, the government has also provided its own counterbalance to Suu Kyi's crusade. Suu Kyi is aiming for the same Western model of governance that we have chosen in India; one that emphasises liberty over affluence To those of us who regard freedom of expression as a basic right, no other model can make sense

But the counterpoint to Western liberalism is Southeast Asian affluence The three most influential Asians of the last four decades have been Mao Zedong, Jawaharlal Nehru and Lee Yuan Kew.

It is Lee's prescription — more economic growth, less political freedom but no unacceptable repression — that most of south-east Asia has followed. The Burmese government hopes that this will work in a country that is as Southeast Asian as it is south Asian.

Nu Win's isolationism has been reversed, foreign investment is eagerly sought and Rangoon is full of office blocks that are half-way constructed by Singaporean and Thai firms. Eight different kinds of foreign beer are readily available, Adrian Zecha has already taken over the old Strand hotel and opened an Italian restaraunt (for those foreigners who prefer their noodles Bolognaise rather than Burmese) and the streets are lined with hoardings for Apple computers and Japanese watches

The government hopes that like many Southeast Asians, the Burmese will prefer affluence to political freedom. Already, the citizens of Rangoon have seen their lives transformed beyond belief. This has not prevented them from gathering at University Avenue but who can predict what will happen in the future?

Hence Suu Kyi's message to those who want to invest in Burma: don't. She is bright enough to realise that rising affluence may knock the bottom out of her struggle. But she is brave enough to hope that in the end the Burmese will pick democracy over dollars. ■

Photographs by the author

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This week: Tina Munim (Ambani)

What happened to her?: What do you mean what *happened*? She hit the jackpot, got the man of her dreams and lived happily ever after

No kidding?: Honest. Yes, dear reader, this is one of the true love stories of our times. Our heroine, Tina Munim, is a beautiful young model from a progressive Gujarati family, when she is spotted on the cover of a women's magazine by Dev Anand. The actor producer-director-writer-humbug is looking for a heroine for *Des Pardes*. She is cast as the heroine and the film becomes a hit—the last box-office success of Anand's career.

Tina is all set to become one of the top three heroines when a misguided sense of loyalty to teenage boyfriend Sanjay Dutt stops her from getting there. She turns down big movies (she was the first choice for *Ek Duje Ke Liye*, for instance), accepts rubbish (*Rocky*, starring you-know-who) and then, is forced to drop Dutt when he becomes a complete junkie.

Things look bleak.

Isn't this a love story?: Yes, yes, but you have to wait for that bit. It doesn't happen until 1986, seven years after *Des Pardes* when she meets and falls in love with the Gujarati community's most eligible bachelor: Anil Ambani. He is fighting V.P. Singh's raid raj while his father languishes in a San Diego hospital and the two are drawn irresistibly to each other.

By 1987, the family is back on top again and like all Hindi movies, the parents get in on the act and offer to find our hero a fat, rich girl so that his marriage can become an industrial alliance.

He says. No way, I love Tina.

What happens next?: Not a great deal, for a while at least. The couple *appear* to drift apart. Tina gives up on movies (she was always out of place in the film industry, anyway) dabbles in the family business, goes off to Australia and seems to be out of Anil's life.

He throws himself into the business, becomes a huge success but refuses to a) get married and b) even get involved with any girl.

Really?: You bet! This is true love, the real thing. If they can't see each other then the couple won't see anybody else either.

Does Daddy relent?: Nobody is sure what happens and how but suddenly, a few years later, the couple appear to resume contact. A week or so after this happens, they get engaged at a small party at the Ambani residence in Bombay's Cuffe Parade. The cake says: "There Is No Alternative." The acronym for this is, of course, TINA.

All is well?: And how? A huge wedding follows. The Ambani family clasps Tina to its bosom and she, in turn, becomes the perfect daughter-in-law.

And is she a glamorous socialite now?: No, that's the funny thing. She's a bit of a recluse. Anil is much more into the film industry than she is. The couple don't seem to go to parties, they are never spotted at premieres. Tina does not hot-foot it to Davos every year, and her public profile is surprisingly low.

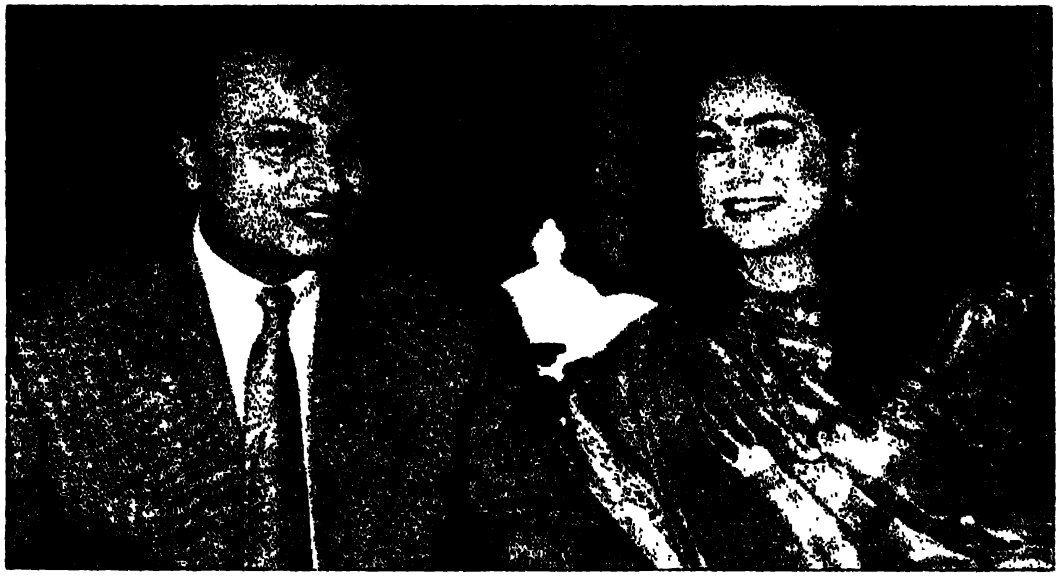
So what does she do?: She concentrates on raising their two children, he cuts down on travelling, they spend a lot of time together and socialise only with close friends.

Is that it?: Well, she seems to be emerging out of that now that the kids are growing up. She has an event planned which involves getting India's best painters together for an exhibition tentatively called Harmony.

You know, this sounds too good to be true!: Perhaps. But isn't it reassuring that in these cynical times it is possible for two people, no matter how rich, how good-looking and how famous, to actually find happiness with each other?

This sounds like a Hindi movie: Probably. May be all that Tina's career lacked was the right hero. She's found him now ■

Anil Ambani with wife Tina



FIRST PERSON

***NAYANIKA CHATTERJEE**, one of the most ravishing models to walk the ramp, needs no introduction. From pirouetting on the catwalk, she has come a long way, choreographing fashion shows in the country.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be able to do exactly what I want and not feel that I was hurting anyone.
What is your greatest fear?
Sickness in old age and therefore being dependent.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My parents alone.
What do you dislike most in others?
Dishonesty.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My wanting to keep everyone happy all the time and failing to do so.
What is your most precious possession?
My art material (specially the ones from China).
What objects do you always carry?
A small brass laughing buddha.
What makes you most depressed?
The fact that there are so many unhappy people.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Lots — too much to get into.

What objects do you always carry?

A small brass laughing buddha

Rashbehari Das

What is your favourite word?
You know.
What is your favourite journey?
Any place without tension.

What is your favourite dream?
That my husband and children are involved in encouraging me.
What is your nightmare?
That I will never fully realise that happiness can only come from within.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Whoever and whatever I have now.
What is your source of sustenance?
Food and lots of it.
On what occasions do you lie?
When conflicting values arise and I want to avoid hurting the people concerned. For example, grandfather's values and mine.
What is your greatest regret?
I could have done much more and still not trying to amend the situation.

What has been your happiest moment?
There are too many to pen.
What brings tears to your eyes?
When I watch someone eat alone, specially if there are poor or helpless people around.

What do you envy most in others?

When someone is not inhibited

How do you relax?
Read, listen to music, try my Chinese paint brushes.
What do you envy most in others?
When someone is not inhibited.

How would you like to be remembered?
That I would be remembered is enough.
How would you like to die?
In my sleep — painless and quiet.

In Karnataka the entrepreneurs can now dance their way to profits

If you have a tourism- releated project in mind, fill in and mail the coupon to :

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Department of Tourism
Government of Karnataka
I Floor, 'F' Block, Cauvery Bhavan,
K.G Road, Bangalore - 560 009.
Tel : 2215489 Fax : 080-2272403

Karnataka tourism invites investors

The tourism industry in Karnataka is poised for a big future Drawing 18 million visitors annually and with a turnover of Rs.1,200 crore, the state boasts of a wide variety of tourist attractions covering history, architecture, art and culture, wild life sanctuaries, beaches and metropolitan centres. All laid out in 1,91,791 square kilometres of Nature's choicest land.

Incentives and Concessions for the Tourism Industry in the State

The Karnataka Government has a package of incentives and concessions for the tourism industry.

● Investment subsidy ● Exemption from sales tax, luxury tax, stamp duty & concession in registration charges ● Power tariff relaxed ● Waiver of fee for converting agricultural land into commercial land ● Special concession for various categories ● Incentives for utilising non-conventional energy sources and also for a large tourism industry

Single Window Agency

The Department of Tourism has setup a Single Window Agency to clear the projects speedily. It

● considers the applications of entrepreneurs and the locations of the project ● finalises the extent of land /building required for the project and enables the acquisition and sanction of same through the appropriate Government Agencies ● considers means of financing the project by way of subsidy, equity, loans through the Government agencies like KSFC, KSIIDC ● sanctions infrastructural facility by way of power and water.

A few possibilities

● Developing Hotels, Beach resorts, Eco-resorts and Convention centres ● Promoting Water sports and developing Golf courses ● Bangalore having International Standard Airport, there is scope to develop airports in Hassan, Hubli and Mysore.

Profit from leisure

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Karnataka. A lasting romance.

7 APRIL 1996

The Telegraph *magazine*

POST MORTEM

Poetic Touch

■ Javed Akhtar adopts a simplistic style to express his thoughts in his poems which makes him so very popular with the masses ('Man of Letters', February 18).

He is a modern poet no doubt; his imagery will vouch for it. Akhtar has a kind of magnetism in his personality, voice and thoughts that makes him an instant hit with the public.

But he is not a kind of poet who will allow his lines to go unnoticed. He has in him a lot of business savvy, too. He has shrewdly assessed the market and realised the kind of poetry people lap up.

Joyneel Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ Akhtar has earned so much fame in such a short time that he can almost be called a legend. His lyrics in *Silsila, 1942: A Love Story, Papa Kahte Hain* are sheer lines of exquisite poetry.

The adjectives employed to describe the imagined beauty, *Ek ladki ko dekha to...* are really high poetry.

Yashwant Singh,
Jamshedpur

Pradyumn Das

Javed Akhtar at a poetry reading session in Calcutta

■ Creative geniuses have always been successful in more fields than one. Take Akhtar, for instance. He excells in all departments of literary creativity: script, story and lyrics writing.

Arup R. Raha,
Jamshedpur

■ Akhtar, for sometime in his career, was forced to pen the kind of stuff that is normally not associated with a poet-lyricist of his calibre. But keeping pace with the changing times and rapid commercialisation of the film industry, he also had to bend certain rules. Now that he has established himself, commercially, he has gone back to his refined couplets.

Biswajit Kar,
Kharagpur

■ Akhtar was known all this while more as the husband of Shabana Azmi and the writer of gripping dialogues. This is the first time he has established himself as an independent identity: a poet who also is a lyricist and a writer.

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ Akhtar's journey through life, with its proverbial ups and downs, will be inspiring many young and aspiring writers and poets.

It is wrong to say Akhtar has suddenly emerged as a poet. For a lyricist is also a poet and some of Akhtar's lyrics like the ones he composed for *Silsila* are sheer poetry.

Utpal Man,
Bankura

■ It may be far-fetched, but not an impossibility, if Akhtar turns to film direction. For a person as creative as Akhtar it would be a natural transition.

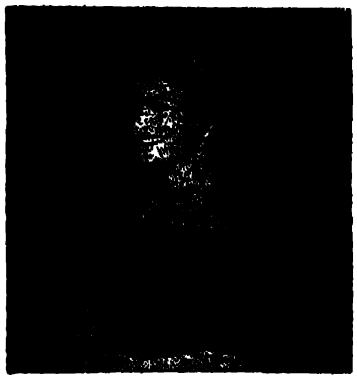
Partha Modak,
Howrah

New Role

'Lights, Camera, Action!' (March 3) presented Madhabi Mukherjee in a new role: from an actress to a director. This is good news for Tollywood which has long been going through a bad phase.

Shantanu Das,
Calcutta

INSIDE



Sophiya Haque of Channel V

PAGE 4

BOTH CHANNEL V and MTV were in India recently with their promotional tours. So, which of the two music giants will finally win over the Indian audience?

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
20 INNER EYE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover: Rahul Khanna by Rashbehari Das

COVER STORY

Which one will the Indian viewer prefer; ***Shameem Akthar*** *reports on the battle of the two music giants*

Channel V's Road Show in Calcutta

ASK ANYONE AT CHANNEL V about their much-vaunted competitors, MTV, and they will look at you incredulously. Competition? And from MTV? You have just got to be kidding! Channel V has the Indian market all sown up, and there's little chance of anyone else getting even a note in edgeways. This competition/rivalry exists only in the fevered imagination of the media.

At the MTV office, it is much the same story. Suggest that they may have a hard time weaning the Indian viewer away from Channel V, and what you get are pitying looks. Don't you know, they ask patiently, that MTV is the music channel of choice the world over? That anyone who has even a passing interest in Western music swears by MTV? So, why on earth would they feel threatened by V?

MTV Vs Chann

Rashbehari Das

But behind this bravado displayed by the two principals, there are some very real worries. While Channel V, which has with its unique brand of Hindi film/pop/rap music leavened with Western hits, captured the heart of the average Indian, it can't help but be worried by the entry of the music giant, MTV, into its territory After all, MTV was in India long before Channel V was even created, and may well recapture some of its old magic.

Channel V, in fact, was created once MTV somewhat messily severed its umbilical cord with the Star Television Network in 1994, and went off the Indian screens It made a reappearance last year when Doordarshan aired a two-hour programme presented by the channel But at the beginning of this year, MTV came back to India as a full-time 24-hour channel, presenting its own brand of funky, way-out programming to this country.

But MTV is not sure that wooing the Indian viewer back is going to be easy. Over the years, Indians have proved over and over again that though they may like to wear Levis jeans and eat Dominos pizzas, when it comes to entertainment, they prefer their own software. Given a choice between *Didi tera devar deewana* and *Take That*, they would go for the former. And given a choice between Alisha Chinai and Janet Jackson, our Baby Doll would win hands down.

So, MTV is well aware that it has the mother of all battles on its hands. And William Roedy, president (internatio-

Rahul Khanna and model Achla Sachdev at Anticlock, during MTV's promotional tour in Calcutta

KNOW YOUR VEEJAYS

No matter which channel they are on

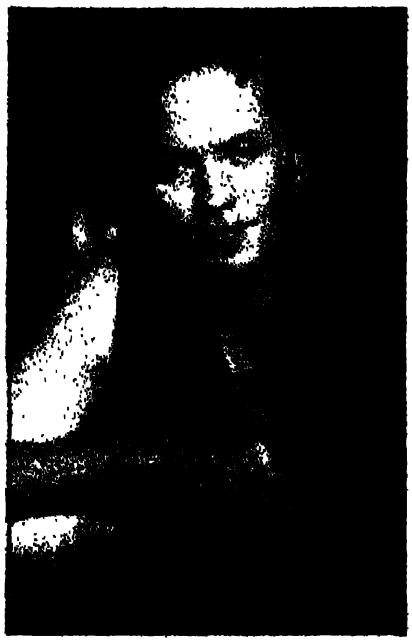
MTV

Danny McGill: Of Chinese-Irish parentage, Danny was born in Japan and grew up in Los Angeles. Since then, however, he has lived in such places as Seoul, Hong Kong and Bombay, making him a truly international person. He first joined MTV in 1991 and formed his own band, Power Onions. He left the channel in 1994 though and went to Los Angeles to make a career in music for himself. But he's now back in India and on MTV; so make the most of him.

Rahul Khanna: The son of Vinod Khanna was widely expected to try his luck in the movies. But unlike his brother Akshaye, he decided to give films a miss and began veejaying on MTV Asia. Brought up in Bombay, Rahul was bitten by the show business bug early, and studied film and video at the School of Visual Arts in New York. He now presents a number of programmes on MTV: *Superock*, *Alternative Nation* and *MTV Most Wanted*. And given his looks, it's no surprise that he's a big hit with the girls.

Anu Kottoor: Until recently, she was known as Chunky Pandey's girlfriend, but now Anu has more fans than her flop actor boyfriend. The former Miss India is now based in Singapore, from where she hosts various shows, apart from travelling all over India making films and videos for the channel. When Kottoor is not working, she loves following fashion and shopping. She is remarkably easy on the eye with her light brown hair and fresh complexion, but it will be some time before she is totally at ease before the camera.

Mike Kasem: The son of the legendary radio-TV personality, Casey Kasem, Mike was born in Los Angeles and trained at the Academy of Radio Broadcasting in Huntington Beach. He began his career with *Inside Track*, a monthly entertainment magazine on audio cassette, on which he interviewed stars from films and music. Apart from music, Kasem is interested in mountain-biking and water skiing.



Danny McGill

Tara Deshpande: She was a finalist for the Miss India 1994 contest, but had to drop out at the last minute because of a sudden illness. A graduate in economics and political science from St Xaviers' College in Bombay, Tara was interested in the theatre and starred in several plays on the Bombay stage. Apart from serious reading — Milan Kundera, Vikram Seth, Stephen Spender, Yeats are some of her favourites — Deshpande also has a keen interest in the arts.

Rajeev Datt: He was born in Dehradun, but was brought up in Canada and the United States. A natural athlete, Datt was a tennis pro in Canada, where he also dabbled in the theatre. Since his return to India, he has starred in the latest music video of the Indian rock band, Indus Creed, and has won many modelling assignments with leading Indian fashion designers with his striking good looks. And now, of course, there is his career with MTV.

Preeti Sethi: She started at MTV as an intern during her second year at university, and shortly afterwards became a production assistant on various MTV news documentaries. Since then, she has worked on such shows as *24 Hours in Rock and Roll*, *Help Not Wanted*, and is now a reporter and producer on MTV News. Currently based in Singapore, some of Sethi's more unusual assignments include shooting behind the scenes at a cockfight, and taping a neurosurgeon who listens to hard rock while performing brain surgery.

Sharon Gomes: As producer/news anchor for MTV Asia, Gomes' tasks include conceptualising news stories, directing the shoots, interviewing Asian and international artistes, writing the news scripts, conducting research and interfacing with the record companies. And if you think that's a tall order, then consider this: she also found the time to co-present the first Asian Youth Forum on Aids. But the best thing that Gomes likes about her job is the travel that is such an essential part of it.

[V]

CHANNEL V

Javed Jaffrey: He first came to fame as the loose-limbed dancer who made quite an impression in some of the cameos that he performed in Hindi movies. But this son of yester-year comedian Jagdeep didn't quite make it in films, and was hanging around the fringes of Bollywood when Channel V discovered him. Since then Jaffrey hasn't looked back, hosting such programmes as *Videocon Flashback* and *Timex Time Pass*, and establishing himself as the primary comic talent of the channel.

Ruby Bhatia: She first appeared on the Channel V screen as a gauche, unsophisticated teenager, who thought that jumping into swimming pools with the likes of Gulshan Grover made for great television (well, strangely enough, it did!). These days, however, Ruby is the epitome of sophistication, clad in designer rags and impeccably coiffed even as she barges into people's houses as part of her *In Your Face Routine*. And her *Palmolive Ek Ka Teen* is particularly well-appreciated.

Sophiya Haque: The daughter of a Bangladeshi father and an English mother, Sophiya had formed a music band of her own before she decided to experiment with the world of veejaying. She was one of the first veejays to make an impression on Indian audiences and remains an all-time favourite. There are those who say, though, that Haque has been cosmetically altered over the last year (a la Pamela Anderson), but that may well be a foul rumour.

Luke Kenny: He is the man whose flowing locks would put even the pretty Sophiya to shame. And his Hindi is far better than the desi Ruby's. But then, Luke Kenny, despite looking very *firang* indeed, has been born and brought up in India and considers himself to be a true *Bhartiya*. What's more, in addition to being a veejay of some distinction, he also has a fine singing voice and would have little problem finding an alternative career.

Alessandra: She is, perhaps, the most non-descript of the people on this list. That's not to say that she's not good-looking; Alessandra is very pretty indeed. But for some strange reason, she looks different in every programme she hosts and one can't help thinking that she would be impossible to recognise if one met her on the street. But a competent veejay nonetheless, despite the striking lack of star quality.

Rageshwari: She tried her luck with Hindi movies — as every pretty teenager in Bombay seems to do these days — and starred in *Aankhen*. The film was a great film, some said because of the superhit song, *Lal dupatte walli tera nuam to bata*, but Rageshwari's career went nowhere after that. Since then, she's got a fresh lease of life with the *BPL Oye* show, which she hosts with a gamine charm.

Tich: She's the fresh-faced youngster who has recently debuted on Channel V with *BPL Oye*. Unfortunately, she's still better-known as Tanisha, the younger sister of movie star Kajol and daughter of Tanuja. But given the professional ease with which Tich (that's how she's billed on the show) conducts herself on camera, there's little doubt that she's a star in the making. Provided, of course, she doesn't switch to the big screen like her big sister.

Javed Jaffrey

nal) MTV, admits that India is the company's top-most priority now. So, the channel is going all out with new and innovative programming, and is coming to town with such old favourites as Danny McGill, who used to work for it during its first innings in India.

On one level, Channel V's confidence doesn't seem misplaced. The channel, which emerged from the ashes of the fight between Star TV and MTV, was launched with just a skeletal three-member bureau. What's more, it had to start from scratch, designing a new logo (which looked suspiciously like the old MTV logo with its ends chopped off), shooting promos which had to be as funky as those of MTV and coming up with creative programming

Today, with nine producers and 120 employees, the V office boasts of a good mixture of marketing and creative staff which has managed to sell the channel to nearly every Indian household. Rare is the family these days that does not watch *BPL Oye*, the channel's Hindi film countdown programme, or even the *Great Indian Manoranjanik Show*. And even the older generation tunes in to watch the comic genius, Javed Jaffrey, host *Video con Flashback*.

Its veejays have become celebrities in their own right, with Sophiya Haque, Ruby Bhatia, Luke Kenny and even the more recent entrant, Alessandra, getting mobbed by fans when they venture out on to Indian streets. Ruby Bhatia, in fact, has become something of a television icon in her own right, hosting everything from *Palmolive Ek Ka Teen* to the Filmfare Awards show.

And Channel V is very proud of its products. Sneers Sudha Nair, the channel's information manager, "Who is Anu Kottoor? Our veejays are all superstars. MTV may have managed to get Slash, but everyone in India thought that their Roadshow was a Channel V event. And that's because in Indian minds, there is only one music channel and that is Channel V."

So, having come this far from such humble beginnings, can you really blame Channel V for crowing about its achievements? Or about the fact that now they — not MTV — are the trendsetters in the field of musical programming. Says Sudha Nair, "When we began, we had to improvise on whatever we had. But today we set the rules for getting the viewers' attention. And

Continued on Page 26

Luke Kenny and Sophiya Haque at the Victorial Memorial, Calcutta

Rashbehari Das

Anu Kottoor

INTERVIEW

'We named him Sachin after S.D. Burman'

Ajit Tendulkar talks to ***Shameem Akthar*** *about his close ties with his brother and how he wrote the book,* The Making of a Cricketer

The reclusive Ajit Tendulkar is not dodging interviews deliberately. Only, till now he has been used to such requests being directed at his younger brother Sachin, whose formative years in cricketing have been chalked out with such tender affection in the elder brother's just-released book.

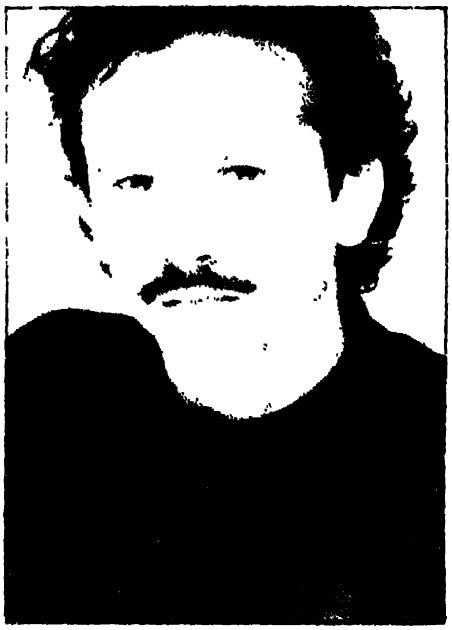
Just as he managed to shield the personal aspects of the young Sachin, he also contrives to shield his own personal life from such sudden scrutiny. His mild-mannered voice is soft with affection for his younger brother. As in the book, he occasionally slips that odd nugget of information on their close ties and the firm family bonding which, as the foreword by Sunil Gavaskar notes, has been the prime reason behind Sachin's exceptional winning traits.

The interview allows one the chance to gauge the truth behind Gavaskar's observation that, "You can be an outstanding individual in your chosen career but to be a good human being is not easy, specially for successful people. It is clear that Sachin's family background has helped him to keep his feet on the ground in spite of his soaring in the stratosphere with his cricketing skills." Excerpts from the interview with the author:

What provoked your decision to write the book and how long did it take you to compile all the details that make the book anecdotal?

As I have explained in the preface, one writer (who does not wish to be named) came to me with the offer for writing a book on Sachin. That put the idea in my head. I started in July and hoped (and managed) to finish the book for the World Cup series.

Initially, I started jotting down notes by hand. A friend suggested that I do it on the computer. That really helped because it became easier to read and correct my initial jottings and move them around to make them chronologically right.



Ajit Tendulkar

Sachin likes a heavy bat

I decided to do the entire thing myself right up to publishing and distributing it. I decided on the name Ten' Promotions since newspapers have called Sachin 'Tiny Ten' so many times as a child player. Ten is also part of our surname Tendulkar.

Was it difficult remembering all those anecdotes that are detailed in the book?

Actually, there were no problems at all because I had witnessed everything that has been mentioned. It was all there in my mind.

You have said you deliberately decided not to seek the help of cricketers and coaches. Why?

Yes, that was intentional. Since the book was to be only on his formative years before his Test career, I did not want to include people who may have entered it later. Then, I might have hurt some people who may feel left out. Also, many see Sachin in his present status. It would be inevitable for these people to make a comment on his career, which I did not want since the focus of the book was very clear in my mind.

How did your family help?

Oh, everybody in my family contributed towards this book. Right from my elder brother, Nitin, to my uncle, my sister-in-law. Even my mother was very understanding since I was served food inside the room and did not have to venture out of it. I never allowed anybody to enter the room and I think by being so tolerant my family members helped me in writing this book.

Now that the book is out, is there any interesting detail that you feel you have missed out, and would have

Skipper Azharuddin releases Ajit Tendulkar's book in Mumbai

liked to include?

No. Because every detail was entered into the final draft only after I thought hundred times over it. I would say that 99.9 per cent I have no regrets. May be ten years later I may think of something. No, I think the book is complete

I used to sit the entire day before the computer. In fact, I went without pay from office for the leave for the entire period, I wanted to focus my entire concentration on the book. In the beginning I had made the mistake of taking five-day intervals twice and realised that this was breaking my flow of thoughts

Except for a few interesting stories about Sachin, the toddler, there are almost no other personal snippets about him in the book. Why?

Yes. Sachin did not want anything personal to be written about him. Also, since this was only about his formative years I did not see the reason for giving more personal details. There was no need for the focus to shift from the cricketer. For instance, if I want to read about Amitabh Bachchan I would be more curious to know about his acting than about his personal life.

Well, I know Sachin's fans would have liked the book to be more personalised. Maybe tidbits on how, when he was born. The family elders had decided that we three siblings should choose his name. So we kids decided that we will name him after Sachin Dev Burman, the composer. Since that name was long, we decided that we will settle for just Sachin.

Was there any sibling rivalry between you two?

There was no chance of that. The age gap is there, it makes me more protective to him and he is respectful. Sachin also has such a personality that nobody can feel like that about him.

In the book you have discussed the passions of your siblings, but there is nothing about yourself and your interests.

(Smiles) I used to listen to Nitin's poems. We used to like listening to such readings of literature We used to share interest in music. Like I said, Sachin Dev Burman's music was a big favourite. We were all passionate about music. Of course, there was also the English music. Initially this was not heard much in the house, but Sachin had convent friends from the Bombay Scottish School and that music too became popular in the house.

I like listening to *bhavgeet, natya sangeet*. Sports has always been a passion in the house. Not just cricket, but any sport. If Mike Tyson was in a bout, then we discussed the wrestling match. If there was a tennis match, we discussed the finer points of that too.

You have mentioned how the entire family got involved with Sachin's career. Does it mean that the entire family, including your grandmothers, discussed it whenever Sachin played?

Yes. The whole family knows the game thoroughly now. But, none of us watch the match when Sachin is playing. We all become extremely tense. We only watch replay or video recordings.

Is the relationship between you two like that of friends or does the age gap make the relationship more formal?

He treats me like an elder brother more than as a friend. There is the big age gap between us.

Do the two of you exchange notes on the game, since you play a good game yourself?

(Laughs). Never. I don't take his advice at all. And he would not offer it himself, either.

EXTRACT

A child CRICKETER

Ajit Tendulkar recounts his brother, Sachin Tendulkar's progress as a cricketer in his early years in this extract

Sachin grew up in quite a different atmosphere than Nitin, Savita and me.

I was the youngest in the family till then. The age difference of almost 11 years between me and Sachin must have mattered a lot. When Sachin was a baby, both Nitin and I were really crazy about cricket. A little later, I started playing for my school, then for my college and various clubs. He would see me leaving for matches with my cricket kit; he would hear us discussing the latest news in the game at home. Perhaps these influences mattered; perhaps they kindled the sporting flame in him in his early childhood.

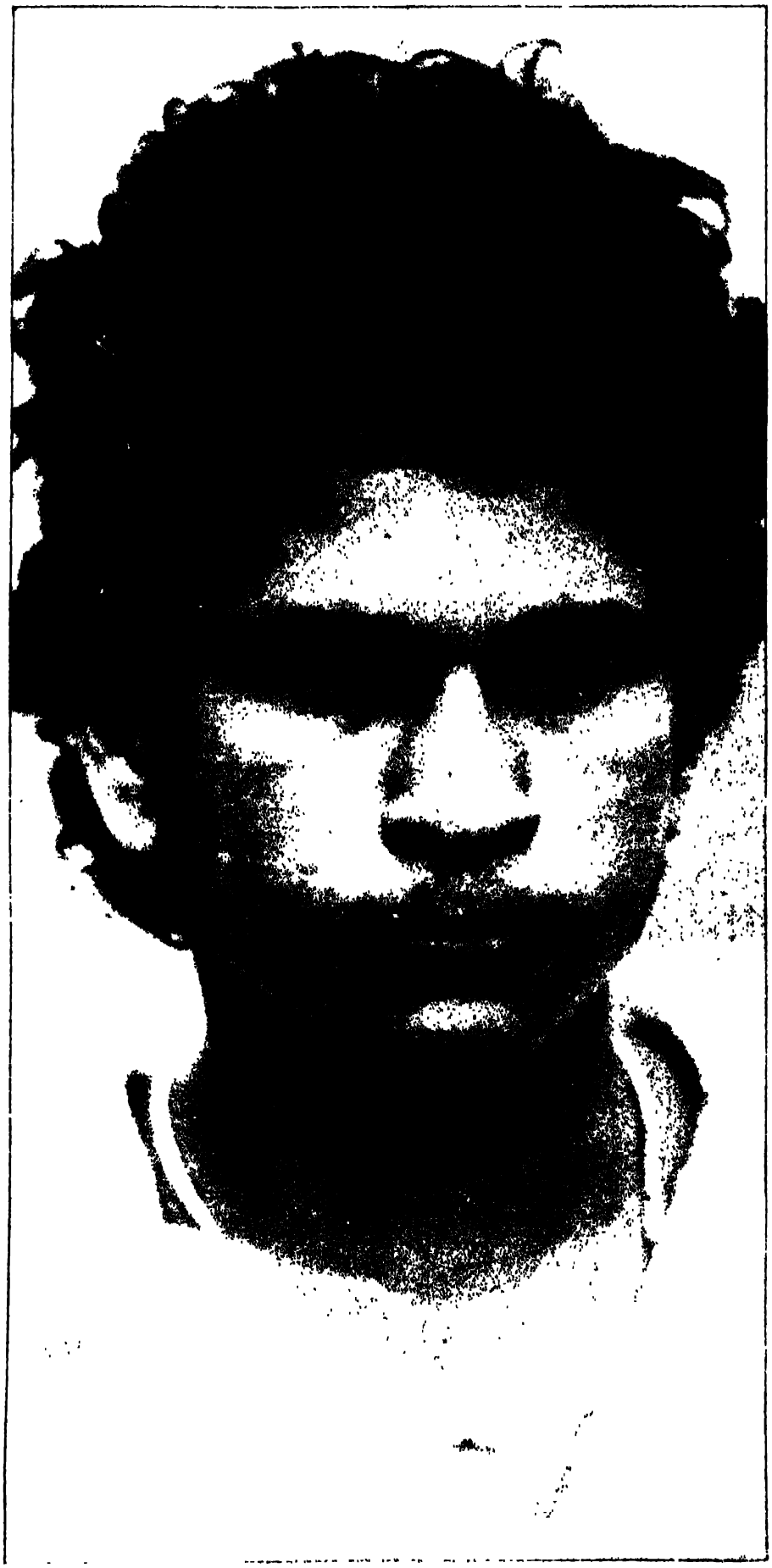
The playground in Sahitya Sahawas is quite large—some 30 by 30 yards. A rare sight in congested Bombay, this 'huge' playground was instrumental in inspiring the younger generation in the Society and inviting it to play games. The 11 buildings of the Society had enough boys of all ages to easily form two cricket teams.

The small kids would be busy cycling, spinning tops, playing marbles, flying kites...Sachin was always one of them.

He was an impetuous child who hated to sit down in one place for long. He would always be moving around, running rather than walking. Instinctively, his interest in outdoor games grew. In the school vacations, when most of his companions returned home in the afternoons to read comics, and play cards or scrabble, Sachin loitered on the ground through the day, playing whatever he could.

With Kapil Dev

Extracted from** The Making of a Cricketer: Formative Years of Sachin Tendulkar in Cricket **by Ajit Tendulkar; Published by Ajit Tendulkar for ten' Promotions (a division of Sachin Tendulkar Promotions Pvt Ltd); Price Rs 550



The one thing that could keep him in any place for long were the sports transmissions on the television. He watched the Wimbledon duel of 1981 between Bjorn Borg and John Mc Enroe with keen interest. While most of us wanted Borg to win, Sachin rooted wholeheartedly for McEnroe. When McEnroe won, Sachin's joy knew no bounds. Instantly, he became a fan of the young American star. He was so impressed by McEnroe's style that he demanded a tennis racket, a headband and two wristbands so that he could look like his hero. He would imitate McEnroe when he played tennis on the concrete pathway surrounding the playground. With his curly hair, he looked a miniature McEnroe and his friends took to calling him 'Mac'.

I feel the television coverage of all the major international sports events was the main reason for our attraction to sports. The sports tournaments on our annual 'Society Day' underlined this passion. We played a cricket match, had a cycling competition, and atheletic events like the 100-metre dash, the long jump and the shot put.

We played hockey and football with almost the same enthusiasm as we played criket. However, cricket remained our main passion. These were the years when Sunil Gavaskar was shattering record after record. Kapil Dev entered the scene and thrilled us with his unique style. The consistent success of these two Indians at the international level, year after year, found them a place in the hearts of most of us in Sahitya Sahawas. Cricket did not remain a seasonal activity for us. It was a craze, a passion. We just had to play, be it in the scorching afternoon sun or in a heavy downpour.

The smaller kids watched us seniors and formed their own teams. If we occupied the playground, they would play on the concrete paths, the garages or the terraces of the buildings. This reflected the cricket atmosphere in Bombay.

Some our Sahitya Sahawas kids soon got good enough to be included in the senior team. Sachin was one of them. He was thrilled that he was allowed to play with us. Shy and quiet with the older boys, Sachin would talk with great confidence at home. Was this the same little boy who not so long ago used to sit quietly sucking his thumb and sratching his head (his childhood habit), listening to us brothers and Savita talk cricket? The change in him was really surprising. His growing maturity as a child cricketer and his quick understanding

With Dennis Lillee

of the game almost made us forget the age gap between us. We started, watching his game with greater interest. I was Sachin's immediate senior in the family. Having played competitive cricket, I had some experience of the game. Sachin started relying on me for more knowledge about cricket, for basic tips in batting and bowling.

This was when I noticed something unusual about my little brother. Though Sachin used to imitate his heroes in other sports (like John McEnroe), he was never seen copying his cricketing idols. Whether batting or bowling, his style was his own. He never hesitated to play strokes. While batting, his arms always swung freely, I thought, he had a great feel for the game and excellent judgment in reading the length of the ball. For those who saw him play, his body movements were enough to provide evidence of the natural sportsman in him.

I saw him play very often and felt that I was watching a real cricketer.

I thought there was talent in Sachin which should not be allowed to go

waste.

FIRST MONTH AT THE NETS

I asked one of my cricketer friends to introduce me to Achrekar Sir and one day I landed up at Shivaji Park to meet him.

Achrekar Sir conducts two nets here — one for the Kamat Memorial Cricket Club (a club he owns), and the other for the Shardashram schoolboys. Sassanian Cricket Clubs, the second club that he owns, have their practice sessions at the Azad Maidan in South Bombay.

I still remember how Achrekar was surrounded by aspiring lads of all ages. That scene made me wonder if he would have the time to watch my brother and spot his talent.

"How old is your brother?" Sir asked me after hearing me out.

"Eleven," I replied.

"Has he ever played with a proper cricket ball (a season ball) before?"

It was a casual question. But it had me worried. Was Sir going to refuse to coach Sachin if I said he wasn't used to season ball cricket?

"No sir," I answered "But I'm sure he'll have no problems."

"What does he do?" was Sir's next question.

"He bats and he can bowl quite fast," I replied.

In those early days, Sachin had a fascination for bowling fast.

"Fine" said Achrekar. "Let him come here tomorrow and watch the others practice."

I heaved a sigh of relief. The next day Sachin and I reached the ground when practice was already half over.

"Let your brother watch the others today," Sir told me. "Tomorrow, I'll see him in the nets."

So far the first and so far perhaps the only time in his cricket career, Sachin just stood and watched the others play. On a couple of occasions, he turned round and told me how some of them were making mistakes, how he could have easily hit all those bowlers and clean bowled all the batsmen. There was nothing boastful about his judgment and the claims he made. Sachin has always had this inborn confidence in his own ability to play the game.

Batting over, the boys started their fielding practice with Mr Das Shivalkar, one of Achrekar Sir's deputies. Sir asked Sachin to join them. Though I knew my brother's ability, I must admit that I was a little surprised to see how well he fielded. For one thing, he wasn't used to a season ball. For another, the playground in our colony where he usually played was surrounded by trees of every size which didn't provide enough opportunities to take high catches. But Sachin was quite relaxed, judging high catches perfectly, positioning his palms exactly as they should be while catching and throwing the ball with aplomb. I realised once more that he had natural talent which should be nurtured.

However, when the other players discussed their mistakes during the fielding session, he stood by himself with his arms crossed, biting his nails anxiously, giving an impression that he wasn't part of the game at all.

"Practice starts at 7:30 in the mornings so be here on time tomorrow and make Sachin wear full trousers," Sir instructed me. I nodded and took Sachin home.

On the way, he told me, "I can bat better than any of them."

"Fine," I smiled at him, still a little anxious.

We reached home. Sachin rushed off to join his friends.

The next morning, Sachin got up early. He was going to bat for the first time in the nets. Everyone in the family wished him good luck. For the first few days, I accompanied him. He didn't have regular cricketing gear for a while. He wore jeans, T-shirt, running shoes and carried the Kashmir willow bat that Savita had bought for him from Kashmir.

Sachin walked ahead of me, eager to get to the ground as early as possible. He kept turning around and questioning me all the time.

"How should I bat?" he asked me. "Should I attack or defend?"

What probably played on his mind were images of the boys he had seen at the nets, playing back or forward defensively.

I replied with a vague "Let's see" After all, I had no idea of what kind of player Achrekar Sir preferred — a strokemaker or someone with a solid defence.

"Should I bowl?" Sachin continued. "Of course you should," I told him.

I knew he wanted to try a few bouncers something he did very well with a runner ball.

We reached the ground at 7:30 am sharp. After the initial warming-up exercises and jogging, the net practice began. Sachin had to field for a while. Then Sir asked him to pad up. I helped Sachin to put on his pads. He entered the nets, took guard exactly as I had instructed him and batted for a few minutes.

Achrekar didn't express any opinion about Sachin's batting but allowed him to come and practise during the school vacation. That was quite a relief. It looked like Sachin would be given enough time to adjust at the nets and to play his natural game.

Don't go by the polished play of today's Sachin Tendulkar, the experienced Test cricketer. Little Sachin's batting style at 11 years of age was a bit odd. He had this tremendous penchant for on-side play, having developed the habit of coping with the bounce of the rubber ball by pulling with a cross bat. Another technical peculiarity of rubber ball cricket is the way most young cricketers play on the rise to a ball that's pitched up to them. Sachin did this too but he showed uncanny ability in judging the length of the ball and middling it. He really had a natural feel for batting which I thought was most important at that young age. And despite his question to me of whether he should attack or defend, he had no notion then of correct defensive play. He either hit the ball with full power or pushed and deflected it with the wrists.

He also had the habit of lifting the ball. With the tall trees in the colony playground, it was a safe stroke to play, because they prevented fielders from taking catches easily. In those early days of net practice, Sachin discovered that it wasn't that easy to hit a season ball. His arms just didn't have that much power as yet. That was good in a way since he might have created a bad impression by trying to lift every ball.

I was quite satisfied with Sachin's first essay in the nets, considering he had never batted in the nets before.

After the first few days, Achrekar asked us to get proper cricket clothes for Sachin. I guessed that Sachin had been accepted as a regular. My father was very happy that Sachin was practising on a regular basis. He took him to a fashionable clothes store and bought him a pair of white trousers. By no stretch of the imagination could one have called them regular cricket trousers. They had loops, big pockets on the hips, bell bottoms and they were made of spongy material which was most unlike the flannel used for cricket.

Sachin was most thrilled with his first cricket trousers. He put them on immediately and came in to show them to me. I didn't approve of them at all and showed my displeasure. However, nothing could spoil Sachin's joy.

But at least it was a beginning. Sachin also acquired a small bag from Savita and her husband bought him a pair of gloves. In those bell-bottomed trousers, holding his bat above his shoulder rather than under his armpit, Sachin looked more like a child actor.

"Sir said I'll be playing in the match

tomorrow," Sachin told me one evening after a couple of weeks at the nets. It was a 50-over game between two teams made up of boys from the same net. In Achrekar's strict regimen, there was no let-off from morning practice. after nets, the boys would get half an hour's rest and then start the match.

Sachin was up early on the day of his first match ever. So was the rest of the family. We wished him good luck. He touched everyone's feet, something he still does before leaving for an important match or a long tour.

We were quite anxious about Sachin's performance in his first match.

"How much did you score?" I asked him when he returned.

"Zero," was his honest reply

"Don't worry, you'll get runs next time." I said

We tried to boost his confidence but fortunately Sachin was quite relaxed, perhaps because the concepts of success and failure were still alien to him. Enjoying the game seemed to be his only motive. The second match brought him another zero. But he soon got into his stride and started scoring consistently. He used to keep a record of his scores in a diary which he has misplaced. I wish I could consult it now. But from memory I remember that he had scores of 51, 38 and 45 runs one after the other. In those limited overs matches, batsmen had to retire after making 50 runs. From the very beginning, Achrekar Sir made Sachin bat at number four. That remained his fixed place in the batting order irrespective of any important senior player's participation.

I wondered why Sir chose the number four spot for Sachin. Perhaps it was because of his attacking style of play We were happy to see Sachin in this position because the number four in the batting line-up had an aura about it. G.R. Vishwanath, one of Indian cricket's most stylish batsmen, who was also one of our favourite cricketers, always batted at number four.

Sir watched Sachin in these practice matches and made him a regular member of his Kamat Memorial Cricket Club with an admission fee of Rs 65 and a monthly fee of Rs 10.

One day Achrekar Sir asked how he spent his afternoons when not playing in a match

"I play with my friends," Sachin told him.

"Very good. Then come here for afternoon practice too," Sir ordered.

Sachin had not expected that. His afternoons so far were devoted to his friends. He didn't mind morning practice since most of his pals got up late during the summer vacations. But afternoon practice! That was going to be tough. Very often, he cooked up excuses to miss it so that he could be with his friends in the colony.

However, once he was on the cricket field, he wanted to take the initiative in everything that happened...he wanted to bowl, bat, field with gusto. His constant involvement with every aspect of the game has helped to sharpen his cricketing skills.

One day Sachin finished bowling his quota of overs in a practice match. Then, seeing that Achrekar was not around, he put on the wicket-keeping gloves. In the summer heat of Bombay, wickets are usually dull and the ball doesn't bounce much. Sachin bent down to gather a shooter and the ball suddenly popped up and hit him on his right eyebrow. The cut bled heavily. His friends tried putting ice on the wound, then panicked when the blood continued to flow. There were not many people on the ground in the afternoon. So a friend put Sachin on his bicycle and quickly brought him home to Bandra, all of six kilometres away. We were terrified to see

Sachin's condition. Luckily my father was home and could rush him to the doctor. The half a dozen stitches didn't stop Sachin from entering the nets the next day

Towards the end of the summer vacations, I heard father discussing cricket on the telephone. This was something unusual. Curious, I tried to listen on and find out what was happening.

"Achrekar Sir would like Sachin to be in the Sharadashram school team," father told us. "He feels Sachin has the potential to go far."

"What do you think we should do," was my father's question to me. My opinion counted as I had played quite a bit of cricket by then

Sachin was studying in the Indian Education Society's New English School, very close to our place in Bandra East. Most of his friends also studied there The school had boys who were keen on cricket but the lack of a good cricket ground and a good coach had prevented the school from building a cricket team.

I felt that switching to Sharadashram would give Sachin adequate exposure to school cricket. But my parents did not want to impose anything on him So far he had played regularly during the vacations Now he would have to play and study. They weren't sure that he could carry this burden

In the evening, the family sat down together and discussed the matter with Sachin He had skipped afternoon net practice that day and was scared that Sir had called up to inquire. When he heard the reason and father explained that he would have to change his school but also that the decision lay completely with him, he though about it for a while

"I want to continue playing cricket seriously," he said as he came to a decision. "I don't mind changing schools I'll meet my friends in the evening" We were a little surprised at his firm stance since he had always been a happy-go-lucky child.

He had made his decision. We in the family now had to prepare ourselves for many things ..making sure that his studies and his health didn't suffer while he pursued his passion; finding the money for a proper kit as cricket is a fairly expensive game, and most importantly, being able to teach Sachin that there was a lot of uncertainty in this game. Though we wanted him to be a success, we had to be prepared for ups and downs and even total failure. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	0700	1 3	IC 742	0930	1 3
IC 741	0800	2, 6	IC 742	1250	4 7
IC 743	0920	daily	IC-744	1150	daily
M9-323	[illegible]20	3 5 7	M9 327	1610	3 5 7
M9-323	1220	2 6	M9-323	1555	2 6
AHMEDABAD					
S2 026/027	0850	1 2 4, 5	S2 028/005	2005	1 2 4 5, 7
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0645	1 2, 3 4 5, 6	PF 302	1555	2 4 5
			PF 302	1635	1 3, 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1250	1, 3 4 5 7	IC 722	1525	1 3, 4 5, 7
D2 181	1230	1, 2 3 4 5, 7	D2 181	1600	1 2 3 4 5 7
D2 183	1200	6	D2 183	1130	6
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0900	daily	IC-772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 402	0700	4	D5-401	1630	4
IC 544	1115	2 7	IC 543	1035	2 7
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	1745	2 4 6
VF 106	1740	1	VF 105	1700	1
MUMBAI					
IC-676	0730	daily	IC 675	0820	daily
9W 202	0715	1 3 4 5 6 7	9W-201	0900	1 3 4 5 6 7
D2 101	0610	daily	D2 101	0640	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	AI-306	1730	-
9W 212	0940	daily	9W 211	1900	daily
AI 451	1930	6	IC 274	1630	daily
M9 305	0630	1 2, 3 4 5 6	M9 306	1155	1 2 3, 4 5 6
M9 307	1700	daily	M9 308	2235	daily
D2 153	2015	daily	D2 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DELHI					
IC 253	0630	daily	S2 022	0810	1 2 3 4 5
S2 026	0850	1, 2 3 4 5	M9 303	0825	daily
M9 304	0625	daily	AI 652	0925	1
IC 612	1515	1 3 5	4S 806	1130	1 2 3 4 5 6
IC 402	1115	daily	IC 401	1115	daily
4S 807	1700	1 2, 3 4 5 6	S2 005	2005	1 2 3 4 5 7
			IC 611	1715	1 3 5
S2 006	2045	1 2 3 4 5 7	M9 301	1530	daily
M9 302	2010	daily	IC-264	2110	daily
IC 456	2000	4 7	IC 855	1755	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
4S 816	1705	2 4 6	IC 702	1030	1 3 5 7
4S 812	1705	1 3 5	4S-815	1635	1 2 3
IC-701	1240	1 3 5 7	4S 811	1635	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	1145	4, 7	IC 257	1550	4 7
PF 301/305	0645	2 4 5	PF 306/302	1555	2 4 5
GOA					
S2 026/027	0850	1, 2 3 4 5	S2 022/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5
GUWAHATI					
D5 601	0600	1, 3 4 6	D5-605	1915	2 3 5 7
IC 701	0410	1 3 5	IC 704	1120	1, 3 5
			IC 704	1220	2 6
9W 511	1020	daily	9W-512	1310	daily
M9-321	1240	daily	M9 322	1510	daily
PF 301	0830	1 3 5	PF 302	1500	1 3 5
IC 705	0830	4 7	IC 230	1620	daily
IC 229	1310	daily	4S 811	1630	2 4 6
4S 816/811	1205	2, 4 6	4S-812/815	1035	1 3, 5
M9 327	1220	3 5 7	M9 327	1610	2 4, 7
M9-325	1220	1 4	M9-325	1610	1 4
HYDERABAD					
IC-777	1615	3 5 7	IC 778	2015	3 5 7
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	1745	2 4 6
VF 106	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC-255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC-215	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
JAIPUR					
S2 026/027	0850	1 2 4 5	S2 028/005	2005	1 2 4 5 7
JODHPUR					
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC 258	1550	4 7
KHARAGPUR					
PF-301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
IC-812	1315	1 3 5	IC 811	[illegible]	1 3 5
S2 026 011	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5	S2 017/005	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
MADRAS					
D5 402	0700	4	D5 401	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 545	1115	1 3 6	IC 541	1040	1 4 6
IC 541	1115	2 7	IC-542	[illegible]	2 [illegible]
D2 [illegible]	1040	daily	S2 173	[illegible]	[illegible]
			D2 171	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
IC 765	1720	daily	IC-766	2220	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	1745	2 4 6
PATNA					
D5-400	1330	4	D5 406	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 812	1515	1 3 5	IC 541	1715	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0640	1 3 5	IC 286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC-812	1515	1 3 5	IC 811	1715	1 3 5
SHILLONG					
D5 601	0600	daily	D5-605	[illegible]	daily
SILCHAR					
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 253	0745	2 4 6	IC 254	1025	2 4 6
M9-325	1220	1 4	M9 325	1610	1 4
M9-323	1220	2 6	M9-323	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC-213	1140	2 6	IC 215	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 3 6	IC 541	1040	1 4 6
D5-402	0700	4	D5 401	1630	3

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA					
BJ-185	1445	4	BJ-184	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0420	7	KL-875	0235	7
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0850	2, 6	KB 106	1020	2
			KB-106	1240	5
IC 721	0855	2 5	TG 315	1240	1 3 6
IC 731	1105	1 3	IC 732	1730	1 3
IC 855	1350	4 7	IC 856	1900	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6	IC 732	1505	2, 5
AI 308	1910	5	AI 309	1625	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2130	5 7	RO-075	1100	5 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
IC 225	0800	1	IC-226	1020	1
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
BG 091	0850	4, 5	BG 091	0810	4, 5
BG 092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC 723	1250	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
Q7 061	1245	3	Q7-060	1300	2
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
RA 214	2155	3, 7	RA-213	2055	3, 7
IC-747	1115	1, 2, 4, 6	IC-748	1435	1, 2, 4, 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
BA-142	2115	3, 7	BA-143	1515	3, 7
SU-538	1755	4	SU-537	1555	4
KB-106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2, 6
KB-106	1325	5			
SQ-415	2345	2, 5	SQ-416	2230	2, 5
BI-108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ-503	1650	4
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	1820	6
IC-227	1530	4, 7	IC-228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	15-20	**Amritsar Mail**	7-55	3006
3003	20-00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13-00	3004
2381	3-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16-15	2382
2303	3-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16-15	2304
2301	1-30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10-45	2302
2305	1-15	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12-50	2306
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4-40	2306
2019	5-20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21-10	2020
3073	23-00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** tri-Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11-35	3074
3045	22-00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday, Arr Friday	12-25	3046
5049	23-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11-35	5050
5047	13-00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon, Wed & Fri	4-30	5048
3009	20-30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	[illegible]	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18-15	3008
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11-55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6-10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17-15	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon, Thurs & Fri	7-55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7-55	1172
3327	14-30	**Shaktipunj (Chosen) Express**	4-50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7-55	1182

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5-15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kaliar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues, Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20-30	**Madras Mail**	6-55	6004
8002	19-20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	12-30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15-25	2859
2021	6-50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5-15	8033
8030	11-20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	14-05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12-10	2842
7003	8-10	**Falaknama (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun, Tues & Fri Arr Mon, Thurs & Sat	19-40	7004
6311	22-35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13-45	6312
8013	17-30	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8111	6-00	**Igatpuri (Jharsuguda) Express**	21-25	8112
8005	20-55	**Tilangarh Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21-40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-10	8016
8007	22-15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-30	8008
8409	19-00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-30	8410
2821	6-15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22-05	2822
8045	10-30	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15-10	8046
8017	16-45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11-35	8018
1030	15-50	**Azad Hind (Puna) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5-15	1029
2421	16-40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16-10	—
—	11-05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10-45	2422
6322	22-35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22-15	-
—	14-05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13-45	6321
—	14-05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13-45	6313
6314	22-35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22-15	–
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep Tues & Fri, Arr Tues & Fri	13-45	6315
6520	22-35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22-15	—
—	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13-45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2208545-54 for in-coming trains; 2208535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2208486-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 136 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3509535-37.

PROFILE

PAST PERFECT

Sheela Bhate, now 78, re-visits her sculptures that adorn the Birla Planetarium, reports ***Trina Mukherjee***

Photographs by Amit Datta

Sheela Bhate

It was a trip down memory lane for Sheela Bhate. The 78-year-old frail lady walked down the corridors of the Birla Planetarium with a new found zest. After all, she was visiting her creations after a long, long time

The slight stoop disappeared as she paused to stand in front of the likeness of Galileo Galilei that she had fashioned out of plasticine so many years ago. "This was my favourite," said Bhate with a smile.

Galileo's bust was one of the four busts made by her and are exhibited in the Birla Planetarium hallway. The others being those of Johannes Kepler, Nicolaus Copernicus and Sir William Herschelle. Bhate made them more than 30 years ago. These busts bear mute testimony to the beginning and end of Bhate's life as a sculptor.

Female sculptors are not a rare breed today. But in 1938 in Lahore, there were not many of them. Bhate's father first got an inkling of his daughter's talent when she made his likeness in plasticine and decided that she was going to be a sculptor.

Bhate's first teacher-mentor, Bhabesh Sanyal, however, felt otherwise. He tried to dissuade Bhate from taking up this art form. Sculpture, according to Sanyai, was extremely strenuous and too demanding for a woman to handle. It was another young sculptor, Dhanraj Bhagat, who worked in Sanyal's studio and gave Bhate her first lessons in clay and plasticine. She exhibited her first life study at the Lahore Society of Arts in 1939 and won a prize amounting to the "princely sum" of Rs 75.

It was encouragement enough for her to apply to the J.J. School of Arts, Bombay. Much against the wishes of the principal of the school, Bhate sat for the entrance exams and topped the test, competing with a majority of male students. Beginning directly from the fourth year of a five-year-course, Bhate worked for two years before her marriage in 1943.

She managed to carry on sculpting, exhibiting at the Bombay Fine Arts Society and also accepted private commissions. Notable among them was the one commissioned by India Steamship Company in 1950.

Bhate was more inclined to life studies. As she explains: "You can make a dead man talk and the mute express himself through a life study." The strong influence of Michelangelo and the school of Western Realistic sculpture is evident in her works. The powerful bone structure of her 'heads'; attention to minute details; the slight arch of eyebrows of Johannes Kepler, the stiff starched collar; the strange tilt of the hood costume of that period or the careless fall of Galileo's lock of hair, speak of immense verisimilitude. But these details are heightened with subtle impressionistic touches. Geoff Chaffee, the first curator of the Planetarium, who admired her work, had commissioned her to do these four head studies. Bhate felt that it "was a challenge" she could not turn down.

"There were too many answers I did not know," said Bhate, "How big was Copernicus' head? Was Galileo a pleasant man? Or Kepler a sociable gentleman?" The minuscule pictures bearing their likeness did not answer her queries. Yet she had to go by them to create their images. "I had to study and imagine. You always have to put something of yourself into it" says Bhate.

She did not get very many opportunities to do more sculptures as she became allergic to plasticine and also due to her failing health. She did manage to give live demonstrations in Washington and spent a lot of time strolling through the museums in London. Bhate recounted an amusing incident during this phase. She was holding a demonstration in life studies at the American Women's Club. Bhate was supposed to select her model from among the guests. But to her horror and dismay, she found all ladies sporting elaborate hairdos in their earnest effort to be the "perfect model" for study. "I finally had to choose a bald and deaf man as my subject," said Bhate in mock despair.

Rich with the wealth of experience and yet poor with not too many fruits of her labour, Bhate still has a feel of her subjects: "It is the idea that is all important and the elusive third dimension to one's work." Her vision, now gone dim with the onslaught of age still sparkles when she touches her initials, which are etched behind her immortal creations. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

The full moon, says Ganesha helps you to forge links and ties, thus augmenting income and doubling pleasure, and surely, that's what life is all about. April 7-9 is certainly about journey, news, visits, interviews, meets and advertising. April 11-13 is for career advancement

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

You will have to work with a will and vengeance. From April 8, children, buying/selling/partying will be fascinating for you because Mercury impresses your own sign, Taurus, according to Western astrology. Pets and projects, loans and funds do take up your time and energy. Well worth it too

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Success through less than normal channels are assured Mutually beneficial situations will work best now because of the full moon impact. Expansion is your mode of operation, therefore, please be jovial and optimistic The essence and the emphasis is on love and group activities. Therefore, an exciting time .

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Good time to make sweeping changes which shut down an old situation and move you into new altogether. The astro reason is, Saturn, according to Western astrology, which will change signs from April 7, honing your ambition and skills. The home, too, will have its share of attention

Leo
July 21 — August 21

You could drop a project for a hare-brained new idea or campaign. Concepts may be totally new. Love will also tug at your heart. Contracts and deeds will have to be signed. There is just too much going on for real peace and rest You tend to be conservative and matters require risks now.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Don't be afraid to mess up and be confused. Loans, funds and monetary dealings are emphasised the next 23 days You may rewrite your contract, go to new commitments, upgrade and thoroughly modernise machines and more importantly, your own mind and ideas.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Personal equations will clamour for a solution, be it love, marriage, or even a business partnership. You will have to attend to it. April 7-8 are for intense and hectic activity. That is the time to play your hunches, give intuition a free rein. Be concrete and focussed for achieving goals.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha says, work in secrecy and reserve your ammunition for your foes and rivals. Conflicts of interest are likely. Agreements could fall through, or may have to be amended Do a look-nice-job job, as the Americans say. Give things and matters a once-over, a second look before you sign and agree

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

You will feel unduly optimistic and could have a totally different way of doing things. Children, ideas, creative use of things, inventions, schemes to get rich quick are what the week is all about. A few false starts should not be allowed to bother you. Go ahead. Trips and ties are foretold

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Clarify all information you do receive and you will receive more than you can really chew. It is absolutely certain that work pressures to really perform will be overbearing and tremendous. This could tell on your health. Otherwise, all is nice and dandy. April 9-11 will be important for progress.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

A big project can come altogether this week. Noble ideas succeed when they are backed with staying power and bullheadedness. Be positive, because Venus-Uranus trine helps you immensely in your attitudes. Surrender sweetly to the dictates and the demands of love, romance and idealism

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Loans and funds will be up your street It is time to angle for them also if you are interested Saturn, according to Western astrology, goes out of your sign on April 7, and therefore, pressures and pain and opposition will most certainly ease Confusion will stop A new era will begin Work will be done

BIRTHDAYS

April 7: Venus-Pluto conjunction sets you to an ideal start. Business, marriage, agreeing, money are the greatest powerfully [illegible] by it.

April 8: Sun-Uranus trine Venus is excellent for artistic, scientific and [illegible] [illegible] and chemically. The [illegible] the better it should be.

April 9: Moon trine Venus-Mars conjunct says luck [illegible] [illegible] communications, and travel. [illegible] outstanding.

April 10: Moon [illegible] will make you exceptionally [illegible] and give you the drive and the [illegible] so necessary to succeed. But try to avoid haste be it at home or on road. Trips are possible.

April 11: Moon-Pluto sextile makes you extremely receptive to new ideas and fond of power, pelf, show and pomp. You can achieve much this year.

April 12: Moon trine Venus-Mars helps doctors, [illegible] actors, industrialists, editors, musicians, [illegible] and scholars of history.

April 13: This is the time to socialise as the stars are very definitely in your favour. Work progresses rapidly, though minor obstacles cannot be ruled out.

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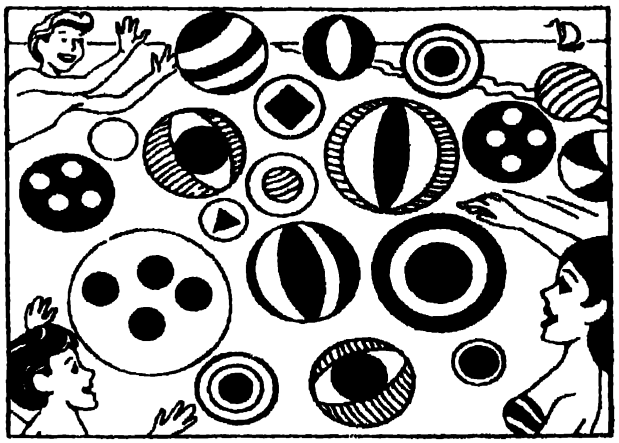
JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN

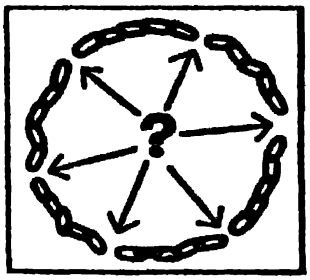


FIND TWINS! There are two sets of twins among the various beach balls above. See how quickly you can find both sets.

IN CROWD!
Insert a consonant into the name of a desert animal and find the name of a California seaside resort. Into this name, insert a vowel and find a possible choice of centre in a box.

Camel, Carmel, caramel

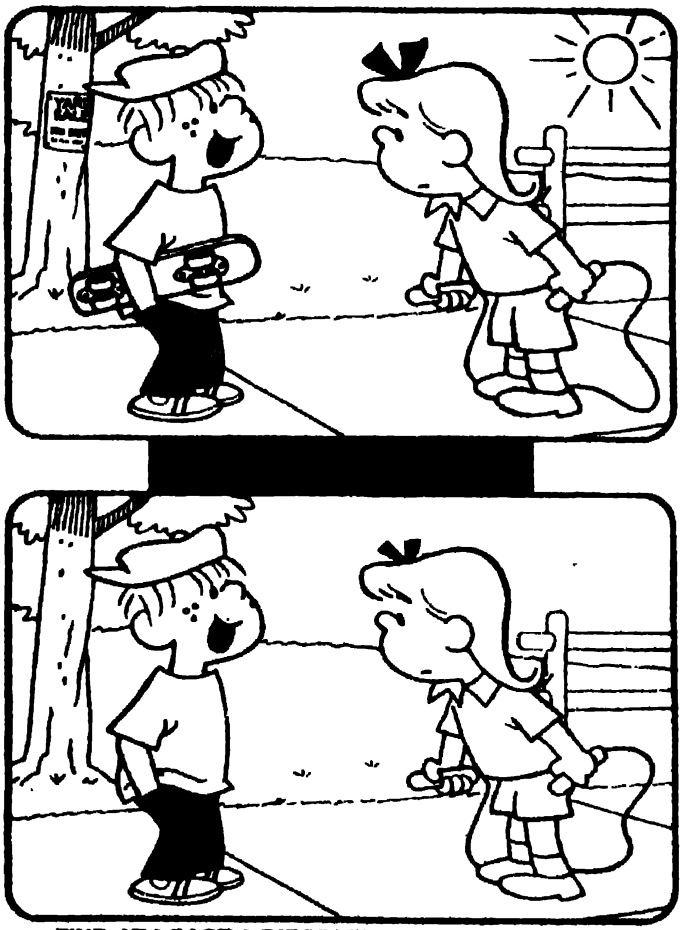
LINK UPS!
This classic poser continues to present a challenge. We have six segments of chain containing five links each, at right. We would like to join these segments into one continuous chain by opening and closing the fewest number of links



If it takes one minute to open a link, and one minute to close one, in how few minutes can we complete the circle?

Ten minutes — by opening all five links of one segments and using each link to connect ends of the others

HOCUS-FOCUS



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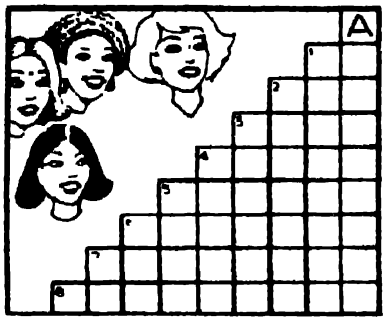
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences. 1. Poster is missing. 2. Skateboard is missing. 3. Bow is smaller. 4. Sun is missing. 5. Shorts are shorter. 6. Jump-rope is different.



ADD-A-LETTER WORD POSER

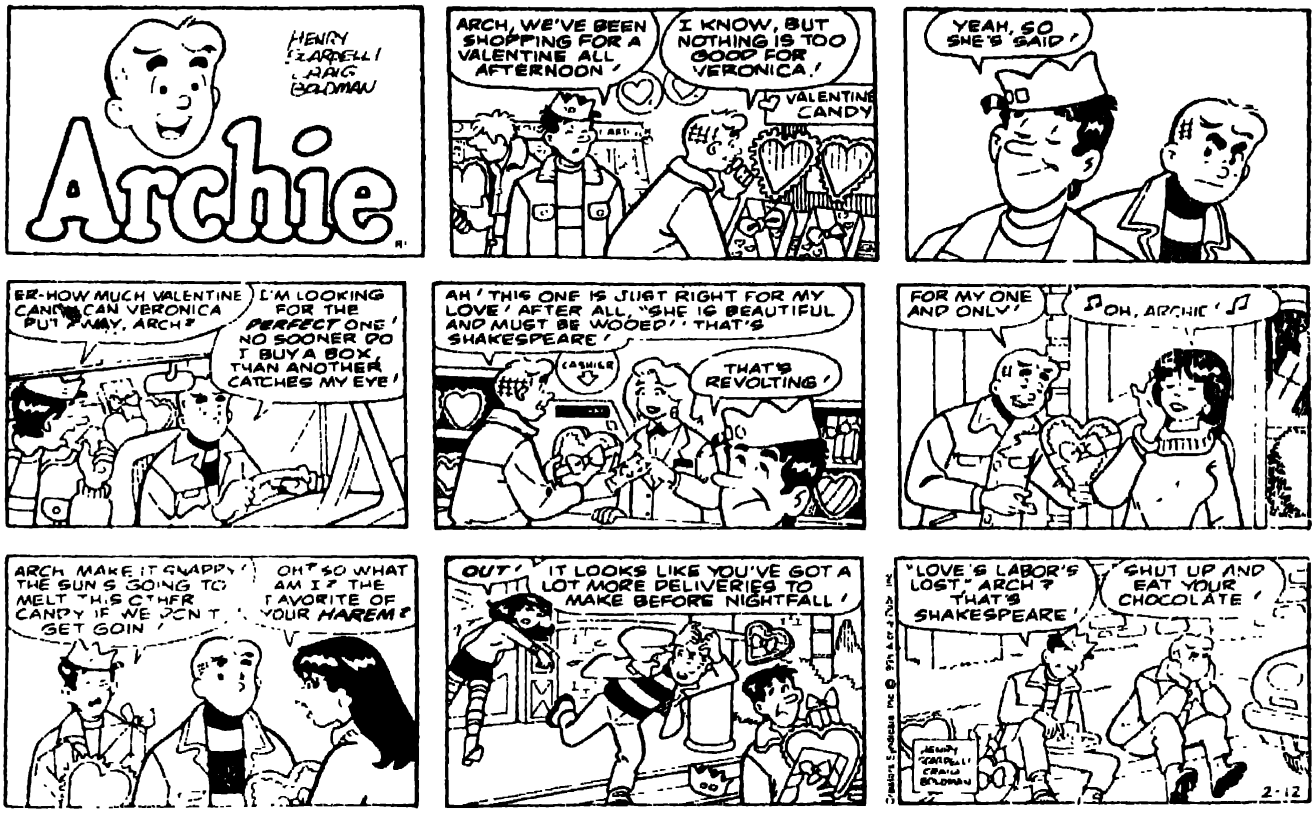
Add a letter in each step progressively at left, re-arranging letters as necessary to form new words in accord with the following definitions:

1. First letter of alphabet (A, in place).
2. In attendence
3. Occupied a chair.
4. Hollywood status.
5. Gaze steadily at a person or thing.
6. Metal frames used in fire places etc
7. Unfamiliar.
8. Police officers next below captains or lieutenants.

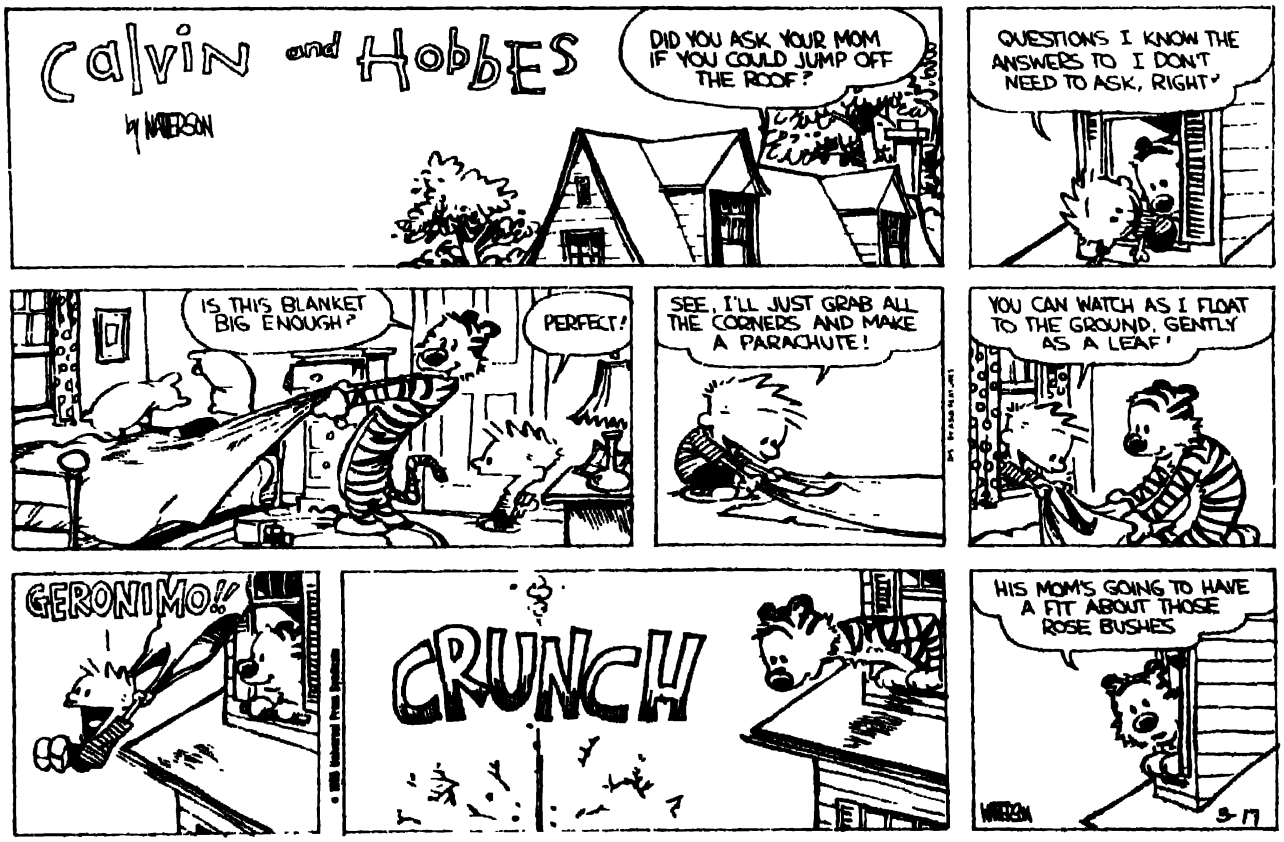
Time limit: 2 mins

1 A 2 At 3 Sat 4 Star 5 Stare 6 Grates 7 Strange 8 Sergeant

ARCHIE

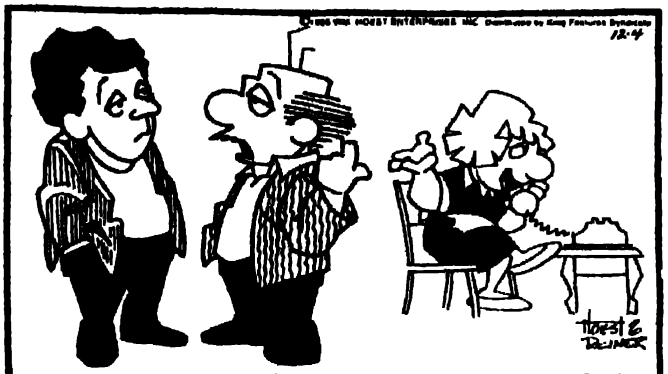


CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



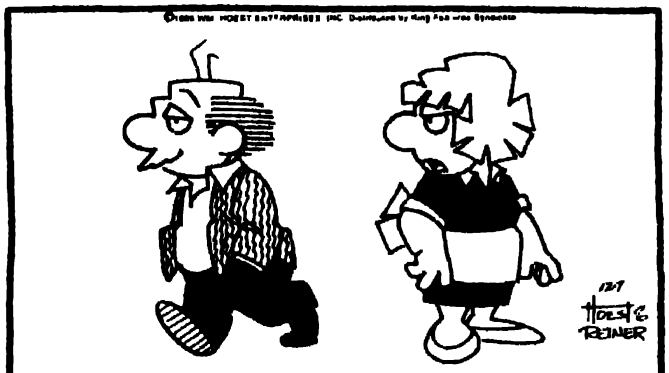
THE LOCKHORNS

"WE STILL SPEAK TO EACH OTHER, BUT LORETTA HAS THE LAST WORD."



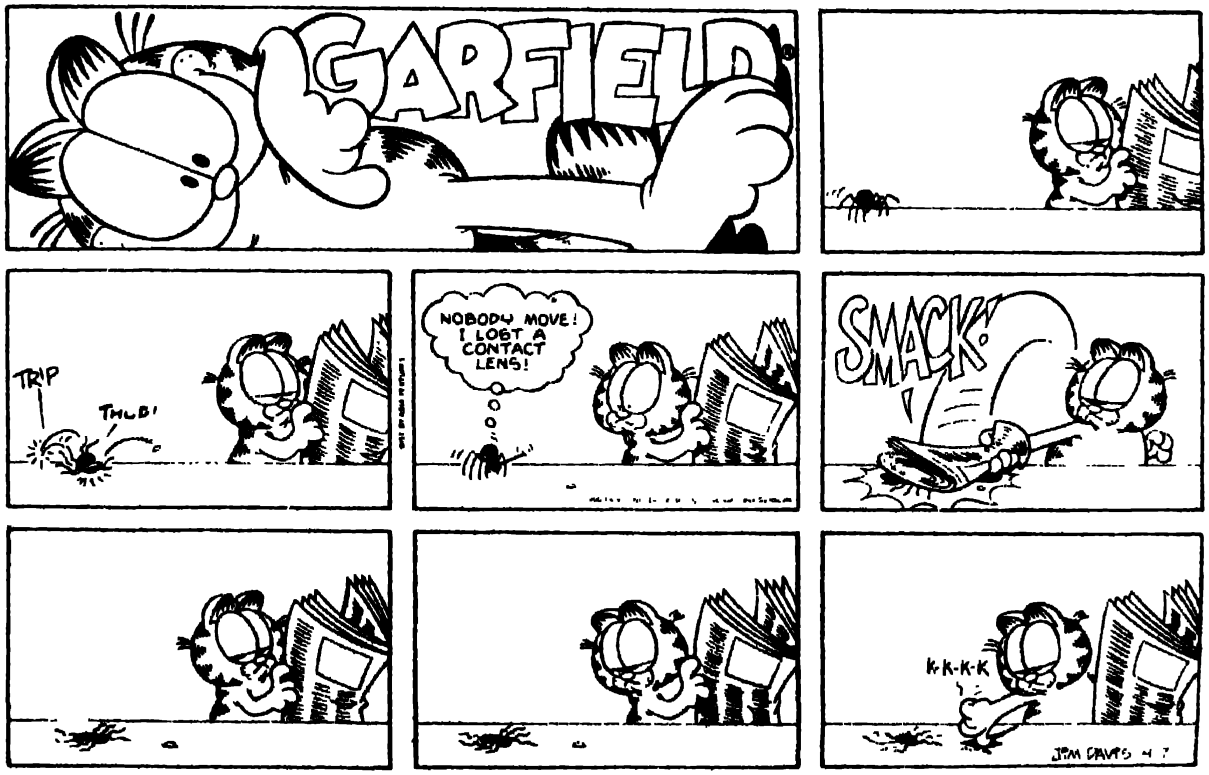
"LORETTA BELIEVES ANYTHING WORTH DOING IS WORTH TALKING ABOUT AT GREAT LENGTH."

"FOR LEROY TO BE HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST HE'D HAVE TO GROW ANOTHER TWO FEET."

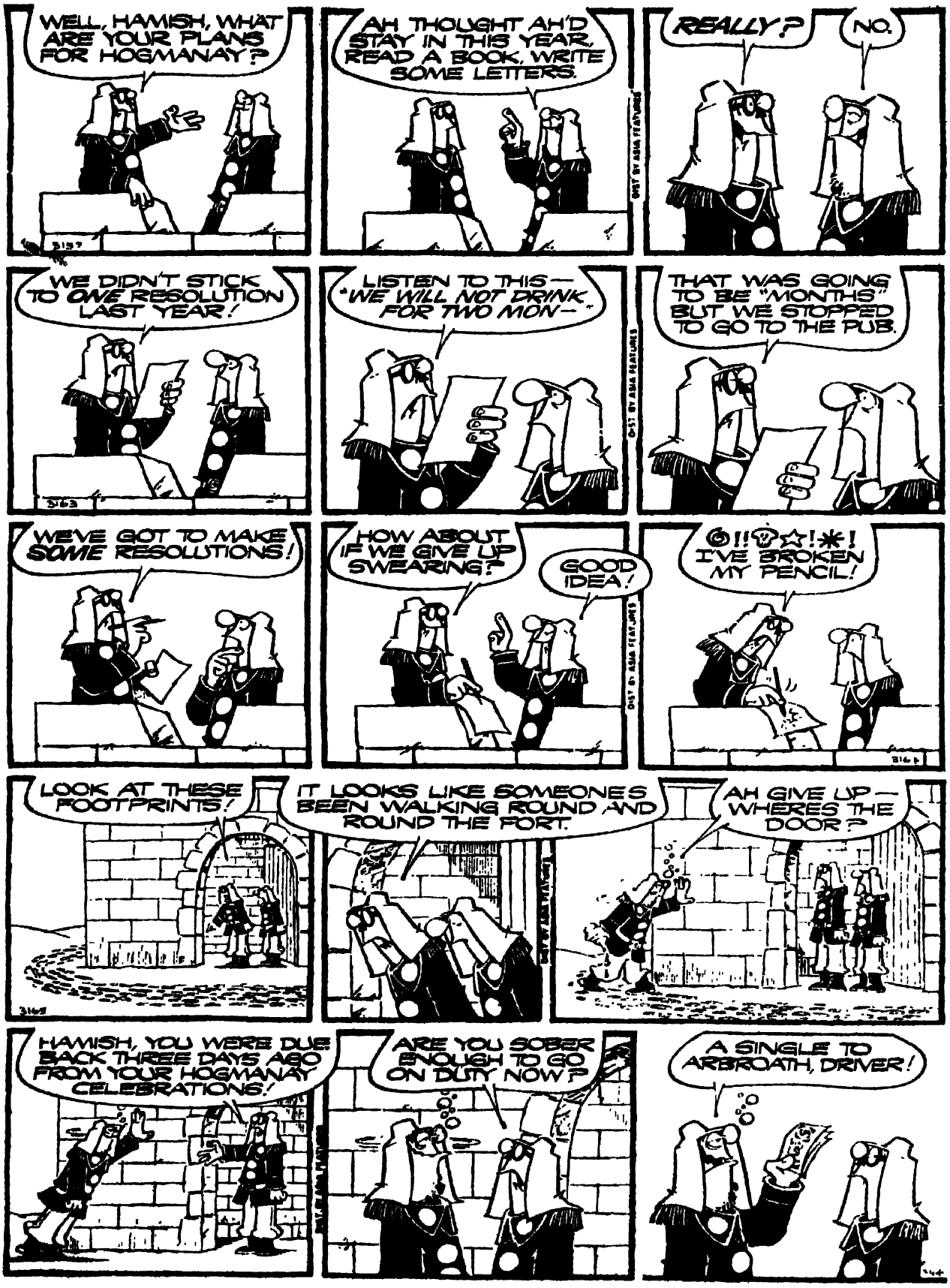


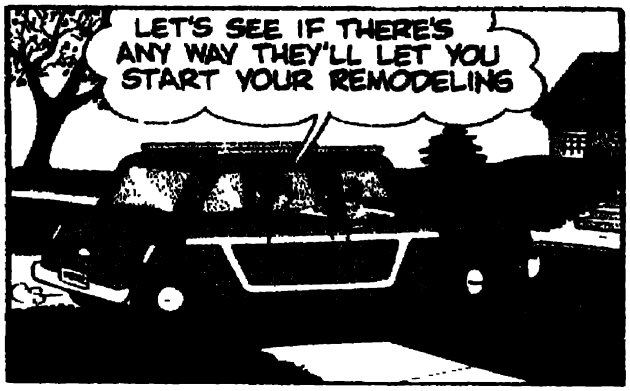
"THAT'S THE SECOND TIME YOU'VE SMILED AT ME TODAY. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?"

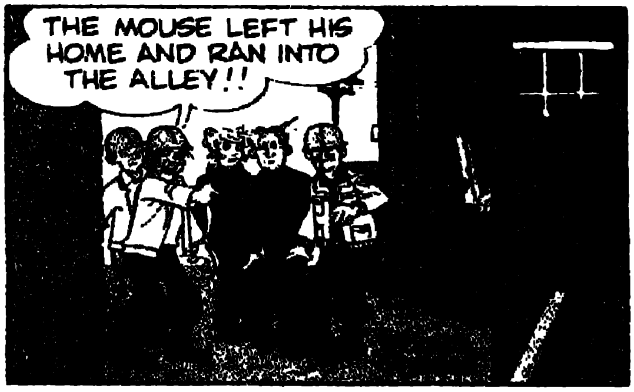
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







Meet the man behind the Bumsteads live on America Online! Dean Young, tonight at 8p.m. eastern. Keyword: comic strip.

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Tara Deshpande

Continued from Page 8

whoever comes after us, will have to follow them."

That, of course, is a reference to MTV. Channel V, which is watched in 55 million homes, is clear about one fact. in India, at least, MTV is very much the Johnnie-come-lately. And what's more, it has still to get its programming mix right. Though only 35 per cent of Channel V's programmes are in Indian languages, mainly Hindi, they have cleverly positioned them at prime-time slots to give itself an "Indian" image

MTV, on the other hand, goofed up on this score during its last stint in India. By showing explicit — by Indian standards, at least — videos, replete with half-naked girls and writhing couples, they earned the wrath of the nation's moral-keepers. The channel was widely denounced as being subversive, and a bad influence on the nation's youth. Channel V has steered clear of making such mistakes. Says Samin Desai, the channel's executive producer, "We do not want to be an international *masala* channel. We want to be India-specific."

But then, so does MTV — without exactly going the Channel V way. It is very clear that it wants its own slot in the Indian market, rather than just rely on Hindi film music to do the trick. And this strategy makes some sense. After all, these days, most channels seem to be showing the same songs over and over again. If Zee is blaring out the tunes of *Trimurti*, so is DD Metro, ATN and even Jain Television. MTV would rather stick to its mix of

Ruby Bhatia and Sophiya Haque: All for Channel V

Alessandra

Rajeev Datt

good Western music, peppered with Indian pop artistes, and then hope for the best

In one important way, though, MTV has made a concession to the Indian market. Most of its veejays -- with the notable exception of the Irish-Chinese Danny McGill — are Indian. There is Rahul Khanna, the son of Indian actor Vinod Khanna, who hosts such shows as *Superock*, a bi-weekly programme for rock music fans, and *Alternative Nation*, a daring cult-ish late night show which airs videos from the alternative music scene, and, of course, MTV's *Most Wanted*, the immensely popular daily request show.

Among the other high-profile Indian veejays is the beautiful Anu Kottoor, the product of a south Indian father and a Burmese-Punjabi mother, who works out of Singapore. Then, there's Tara Deshpande, whose bio-data (as provided by MTV) has it that she is interested in the works of such intellectual giants as Milan Kundera, Vikram Seth and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Her philosophy in life, though, is somewhat more down-to-earth: "Try to change the world and they will take away your T-shirt."

Mike Kasem

The latest to join the MTV stable is Rajeev Datt, who was a model before he became a veejay. He was discovered by one of the channel's producers at the Blue Camel Bar in Bombay, because he "stood out in the crowd". Ask Datt why that was so, and he laughs, "Because I was wearing plat forms at the time!" And *MTV News* is anchored and produced by Preeti Sethi and Sharon Gomes.

None of them have, however, achieved the kind of cult status that, for instance, Javed Jaffrey has. To be fair, though, MTV has only been on the air for a couple of months, and its veejays will probably come into their own soon enough.

Not that Channel V will let them do so without a fight. The channel is already devising new programming and is coming up with more commercials of the *Quick Gun Murugan* variety. This, for those of you who don't watch

At the MTV launch: Chandni Sahgal, Asha Bhosle, Peter Jameison and Bill Roedy

Channel V, was based on the concept of a *sambar* Western, with Quick Gun Murugan enacting the part of a *dosa* and *idli*-quaffing sharp-shooter. And then, of course, there's the V's bottom-line that has won the hearts of most Indian viewers: "We are like this only."

MTV's answer to Javed Jaffrey seems to be Danny McGill, the light-eyed veejay of somewhat eclectic tastes: he has about 5,000 Cds and "enjoys Metallica on Friday nights and Vivaldi on Sunday mornings". He is widely regarded as being one of the best-informed (as far as music goes) veejays in the fields, and is best-known for his off-the-cuff comments on the videos he runs for the audience. He's hosting the *Headbangers Ball* in his own inimitable style, and will win many more fans before the next couple of months are out.

Adding the international touch to MTV is also the Indonesian/Australian Nadya Hutagalung, Stella Sohn, and Mike Kasem, the son of Casey Kasem, the legendary radio-TV personality, who also writes in *Inside Track*, a fanzine on cassettes.

Alisha Chinai and Angela Chow

But MTV maintains that its veejays are different not just in their looks and style, but also in their attitude to their jobs. Rather than just giggle and chatter through their routines, they combine show business with serious social commitments.

To illustrate their point, they refer to the Channel V Roadshow, where such exciting prizes as a BMW bike were on offer. In contrast to this was the MTV-Levi's Clothing Exchange organised for the launch of MTV Asia. Here all the guests were encouraged to donate a wearable piece of clothing that was exchanged for a limited edition of Levi's MTV Indian launch T-shirts. The clothes which were collected from the guests were then given to Reach Out, a non-profit non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Channel V's Roadshow in progress

Rashbehari Das

The proceeds from MTV's charity raffle and ticket sales went to AIDS awareness charities, yet another example of the channel's commitment to good causes. But then, even its veejays seem very aware of their social responsibilities. Sharon Gomes, for instance, has co-presented the first Asian Youth Forum on Aids and Mike Kasem has been named the national youth chairman of the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

But the channels seem to differ in far more fundamental ways than these. Their attitudes to their target audiences, for instance. MTV seems to have targeted 15-35 year olds, going in for a much younger audience profile in the hope that these people will stick with them even as they grow older. Channel V, on the other hand, has targeted entire families because of the wider variety of programming it has to offer.

In effect, this means that MTV is going in for a niche audience, and will make more of a headway in homes

Sharon Gomes

which have multiple television sets. But Channel V, on the other hand, will have its takers even in single-set families, with both parents, grand-parents and children tuning in to watch different kinds of programmes.

It is this difference, in fact, that will determine the future of the two channels. If MTV does not change the character of its programming — and it shows little signs of doing so — then it will have to content itself with niche advertising. This would mean that it would earn much less revenue than Channel V, which will garner far more advertising because of its mass appeal.

For the moment, though, MTV seems to be quite happy with the way it has positioned itself in the market, and remains convinced that it has enough hardcore fans in India to make it a viable proposition. As a MTV staffer explains, "Channel V has now focussed on a broader, more family-oriented market in the push for advertising revenues. But MTV is really for the urban, young-at-heart individual with a taste for English language music and international fare. Basically, we are in for the youth market."

The coming months will tell us whether this strategy will work. And if MTV will be able to give Channel V a run for its music. But whatever happens: remain tuned. This will be a musical well worth listening to. ■

SAIFUDDIN CHAUDHURY, *the firebrand four-time CPI (M) MP from Katwa, West Bengal, has been denied a Lok Sabha ticket despite the recommendations of the party's state committee. Widely regarded as the brightest spark among young CPI (M) leaders, Saifuddin is a major player of the pro-change brigade led by Jyoti Basu.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To acheive unity of thought and action.
What is your greatest fear?
Loss of honour and dignity.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
A party worker in my village whose lone and selfless campaign with a red flag and a hand-held loud speaker made a deep impression on my childhood years.
What do you dislike most in others?
Deception.
What do you dislike most in yourself?

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My appearance after a haircut

Complacency.
What is your most precious possession?
People's goodwill

Saifuddin Chaudhury with his wife

What objects do you always carry?
A free-flowing pen and a clean writing pad.
What makes you most depressed?
Treachery and meanness.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My appearance after a haircut.
What is your favourite word?
Change.
What is your favourite journey?
From Howrah to Memari by local train, sitting at the window seat on a spring evening enjoying the gentle breeze on my face.
What is your favourite dream?
The resurrection of good and noble persons.
What is your nightmare?
No comments.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My two children.
What is your source of sustenance?
People, friends and family.
On what occasions do you lie?
On April Fool's day.
What is your greatest regret?
No regrets.
What has been your happiest moment?

On what occasions do you lie?

On April Fool's day

It has yet to come.
What brings tears to your eyes?
A hungry child.
How do you relax?
By listening to music.

What do you envy most in others?
I don't envy other human beings but I do envy the birds their freedom.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a simple, honest and free man.
How would you like to die?
With dignity.

THE DISCERNING EYE

We set the pace We manufacture with the express purpose of satisfying our customers Our R&D sustains this objective, it seeks to present the perfect product Each miniscule detail is scanned with an eagle eye be it the raw material, the manufacturing process or the finished product Today, our numerous and varied products cater to a wide spectrum of industries, both in India as well as abroad This reality is a result of our discerning eye - our R&D

UNIVERSAL CABLES LTD.

UCL is a leader in the Indian cable industry, producing a wide range of cables and capacitors known by the brand name of 'Unistar' in collaboration with various internationally renowned principals The range includes Paper Insulated Cables Speciality Elastomeric Cables, Cross Linked Polythene Cables, Power & Instrumentation Cables and Power Capacitors

P O Birla Vikas Satna 485 005 (M P)

VINDHYA TELELINKS LTD.

VTL was established in technical collaboration with Ericsson Cables AB Sweden, and manufactures a wide range of Polythene Insulated Jelly Filled Underground Telephone Cables in a wide range of standard conductor sizes with cable sizes varying from 10 pairs to 3600 pairs

Udyog Vihar P O Chorhata Rewa 486 006 (M P)

BIRLA ERICSSON OPTICAL LTD.

BEOL has entered into the field of telecommunication for the manufacture of Fibre Optic cables at its state-of-the-art complex at Rewa (M P) in a joint venture with world renowned Ericsson Cables AB Sweden The Fibre Optic cables are of international quality and meet all the requirements of the Department of Telecommunications and the Railways

Udyog Vihar P O Chorhata Rewa 486 006 (M P

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Classic

shirting

fabrics

from

Raymond.

polyester

and blends

plaids

and prints

Raymond

SINCE 1925

The Telegraph

14 APRIL 1996

[illegible]

All the Men for President

■ India owes much to Dr Karan Singh as it is because of his family that Kashmir is today a part of India ("Should He be Our Next President?", February 25).

He is a renowned educationist and a scholar whose views have been widely appreciated. He has never allowed his secular credentials to be questioned under any circumstance. And this should be the most important factor in choosing a President.

But it is also a fact that such men of worth do not find a place in today's politics where vested interests and powerplay dominate the proceedings. Going by past experience it is only to be expected that the gubernatorial post will go to someone who will be a compromise candidate; made President under political compulsions.

Santosh Kumar Sharma,
Kharagpur

■ Dr Singh's erudition is beyond debate: he is extremely knowledgeable and has sound information on diverse subjects.

Dr Karan Singh: The best candidate for President?

Apart from being a close aid of Indira Gandhi he has presided over a number of prestigious posts in the Indian administration. His secular credentials have never been questioned. One wonders why the Narasimha Rao government has never used the good offices of Dr Singh to solve the Kashmir imbroglio.

Arun Kumar Nandy,
Chandannagore

■ Going by the health of our present President one feels the 65-year-old former Maharaja of Kashmir would be the best candidate suiting the elegance and prestige of the high post.

As President he might usher in a new era of peace and prosperity in the Valley inducing the terrorists to give up their arms. Men of mediocrity have long dominated this important but ornamental post. We now need an intellectual who will do justice to the post.

Manoranjan Das,
Jamshedpur

■ I wonder if India can really afford to maintain the high office of the President whose function is merely to cut ribbons, hand over prizes/awards, welcome foreign dignitaries, read out prepared speeches and visit foreign countries at the cost of the national exchequer.

When the President has no constructive role to play, the Constitution should be amended and this post abolished.

D. Lahiri,
Jamshedpur

■ If Dr Singh is the true liberal Indian unshackled by any political prejudices and has a pragmatic approach to Kashmir, then he is the best candidate for President.

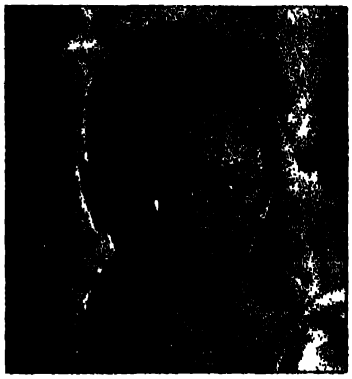
The turbulent Valley needs a physician like him who has an optimistic message for the people.

Debashis Sen,
Calcutta

■ Atal Behari Vajpayee would make a better Presidential candidate.

Prabal Guha,
Patna

INSIDE



PAGE 4

INDIA'S BEST known fashion photographer, Prabuddha Das Gupta's book, *Women*, is a fascinating collection of images of some of the most beautiful women from the country.

PAGE 26

WHEN IT comes to advertising, women are more successful than men in selling products.

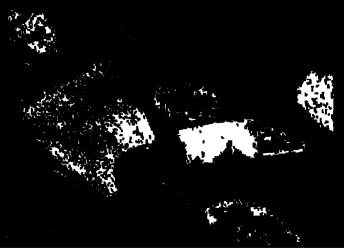
Advertisers prefer them

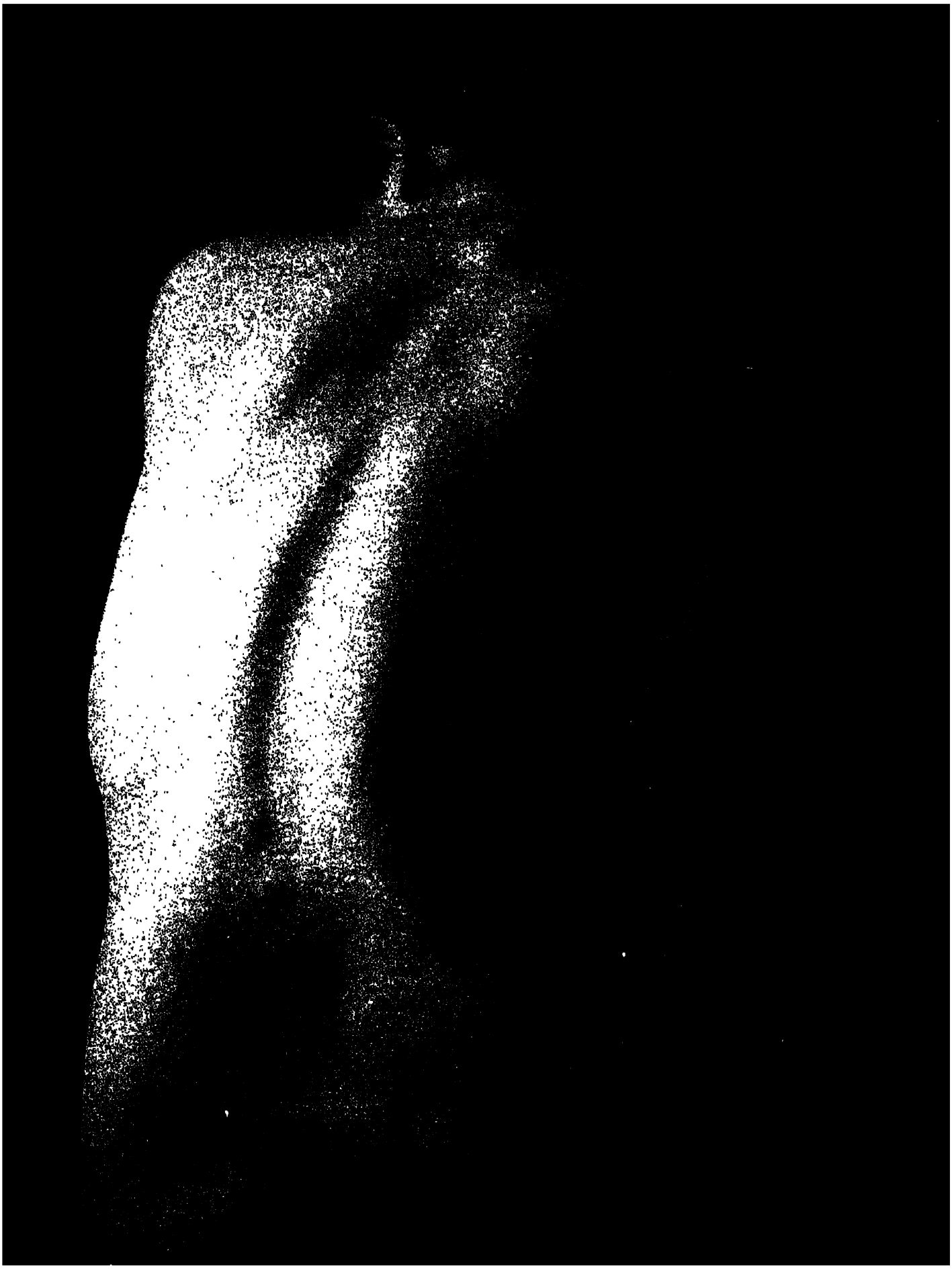
SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
20 INNER EYE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
26 ADVERTISING
28 MUSIC
30 FIRST PERSON

THE MAN WHO LOVES OMEN

Everyone's talking about Prabuddha Das Gupta's book of nudes. Now we these days, ***Samita Bhatia*** *profiles India's best known fashion photographer*



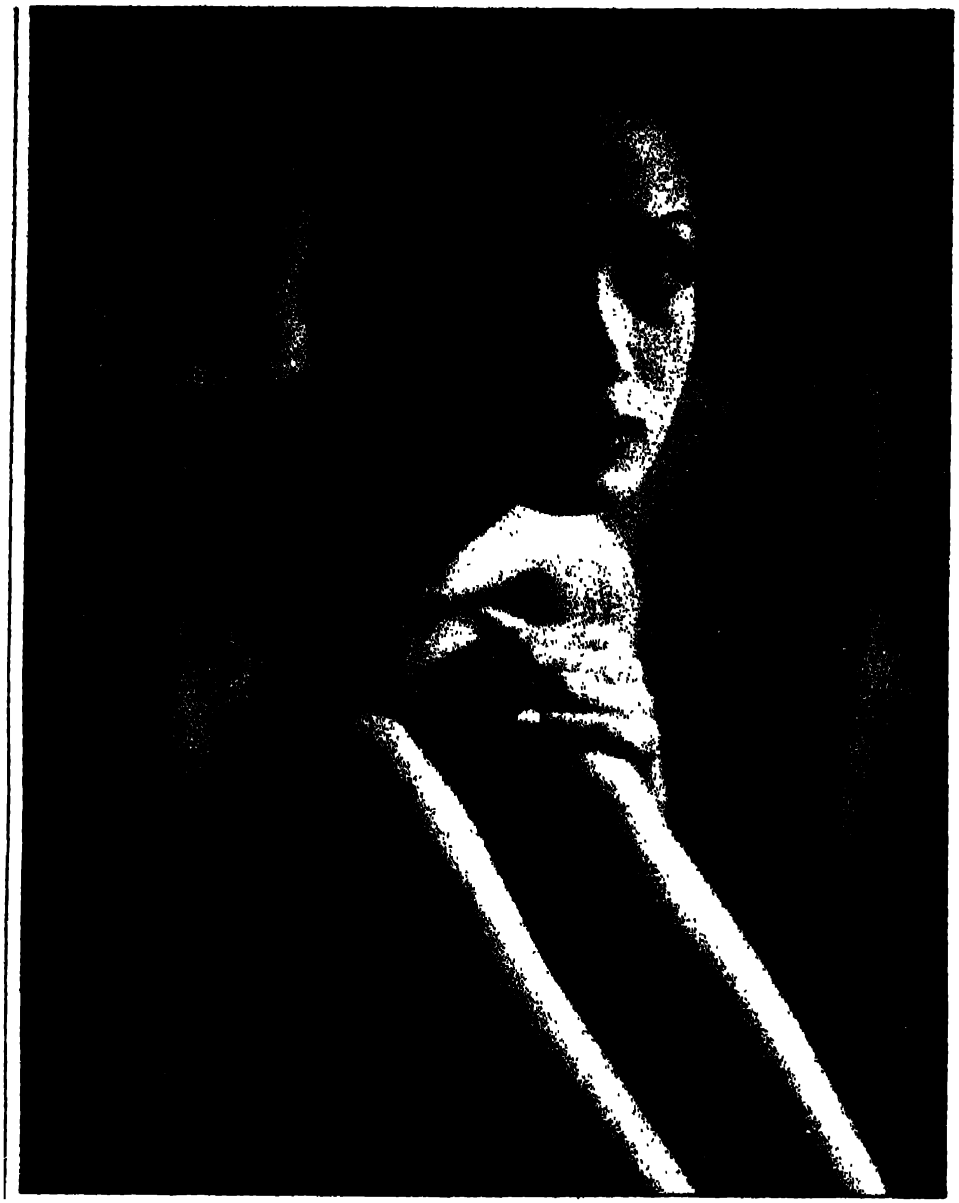


Wispy, blue smoke-rings float languidly towards the ceiling. India's ace fashion photographer watches them contemplatively, occasionally brushing aside his tresses that are streaked with grey.

You'll always catch Prabuddha Das Gupta looking relaxed, laid back and, more often than not, introspective. In one such pensive mood he might just tell you that there's no such thing as perfect happiness. A cynicism that will give way the next moment to mock-seriousness That's when he'll claim that he sinks into a depression when his "most precious possession" — his cigarette lighter — is misplaced. His wife Tania will corroborate helpfully, "He didn't sleep one night when he thought that he'd lost the thing!"

He's cryptic at most times, exudes an air of curious detachment, loves to say 'no' and dislikes hypocrisy in others — and in himself too He confesses, "I love women and photographing them is one of the pleasures of my job"

So, is it any surprise then that he's most relaxed while he's working? Or that it is the female form which has catapulted him into the pages of glossy magazines and news reports? Or that, these days Prabuddha Das Gupta answers to the sobriquet of the Man Who Loves Women?



Of late, Das Gupta has been in the news because of his first book, *Women*, published by Viking (some time back he was in the headlines because of the controversial Tuff Shoes ad) The genre to which *Women* belongs — the study of the nude female form — has enjoyed an elevate status through the ages. Only here the medium is a new one — photography.

A collection of some 90 black and white images of some of the most beautiful Indian women, the book is attracting rave reviews This, despite the fact that *Women* was launched with practically none of the publicity that goes with the birth of a coffee table book — and no launch party either. It slipped quietly into the World Book Fair to forge its own destiny

Some have called it path-breaking, others a landmark achievement, being the first photographic coffee table book to be published in the country that deals with the subject of female nudes. While Prabuddha is heaving a sigh of relief at the fact the book has not been sensationalised, he says that now that the book has a life of its own he finds himself "in a limbo, exhausted and empty."

Explains the maverick photographer in the Afterword to the publication, "The human body has always been considered to be the most beautiful of nature's creations, and has been acclaimed as such in all the arts, universally. Its plastic and sculptural qualities on the one hand and its enigmatic erotic quality on the other have inspired poets, writers and sculptors But although the nude, and themes related to it, have been a vital part of any artistic tradition, they have always been sensitive subjects"

David Davidar, editor, Penguin India, which is a sister concern of Viking, is also satisfied with the response that *Women* has evoked. While "some thousand copies" of the book were published, he says, over a thousand have already found buyers notwithstanding the Rs 1,500 price tag. Says Davidar, "The book has been

received just as the way we hoped it would — as a work of art. Penguin looked at *Women* as a new kind of art book going by the premise that photography 'is' an art form. Besides, Prabuddha happens to be the best fashion photographer in the country. He has been photographing the human body in a way that other Indian photographers are only beginning to emulate now."

Davidar feels that with *Women* Prabuddha has broken new ground and set a new landmark. Says he, "Penguin has a reputation for publishing books that are unique and are not me-too products. And this picture book is not derivative of any other picture book, it's a very personal point of view."

Prabuddha nods in agreement. The book is a personal journey, a photographic interpretation of the subject of women, women that he as photographer has known. Not surprisingly then, some of the images in the book go back more than a decade. Explains Prabuddha, "I've tried to explore the totality of the nude as a photographic subject rather than focus on sexuality — the curve of a back, the beauty and purity of the form."

If his area of specialisation is women then his medium is primarily black and white. Prabuddha unleashed the trend of black and white photography in the late Eighties, at a time when the industry was saturated with colour.

"Strangely, a stigma seemed to be attached to this genre of photography at that time," says Das Gupta. There was nothing glamorous about it and one only associated passport size pictures and the downmarket stuff with black and white photographs." While he claims that it was Lady Luck who smiled on him, associates press the point that Prabuddha's runaway success in the field brought about a resurgence in this medium and had other photographers jumping on to the bandwagon.

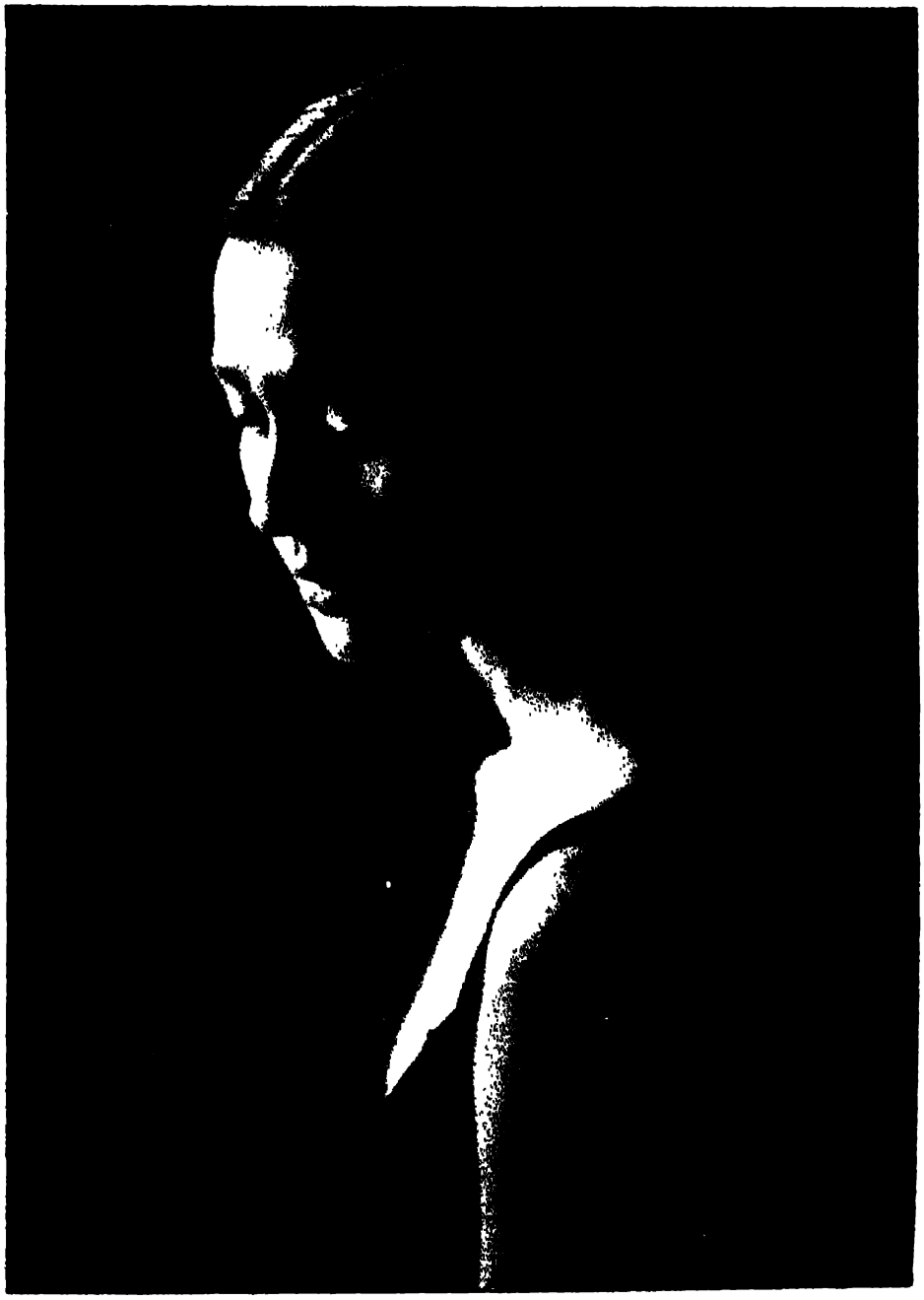
Fashion designers who have worked closely with Prabuddha are effusive in their praise of him. They feel that the hallmark of his work is an incredible sensuality and his dramatic use of black and white. Says the Ensemble man, fashion designer Tarun Tahiliani, "Prabuddha is the kind of photographer who will hang upside down from a ceiling to get the right angle. He never clicks what's in front of him but visualises the best way the shot can be taken. If the model's hair is not 'just right' Prabuddha is disconcerted. He has a stylist's eye."

Designer J.J Valaya adds that Prabuddha has mastered the art of controlling natural light. While it is technically very difficult to make things look great in the existing light conditions Prabuddha deals effectively with this problem.

Just as accolades pour in so does a fair share of criticism from others of Prabuddha's ilk. While photographers concur that Prabuddha has handled black and white tones exceedingly well some assert that the book lacks the depth and vision of a dedicated person whose experience has given him an insight into the theme that he is working on.

Observes Raghu Rai, the man who practically invented photo-journalism in India, "There are four or five images that are quite original in their composition, besides in totality the book is aesthetically appealing and quite romantic with a dramatic design element. However, the lines and tones are not enough in my opinion to carry any book."

Rai observes that had the book been split into chapters individually summing up some of the different aspects of womanhood, it would have been better "directed". He adds that bifurcations would have breathed in a semblance of a visual continuity in the images. Rai adds, "The book doesn't excite me as a man, while a woman



will not find what she is looking for in it."

Detractors point out that while Prabuddha deals with a subject that has enormous possibilities *Women* restricts its scope to encompass a certain type of woman. Besides, the book is a collection of images that are 'posed' as opposed to candid shots

Prabuddha has an explanation. *Women* is not meant to be an anthropology on women or an attempt to do an expected 'Women of India' kind of volume — the very purpose of such a focus becomes different However, the title, perhaps misleads one into expecting images of women in various geographic and social variations. Perhaps the title 'Woman' might have been more appropriate," he says in hindsight.

So there is no snatching of moments or creeping up on someone for a candid picture, he says with a half smile. "The genre of nude photography or portraits by their very nature implies a controlled environment where a pose must be struck."

Doing a book of this nature wasn't easy. Prabuddha explains that given our current environment and the cultural climate not too many women are willing to be photographed without their clothes on. "It's a matter of utmost delicacy and no matter how much exposure the woman may have had to the camera or however confident she may be before it, she will not be completely convinced to pose in the nude. Besides, taking off your clothes before the camera is only a stumbling block but to have the photographer critically examine your body is perhaps the hardest part!"

It is, therefore, a tribute not only to Prabuddha's skills as a photographer but his qualities as a human being, that so many women — top models among them — agreed to pose in the nude for him. There are few photographers in this country who could inspire that kind of trust.

Putting the book together, however, was even more difficult than the process of photography. The process of editing and sifting through mountains of photographs for the final selection was ultimately not a very personal exercise. Each of the images had to be approved of by the models first. Many personal preferences of Prabuddha had to be excluded because the model had second thoughts about the photographs being used. Some were even pulled out just when the book was to go into print.

He explains, "While the models were keenly interested during the shoots, it hadn't hit them just then that the pictures would be published in a book that would sell in every other bookshop "

So, what made them agree to sign the release forms (without which their pictures could not have been used)? Prabuddha muses, "Frankly, I don't know what I have said or done to inspire the confidence in these 40-odd women to have vested that trust in me to photograph them for the book. Perhaps it's a respect that goes beyond me being a photographer or a maker of images. Most were friends whom I had worked with before so in that res-

pect none of them were complete strangers."

And when word spread that Prabuddha was working on a book of this nature, complete strangers too got in touch and wanted to be included and become a part of this artistic creativity.

As the reams and reams of film were clicked, Prabuddha's wife Tania, a designer by profession, got her act together. Explaining the line taken by her in designing the book, she says, "I decided to keep it extremely simple. The idea was not to overpower the pictures, which were meant to stand out just the way they were. I think the whole book is very pure — it's not sensational."

Pure it may be, but it is not devoid of erotic content. "Any nude that is not erotic is a failure. However, there's a difference between eroticism and titillation. My pictures don't say 'come hither, I'm sexy' they are not meant to titillate," says the photographer firmly.

Prabuddha never thought that one day he would grow to become the most sought-after fashion photographer in the country. As a matter of fact he never thought that he would ever become a professional photographer. As a copywriter with Ulka advertising in Calcutta, Prabuddha says he was "a closet photographer" for nearly eight years before he launched full time into photography in 1988.

In the latter years of his ad days, Prabuddha began putting his photography to great use in campaigns where he'd write the ad line as well as shoot for the campaign. It was his experience with the agencies — Ulka in Calcutta and Delhi, Clarion and Everest, also in Delhi — that armed him with the capacity to "think visually" all the time. Reminiscing about his advertising days he says, "I never wrote a copy in isolation."

This fashion photography specialist began his career in this arena with campaigns for Inter Shoppe and Blue Lagoon jeans. The shift from the ad world to fashion photography was a gradual one. Most assignments that Prabuddha took on were people oriented, with the clients hailing from the fashion world. And before he realised it, his career as photographer predominated that of being copy writer.

Assignments were not hard to come by and Prabuddha stood his ground and took on no more than three or four campaigns in a month. "I never compromised on my craft. I never had a craze or fascination for money in the obsessive sense," he says.

PRABUDDHA'S FAVOURITES

He rates Shyamoli Verma and Malaika Arora the highest

The lines on your face will appeal to him, so too the blemishes and the puffiness around the eyes. And chances are that if he photographs you little will be done to camouflage these with a few deft tricks of his lens.

In fact, Prabuddha's *Women* is replete with portraits where the fine lines and smudges are not concealed. "The concept of beauty is very subjective. A lot of women who I find truly beautiful are not considered so by others," says Das Gupta. "When I photograph women I like them to go slow on cosmetics. Yes, the fine lines and blemishes constitute my vision of beauty in its totality. It always helps to have some imperfections."

He obviously goes beyond the conventionally pretty face and instead "looks out for a strength of character." The one woman who epitomises his definition of Woman — and not just photographically — is none other than yester-year supermodel

The turning point in Prabuddha's career came when the late Rohit Khosla — the designer who introduced *haute couture* to India — sought him out for assignments. "Whatever little feeling I have for fashion and any technical know-how I possess on the matter of fashion photography is due to Rohit," says Das Gupta.

Luck swung in his favour again as the fashion boom set in. The concept of the designer label was catching on and there was a breaking away from the traditional ideas of fashion. The industry was in its nascent stages and experimentation was in the air. If Garware Suitings and Raymond's had ruled the roost before as the only benchmarks in the arena of 'designer wear', then Ensemble with its collection of designers was poised to usher in a new era in Indian high fashion. And Prabuddha was in the right place at the right time.

Today Prabuddha claims that he works best in a situation of chaos and depends solely on his instincts for the finer points of fashion photography. Perhaps the most un-fashion conscious fashion photographer, Prabuddha's response to high fashion comes through an instinctive and intuitive feel for the subject. He smiles. "I haven't the faintest idea of what styles are or those that are *passe* or whether the look of the Sixties or Seventies is back again."

Prabuddha arrives for a shoot with no pre-conceived notions as to how he would like to structure the assignment. "I always go with a very basic idea of how the shoot should turn out. All I like to arm myself with is the basic information about how many models are involved, the location and the clothes to be modeled."

Not very surprising then that the unpredictability of Prabuddha's *modus operandi* is known to have thrown many off balance.

Model Ruchie Malhotra who has worked with Prabuddha on many occasion says that he may function best in chaos, "but he knows exactly what he wants. There are many who get intimidated by his working style but as a model I know that the shoot will be over within an hour. Besides, the model can rest assured that she'll end up looking her best."

Models and designers vouch for the fact that Prabuddha is a stickler for detail. He may not know what's in and what's out in the fashion arena but he sure knows which accessory or prop will give him the result he is looking for. Attention to detail is one fetish that Prabuddha can never shake off. While a battery of professionals — from a make-up artist to stylist — lend a helping hand to put the shoot together designers say that Prabuddha's keen interest in the props, the background and the clothes goes to enhance the product that he's shooting.

While the brief from the designers are pretty much open-ended, and give his creativity a free hand, advertising campaigns must adhere to certain parameters. "Yet he does manage to

Shyamoli Verma.

"Her's is an 'aura' that gets translated into print, which rarely happens. There are innumerable women who are beautiful in person but are not photogenic. But Shyamoli is by far the most magical woman to appear before my camera," muses Prabuddha.

Another is Malaika Arora who Prabuddha says has an in-born relationship with the camera. "She has the ability of changing before the camera," he says about her.

change each brief!" says wife Tania smugly.

Prabuddha explains, "When an ad agency commissions me for a job they pay me not only for my technical abilities but also my creativity Besides, I'm not divorced from the jargon of admen when they speak of advertising objectives or marketing strategies. Since they are not photographers themselves I must interpret their brief and then translate it into photographs. So, yes, a lot of the initiative is mine "

A word of warning for admen. Never ever make the mistake of bringing your little book of 'Advertising Greats' to Prabuddha for emulating. "I show such people the door," says Prabuddha blowing another smoke ring towards the ceiling.

Plagiarism is what he obviously hates and accusations of this enrage him — just like they did when the Tuff shoes ad controversy broke This lanky photographer whose lens had captured the models Milind Soman, Madhu Sapre — and the serpent — entwined together, all in the name of selling shoes, refused to comment on the campaign when it ran into troubled waters. The campaign was lambasted, banned and thereafter hastily withdrawn

Today he explains, "The attempt was to shock and have the product noticed We never intended to offend anybody's sensibilities." Besides, when the Indian moral code came cracking down on the team behind the ad, Prabuddha, part conceptualiser of the campaign, was smarting at the suggestion that the ad had been plagiarised from a foreign campaign

"I felt exonerated when the same advertisement won an international award in New York There was an element of thrill at having won a claim for the ad which had competed with countless campaigns from the world over and had been criticised in one's own country," he says

More importantly, Prabuddha was absolved of the charge of plagiarism, as amongst the competition was the Calvin Klien advertisement that he had supposedly imitated.

While he rides a euphoric wave nonchalantly, Prabuddha gets on with his next project This time it's contributing to a book on the ten years of the career of designer Suneet Varma And going by his track record, that should prove to be a smashing success as well ■

FOCUS

CAUGHT IN A JAM

That best sums up Calcutta traffic; but, asks ***Rajlakshmi Bhattacharyya****, is there any hope of improvement?*

It is said when the going gets tough, the tough get going. In Calcutta, though, one has *not* to be tough to battle one's way through the traffic. And in this city traffic itself is but a byword for chaos and sheer pandemonium.

Buses, cars and trucks change lanes at will, often missing each other by the proverbial whisker; hawkers peddle their wares on the footpaths, so that pedestrians have little choice but to walk on the overcrowded roads, and the traffic police whisper importantly into their walkie-talkies, and fling their arms around — but to little avail. More often than not, the complete lack of road discipline slows the traffic down to a snail's pace, making it impossible to show up anywhere on time.

But what ails our traffic system? Is there no method in the madness that currently prevails?

The first — and perhaps the most insurmountable — problem is that of inadequate road space. Calcutta has a meagre six per cent as compared to Bombay's 20 per cent and Delhi's 25 per cent of road space. The ratio indicates not only a paucity in the number of commutable roads, but also inadequate width of existing ones. A large chunk of the road space is taken up by alleys and back lanes that are not broad enough to accommodate a two-way traffic of cars, leave alone buses. To further complicate the situation is the fact that buses are not allowed to go through residential areas, and have to ply on the main arterial roads.

Trams also contribute to traffic bottlenecks, by breaking down on such main roads as B B Ganguli Street, Rabindra Sarani, Amherst Street and M G Road. Calcutta Tramways has been asked by the traffic police department to place breakdown vans at such road crossings, so that the minimum inconvenience is caused.

Talk of traffic signal equipments, and you would — even a few years ago — be talking of junk. The signals have neither been able to ease the trat

A typical traffic jam in Calcutta

arresting a jay walker during last year's Traffic Week

fic jams not have they replaced the traditional constables. They stand, often blind as a bat, on freshly painted poles, at times blinking amber light to mock, perhaps, the perilous state of the city's traffic.

The situation might improve once the mega city project is implemented. This will reduce the concentration of traffic in such arterial roads as Chowringhee and Park Street. The western flank of Strand Road is being concretised and once that is complete it is expected that the entire Howrah bound traffic will cruise along it, giving the main city a miss. The withdrawal of trams in this area has also come as somewhat of a relief to traffic commuters. And once the Metro is fully operational, it is expected to carry the brunt of the north-south traffic.

"A Japanese team has suggested the construction of more flyovers, overbridges including pedestrian ones from the Central metro station, intersection improvements and pedestrian plazas," says S. Ramakrishna, Joint CP (Traffic). But whether they will bring about an end to the difficulties most commuters face is hard to predict. The number of people pouring in from neighbouring states shows no signs of going down and the city is ill equipped to cope with such high numbers.

According to the latest census estimates, Calcutta is said to be the most densely populated metropolis. The rise in the number of vehicles (and there are 400-500 new cars every month) hitting the roads have also kept pace with the growth in population figures.

One of the principal ways to solve the crisis of limited road space was the introduction of one-way traffic. The first attempt was made successfully several years ago on the Park Street, Camac Street, Theatre Road area. Yet this was not extended further till a few years ago — in January 1990.

The one-way regulations on subsidiary roads linking with main arterial roads has made some difference to traffic speeds, though not to a perceptible degree. Closing streets to vehicles either partially or completely would help regulate the flow of traffic. It makes sense, for instance, to close New Market to traffic and convert its parking zone into a boulevard. The situation in Dalhousie Square can be improved by making people walk to their offices from the main road. While it is not possible to increase road space, a more scientific management of the existing ones can ensure a smoother system of travel.

Plans are also on to lay a road through Curzon Park to help vehicles plying to and from Central Calcutta to avoid rallies. The road will cut across the park and extend from the Esplanade East Raj Bhavan crossing to the Chowringhee S.N. Banerjee Road crossing. Once the road is laid, Central Calcutta traffic will not have to use Esplanade East at all. That stretch will be solely maintained for rallies. In due course of time, Esplanade East can become the official venue for rallies except the major ones which will be held at the Brigade Parade ground.

"If it is there any way to prevent traffic being disrupted by demonstrations and processions?" When there is a well planned procession and information comes well in advance, we try to provide alternative routes to normal motorists and another for the rallyists," says Ramakrishna. But to snap demonstrations, computerised display boards are in the pipeline to enable vehicle owners to take the right routes. Announcements through FM radio and pagers have helped, he claims, ease the congestion at times.

A computerised traffic system through maps that are computer developed will be useful for providing information to the motorists regarding restrictions in force in the city, no entry on the roads on which he is travelling and in entering, traffic-safety guidelines. About Lal's roos anyone?

CATCHING THEM YOUNG

A new project in St Xavier's School is geared towards inculcating a respect for traffic rules in their students

When the chairman of the Civic Affairs and Rural Development Committee of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, visited Bombay, he was impressed. Not by the city itself, but by a couple of hoardings that had spearheaded a traffic awareness movement in Bombay. The agency involved in putting up the hoardings was Contract, which was then approached by the chairman to draw up a similar plan for Calcutta.

Looking at the overall traffic situation, it was felt that schools were the most fragile and vulnerable victims of traffic congestion. Besides, it was always easier to discipline a child than educate an adult. St. Xavier's School seemed like the ideal venue for the pilot project scheme, even if its students would be the first guinea-pigs in the experiment.

Once a tranquil zone, the school is now surrounded by chaos. Cars belonging to school children, residents, Vardaan shop owners, visitors and office-goers clog the streets creating both parking problems and noise pollution. "Sometimes the din due to traffic snarls is such, it is impossible to *hear* oneself think," rues Clayton Moses, the Prefect of St. Xavier's School. And the streets, too, are getting narrower due to double parking, he adds.

The time had come to do something, and it had to be done fast. It is at this juncture that the Indian Chamber of Commerce and the Calcutta Police came forward. Announcements were made at the school asssembly to tell the children that a special effort was going to be made to improve traffic in and around their school area. The children were then expected to carry the message back home to their parents — who were often among the traffic offenders. "The kids we thought, were our best ambassadors," says Moses.

No sooner were the first zebra crossings laid, than the children voiced their observations in the assembly. They were encouraged to cross them with their parents as a first step towards developing a sense of traffic rules. Everybody agreed to name the area a child-friendly zone and hoardings which used a child's face to plead 'silence please' or 'if you honk too loudly, I migt / might fail in class" were put up as part of the gentle persuasion drive. Warnings were issued that cars parked near the gates will be picked up. "Though," says S. Ramakrishna, joint commissioner (CP) traffic, "there is a limit to the number of cars that can be towed away every day. The real discipline should come from within."

Recent hoarding near St.Xavier's School

"Plans to issue letters to parents by the kids have also been chalked out," said Moses and a need has been felt to take the seniors into the fray to give the movement more momentum.

Though Moses would not allow his little ones on the street to help enforce traffic rules, he has brought about a change in the very attitude of the kids. They are asked not to rush down the corridors and to stay in line, which he feels is the basic rule in traffic training. Interacting with conductors and bus drivers, issuing stickers and hosting contests in school on designing road signs, to essays on what a child should do were he caught in a jam can go a long way in instilling traffic discipline, says Moses.

Parents of children would be persuaded to pool their cars by rotation every week so that the number of vehicles entering the zone is minimised. Both car-owning residents and shop owners have a right to park but tend to abuse the facilities offered. But if parking attendents and constables remain vigilant and honest, then parking in no parking zones could be reduced, if not prevented altogether.

"There are definitely some signs of improvements," feels Moses and even Ramakrishna has suggested sending his traffic officers to school the children on traffic regulations.

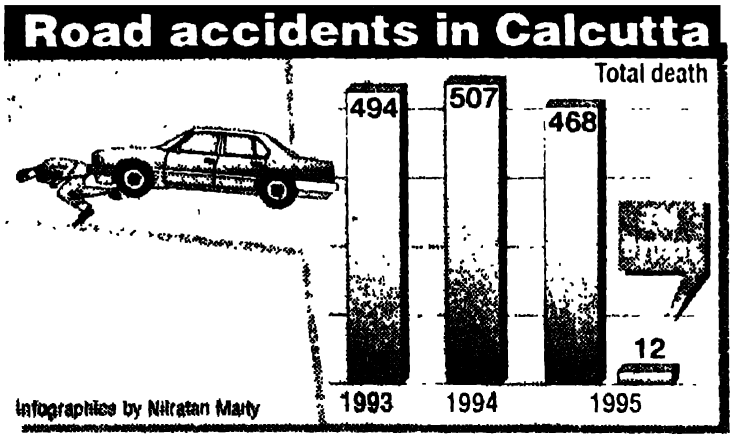
As for the kids, they will soon get talking about the project which is expected to be implemented in other schools, too, should the Xavier's experiment work out. But the children should be made to feel it is a part of their lives and not a part of their curriculum. "It won't be assessed nor would grades be put on it," says Moses, "for that would be self-defeating".

But, with luck, this project will produce children who know that traffic rules are not meant to be broken. They are there to make the roads a better and safer place to move on.

have computerised traffic signals

With a view to encouraging discipline, safe driving and minimising accidents, the Calcutta Traffic Police have introduced speed check radars, which are being used, according to traffic reports, at the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass. Other projects in progress are the use of wheel clamps on vehicles parked in areas not falling within the parking zones to check illegal parking, use of breath analysers to check drunken driving and the use of cones or portable guard rails to act as road dividers. This is already in evidence on Red Road to ensure lane-wise flow of traffic and to prevent people from breaking/jumping the lanes.

One of the most pressing problems affecting not just road transport but the very lives of people who avail of it, is the alarming rise in atmospheric pollution. In 1995, the Calcutta traffic police organised diagnostic camps and Anti Auto Pollution Week which initiated a total of 12,227 cases against noise and blow-horn pollution. What the city really needs are auto emission centres where pollution can be monitored and mobile checks done. The easiest thing would be for each owner to keep his car clean which does not always cost much when defects are small and related to basic maintenance.



Responsibility must also lie with citizens who are too diffident to share the blame for traffic congestion. With zebra crossings, pedestrian flyovers and subways reduced to an insignificant part of the city's landscape, it was not surprising to see 1,056 jay walkers being arrested and fined last year from various road intersections. What was disheartening was the lack of a sustained drive by the Calcutta police. "We have tried to enforce whatever facilities are available so that near Sealdah, accidents are on the decline," says Ramakrishna. While 1994 registered 507 fatal cases, in 1995, he puts the figure to 468. The number of accidents are highest from 8 am-1 pm, 4pm-7 pm and 8pm-9pm. The first two zones are related to rush hour traffic when everyone is in a hurry and tempers are frayed.

"Pedestrian movement can be controlled at any point of time but what really counts is a habit," emphasises Ramakrishna. Calcutta desperately needs a more conscious and vigilant traffic culture. But from the look of the roads, it will be a long time before it actually acquires one. ■

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TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4 THURSDAY 5 FRIDAY 6 SATURDAY 7 SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

	Departures			Arrivals		
	Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
■ AGARTALA						
■ AHMEDABAD						
■ AIZAWL						
■ BAGDOGRA						
■ BANGALORE						
■ BHUBANESWAR						
■ MUMBAI						
■ DELHI						
■ DIBRUGARH						
■ DIMAPUR						
■ GOA						
■ GUWAHATI						

	Departures			Arrivals		
	Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
■ HYDERABAD						
■ IMPHAL						
■ JAIPUR						
■ JORHAT						
■ LILABARI						
■ LUCKNOW						
■ MADRAS						
■ NAGPUR						
■ PATNA						
■ PORT BLAIR						
■ RANCHI						
■ SHILLONG						
■ SILCHAR						
■ TEZPUR						
■ VARANASI						
■ VISHAKHAPATNAM						

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

- ■ AMMAN
- ■ AMSTERDAM
- ■ BANGKOK
- ■ BUCHAREST

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
DHAKA					
DOHA					
DUBAI					
KATHMANDU					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
LONDON					
MOSCOW					
PARO					
SINGAPORE					
SOFIA					
TOKYO					
YANGON					

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom-Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
		Delhi-Kalka Mail		
		Amritsar Mail		
		Bombay Mail		
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express		
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express		
		Rajdhani Express		
		Rajdhani Express		
		Jodhpur Express		
		Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express		
		Himgiri (Jammu Tawi) Express		
		Guwahati Express		
		Gorakhpur Express		
		Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express		
		Doon Express		
		Udyan Abha Toofan Express		
		Amritsar Express		
		Kathgodam Express		
		Mithila (Raxaul) Express		
		Kamrup (Guwahati) Express		
		Black Diamond Express		
		Coalfield Express		
		Asansol Express		
		Danapur Express		
		Jamalpur Express		
		Santiniketan Express		
		Chambal (Gwalior) Express		
		Shipra (Indore) Express		
		Shaktipunj (Dhopan) Express		
		Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express		

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
		Teesta-Torsa Express		
		Darjeeling Mail		
		Lal Quila Express		
		Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express		
		Gour Express		
		Katihar Express		
		Jammu-Tawi Express		
		Mughal Sarai Express		
		Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express		
		Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
		Madras Mail		
		Bombay Mail		
		Gitanjali (Bombay) Express		
		Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express		
		Ahmedabad Express		
		Puri Express		
		Commandal (Madras) Express		
		Fulakhuma (Secunderabad) Express		
		Bangalore Express		
		Tata Steel Express		
		Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express		
		Titlagarh Express		
		Ranchi Hatia Express		
		Puri Express		
		Jagannath (Puri) Express		
		Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express		
		East Coast (Hyderabad) Express		
		Purulia Express		
		Azad Hind (Puri) Weekly Express		
		Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express		
		New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express		
		Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express		
		Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express		
		Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express		
		Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express		
		Cochin Harbour Terminus Express		
		Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express		
		Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express		

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SKETCHES

WAR GAMES

And the people who play them

This Week: Manisha Koirala Vs Mamta Kulkarni

How it began: Nobody is too sure. Mamta's supporters insist that it was Manisha who started it all by calling Kulkarni a 'vernacular' type (a snide reference to the fact that Mamta was from a lower middle-class background and spoke very dodgy English). The Koirala camp, however, has a very different story to tell. According to this version, it was Mamta who began the war by making disparaging references to Manisha in interviews to various film magazines.

So, what did Kulkarni say?: Well, the general thrust of her attack was on Manisha's drinking habits, and by that we don't mean that Koirala drank entirely too many Pepsis to beat the Bombay heat. If Mamta was to be believed, then Manisha's puffy face, and those unsightly tyres around the mid-riff owed more to Bacardi and coke than biryani and raita.

Manisha's reaction: Spluttering with indignation, Koirala retorted that it was beneath her dignity to respond to such attacks by B-grade actresses like Kulkarni. But not before she had pointed out that Mamta was hardly the one to talk about puffy faces and podgy arms, considering how much weight she had put on since her salad days (when she posed topless for the cover of *Stardust*).

Was this just another storm in a C-cup?: Well, not entirely. The two actresses stopped speaking to each other—except through the columns of sundry gossip magazines—and the vibes between them were ice cold if they ever ran into each other. Their friends took up cudgels on their behalf, and the minor skirmish had soon become full-scale war.

But was there any truth to the allegations?: If you're talking about Koirala's drinking habits, then alas we have to reply in the affirmative. Her preference for alcohol is too well-documented to be wished away.

Manisha Koirala

Mamta Kulkarni

Kajol

Karisma Kapoor

She has often reported on the sets with a massive hangover, and on one celebrated occasion Mahesh Bhatt even called pack-up once he'd got the measure of Manisha's puffy cheeks and blood-shot eyes. What's more, Koirala has even suffered the mortification of tripping and falling down on stage, while performing in a star nite abroad

And what about Mamta?: Well, it's certainly true that the Kulkarnis are nice Maharashtrian types, as far removed from Malabar Hill and Pedder Road as you could possibly imagine And it is also correct that Mamta hasn't had the benefit of a convent school education like some others in filmland, hence the accented and less than grammatical English. But it would be hard to justify calling her 'vern' After all, she is dressed in the latest designer garments —even if she does end up looking like a fashion victim at times —and by now even knows who Gianni Versace is

As for the puppy fat issue, well, just have a look at her recent pictures and judge for yourself.

Why are these two at loggerheads?: Logically speaking, it makes little sense. Mamta is not really in Manisha's league, whatever she may say to the contrary Koirala has had such major hits as *Bombay*, and is accounted a very fine actress. Mamta, on the other hand, is still better known for the poses she strikes on magazine covers.

Raveena Tandon

So, why does Manisha bother to respond to Mamta's bitchy remarks?: By now, Koirala probably realises that she made a mistake by letting it rip But now it's too late to remedy matters She's already granted Mamta some measure of legitimacy by retorting in kind; and indicated—if only by implication—that Mamta isn't too low down on the stardom scale after all

So, the honours go to Mamta, after all. Do all actresses have these kind of cat fights?: Yes and no There are some like Karisma who seem to attract enmity even without trying. First, the Kapoor daughter got involved in an unseemly battle with Raveena Tandon, who had once been close to Ajay Devgan, then Karisma's boyfriend The two girls attacked each other in print, and even Karisma's mother, Babita, got involved in the fracas But once the Devgan-Kapoor romance came to an end, Karisma and Raveena made up, and now will even be starring in a movie together

But, then, Kajol took off from where Raveena left off; and not without good reason She had started dating Ajay Devgan (and the latest gossip is that they may well get married), and rather understandably, didn't like Karisma too much So, when the two heroines came face to face at some studio or the other, Kajol looked through Karisma

The Kapoor daughter was not one to give up without a fight So, she called up Ajay and complained that his girlfriend was being rude to him. But Kajol had her defence ready she hadn't had her contact lenses on, and so had failed to see Karisma.

But what's the latest on the Mamta-Manisha front?: Thankfully, things have quitened down ever since Manisha started going around with Nana Patekar, who, apparently, had a very sobering influence on her But now that Koirala and Patekar have split up—so Manisha informed the press last month— fireworks may well resume.■

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALL

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says concentration, heavy and total on the work frontier the first three days. After that, personal posers and relationships hold the key. You have to keep the momentum going, even when there is no one to push you. Thanks to Mars, energy will follow thought.

Taurus
April [illegible] - May 20

Mercury in your sign, according to Western astrology, help you to take the bit in your mouth and run fast as do horses. Journey, change, move all come together now. Also, expenses will skyrocket. Problems can be ironed out given persistence and dexterity. You will have to face social responsibilities.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Success through influence and your charming behaviour is foretold. Your attitude should be sympathetic and concerned for others. If money is the issue, it should be with you shortly. Friendships will blossom. Mutually beneficial situations work best. So create opportunities for many people.

Cancer
June 21 - July 20

Love and work now really come together or clash depending on your attitude. You will have to socialise, work hard, wade through a little opposition in order to get what you want. You will have to share the cake just to satisfy one and all. April 14, 16, 18 will be important for the news you do receive.

Leo
July 21 - August 21

The fascination and work possibilities of distant places will impinge upon you. Those in information, TV, media, heavy industry and chemicals, import, export, foreign affairs, leadership and management training do wonderfully. It is certain that you will work yourself to the bone. Learn to relax.

Virgo
August 22 - September 22

The luck of the draw will be with you. It is a challenging need. You must be upbeat and put in a lot of hardwork. Fortunately, your creativity will be superb. Loans and funds, buying and selling, will take your time and talent. Health safeguards towards the week's close are essential.

Libra
September 23 - October 22

You do get caught midstream between tradition and modernity. Relationships could go askew causing pain and disruption. Time to change tracks completely is the loud and clear message of Jupiter-Saturn. That done, you should be on the high road to success. Be firm of purpose.

Scorpio
October 23 - November 22

Ganesha says a trip would be tied in with work, studying and love. You can and will have to take up cudgels for injustice and dirty politics. Lobwise there could be a few changes. A little extra care of your health is advisable. Secret work will have to be done so that neither clues nor information is given out.

Sagittarius
November 23 - December 20

A risk taking week and ho hum common set of rules just do not apply. Children, grandchildren, education, new enterprise, developing a hobby could excite you. The flow will come from the sheer spontaneous joy of doing. This is the time for you to take long trips. Ties and contracts are foretold.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

Attention to details, a sense of perfection, a growing annoyance with things as they are will grip you. You will have to move quickly and efficiently without ruffling too many feathers and that could be difficult. Sparks are going to fly. Home conditions may not be all that you ask for.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

You will have to communicate real fast and with exceptional clarity to get your message across and you will do it. While you will get assistance from others, atleast a little, you will have to do followups. There is plenty of movement this week, not in mere terms of journey but also mental stimulation.

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

Those with a tainted or disrupted past, can now hope to build bridges for the future. This is a time of healing but it will take time. Do have your eyes set on the goal. Money transactions can be made more simple and creative. Group efforts and backups will be needed. The trick is to contact those who count.

BIRTHDAYS

April 14: Moon sextile Jupiter-Mercury stands for money, Mercury for skills and because both are in good placing with the moon, this could be a year for fulfillment.

April 15: Mars square Jupiter means you would have to go slow and keep your wits about you. If you are put in an awkward situation, you will get out of it.

April 16: Moon sextiles Venus-Uranus indicates an unusually powerful birth year because both money and happiness will be given to you.

April 17: Eclipse of the sun could lead to a slightly tough year in the sense that extra work and concentration will be needed to get things done. Be brave, act rightly and thus be satisfied.

April 18: Mercury trine Jupiter means those who are writers, teachers, filmstars, travel agents, astrologers will get the most out of it.

April 19: Moon trine Jupiter leads to a good conscience and a clear mind all of which will work wonders. At work and play, your luck will hold.

April 20: Moon-Saturn sextile shows results and responsibilities will materialise by August and December. If you do your part and a little more you will win the game.

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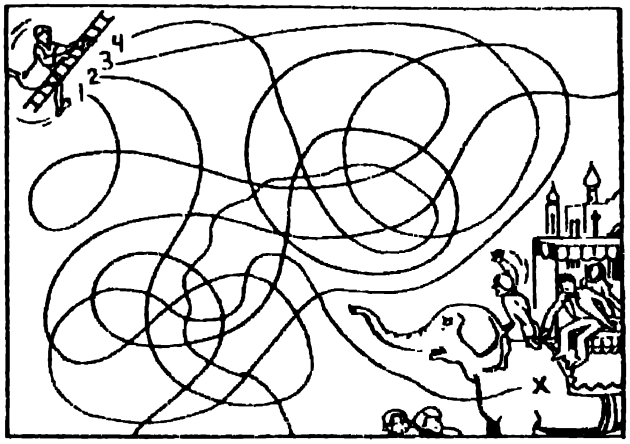
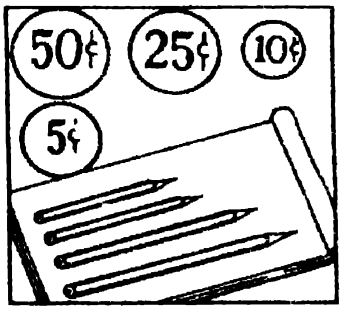
JUNIOR WHIRL



HURRY CALL! Hurry, our elephant-rider friends are in need of a ladder. Which path from top left leads to the scene?

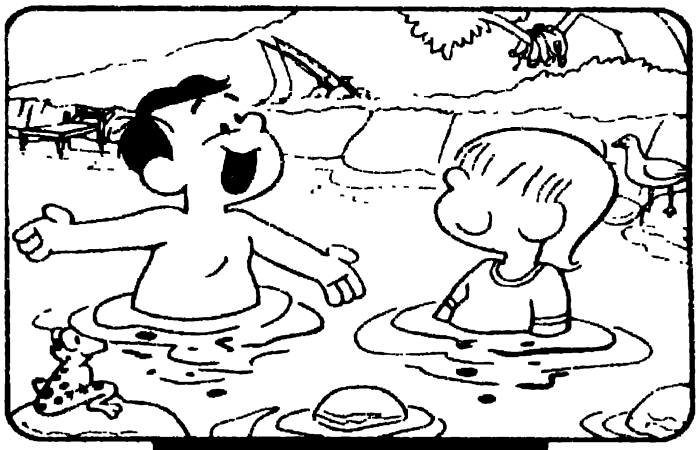
ZANY POEM! To half a dozen, add half a score, and you will plainly see. Just twenty, neither less nor more --- do tell, how can this be? See if you can puzzle it out.

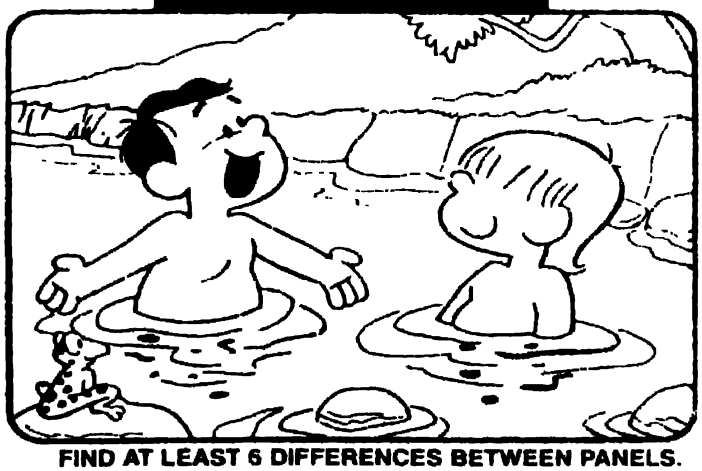
SUM LENGTHS!



Place several coins upon the table and ask someone to point to a coin. Call back your friend, provide a pencil and paper and ask him or her to jot down the identity of the selected coin. Alakazam, the answer is Secret. Answer is keyed to length of the pencil. Tie-in to coins is devised and memorised prior to performance of the trick. Give it a try.

HOCUS-FOCUS



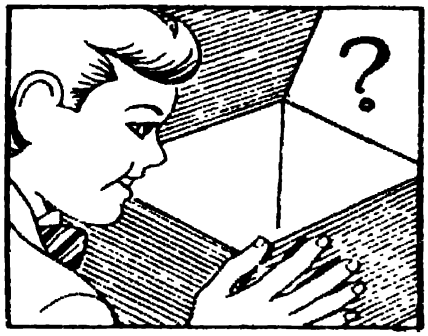


Original by King Features Syndicate Inc.

Drawings by Henry Brettnoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1 Dock is missing. 2 Arm is moved. 3 Poles are missing. 4 Clothes (in tree) are missing. 5 Bird is missing. 5. T-shirt is missing.



PICK A PARTNER BOXING MATCH

THERE'S a box for this and a box for that listed below. And there's a companion list of box related "partners." How quickly can you match lists?

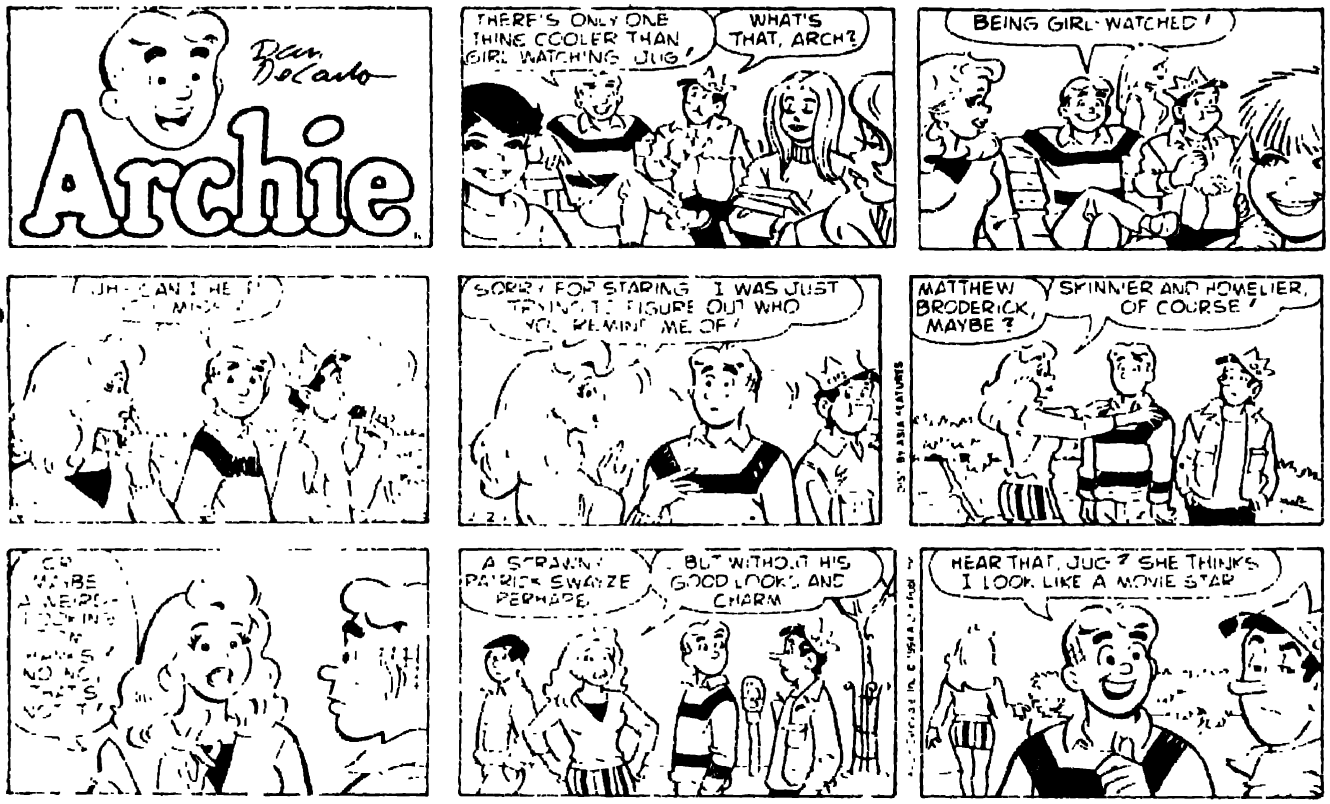
1. Sandbox panelist
2. Mailbox writer
3. Soapbox bandit
4. Jury box angler
5. Shoe box voter
6. Press box gardener
7. Hatbox realtor
8. Tackle box toddler
9. Flower box postman
10. Saltbox orator
11. Strongbox cobbler
12. Ballot box milliner

Note: Each box is to have just one partner.

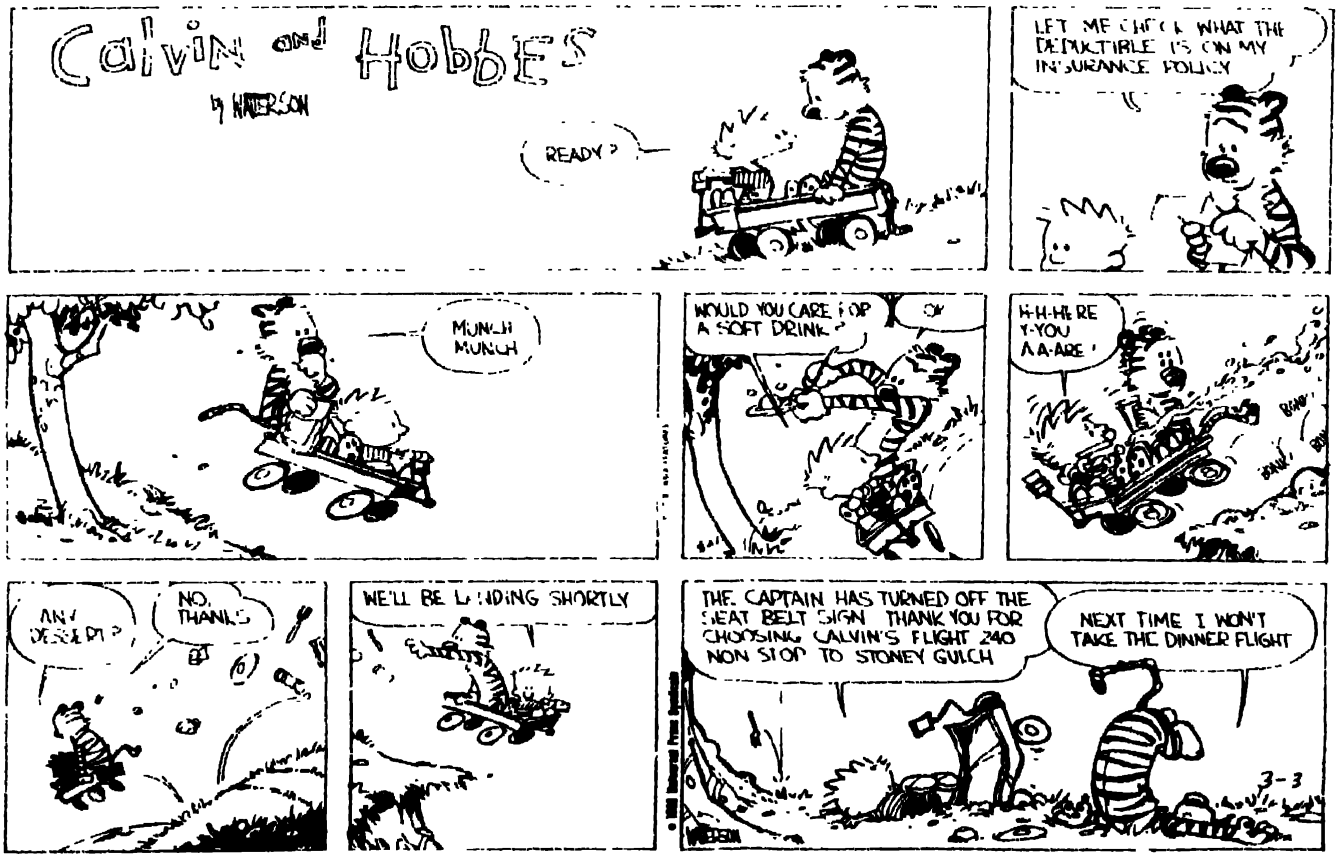
Time limit: 2 mins.

COMICS

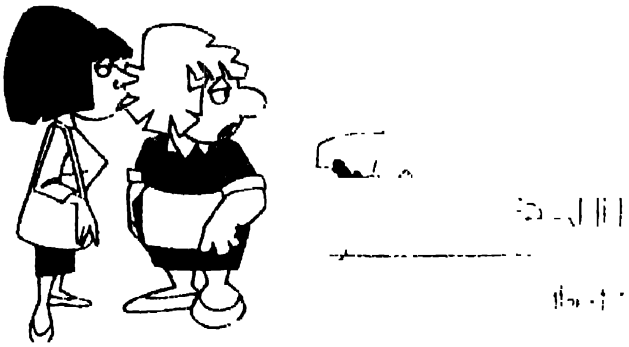
ARCHIE



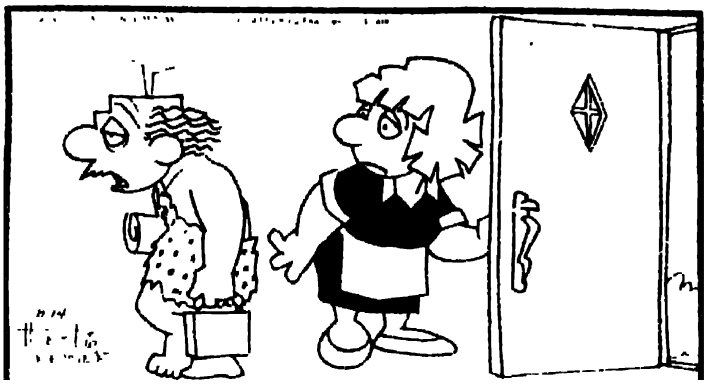
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



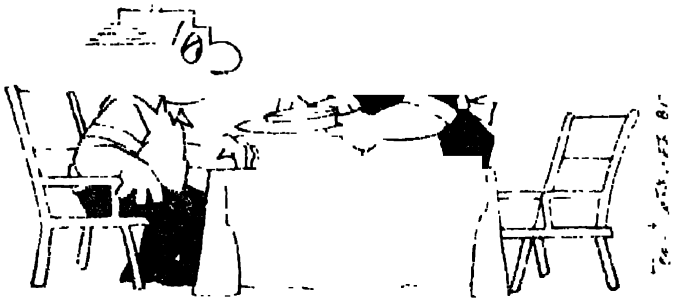
THE LOCKHORNS



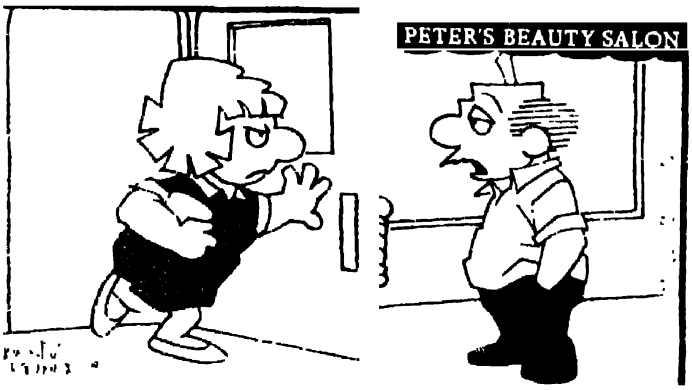
"YOU CAN COUNT LEROY'S FRIENDS ON ONE FINGER"



"WHAT A DAY! IT REALLY WAS A JUNGLE OUT THERE!"

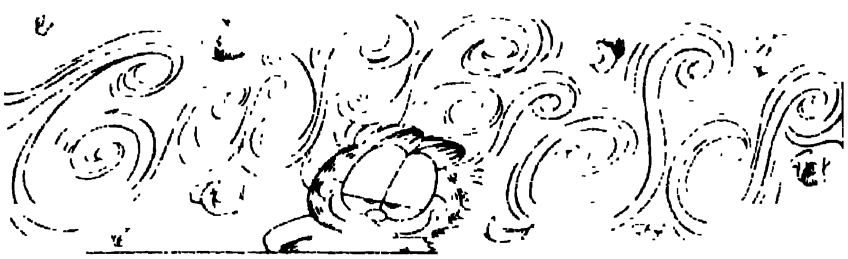


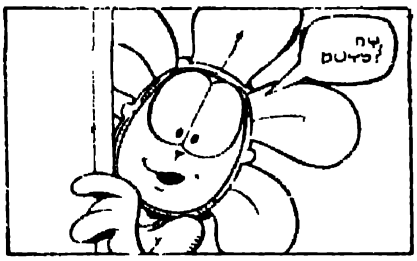
"THIS CAME FROM THE GRAY AREA OF MY COOKBOOK"

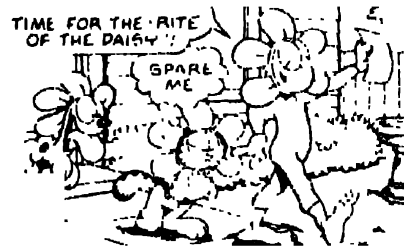


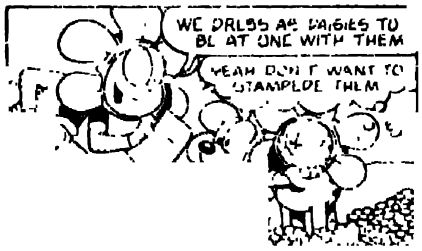
"I'M SURE THAT HAIRDO WILL COME BACK SOMEDAY"

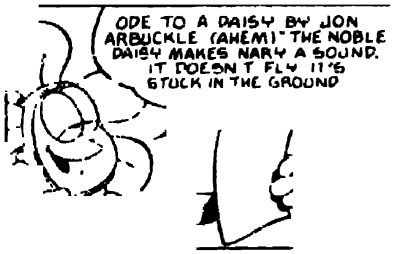
GARFIELD

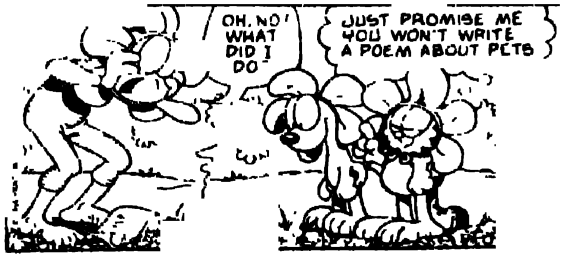




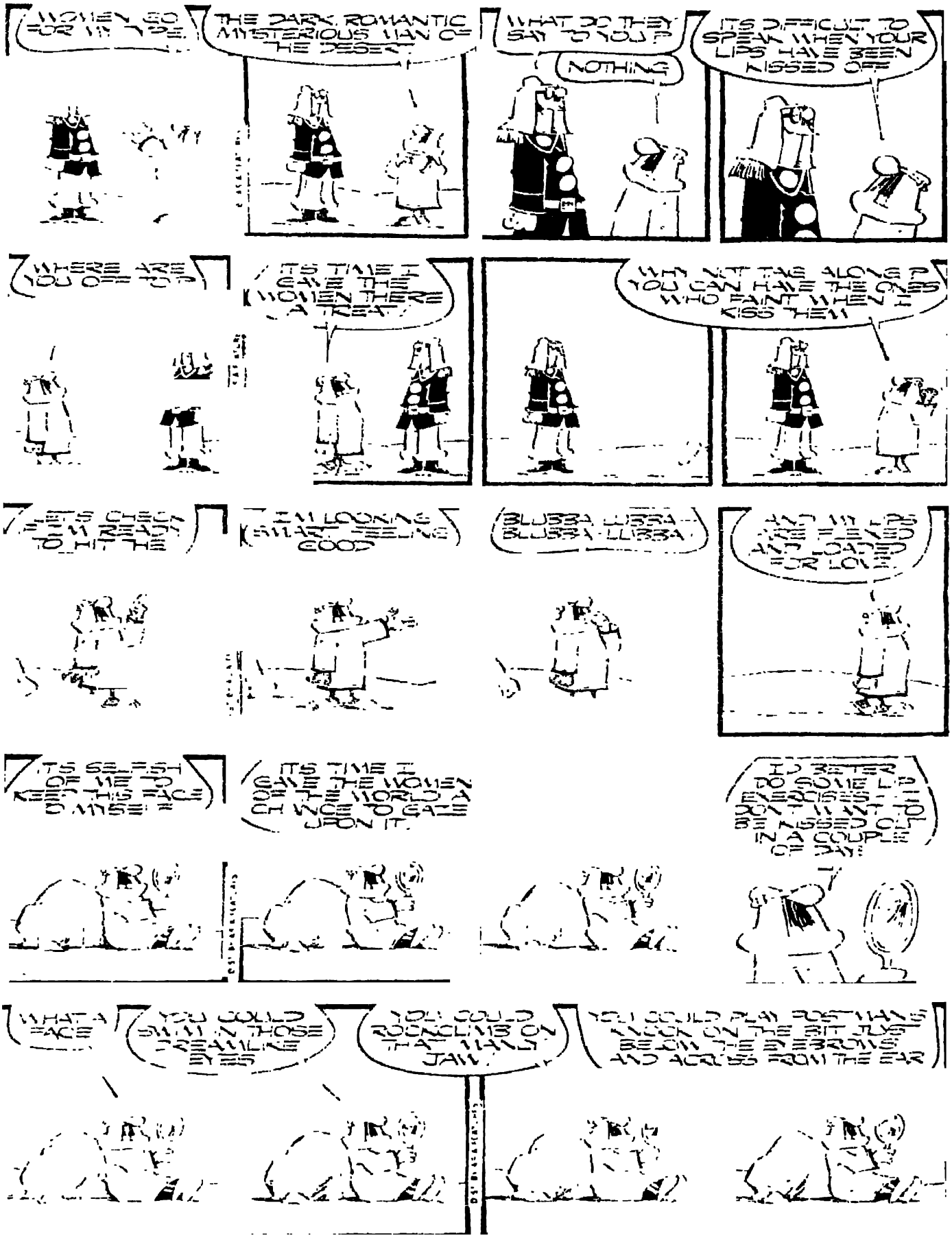


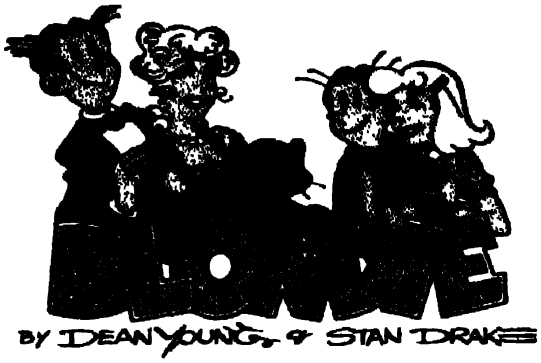


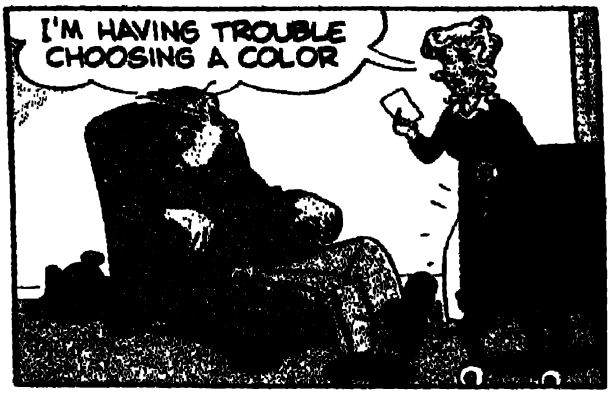




THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP




BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE


I'M HAVING TROUBLE CHOOSING A COLOR

THIS IS THE SHADE I WAS THINKING ABOUT PAINTING MY SHOP, BUT I'M JUST NOT SURE

LET ME HAVE THAT AND I'LL GO WHIP UP A FEW OTHER COLOR SAMPLES SO YOU CAN HAVE A CHOICE
OH, THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL

I LOVE EXPERIMENTING!

I'LL JUST START MIXING AND SEE WHAT I COME UP WITH

I WONDER WHAT'S KEEPING DAGWOOD SO LONG?

THERE! THAT ONE ON YOUR KNEE! IT'S PERFECT!
GULP, I ONLY HOPE I CAN REMEMBER HOW I MADE IT
11-26
YOUNG & DRAKE

GENDER BENDER

Women are the current sex symbols of advertising, selling anything from soap to aftershave, but men have yet to get a look in, says ***Manisha Gulati***

The saying, of course, goes: the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But step into the world of advertising, and you're left in no doubt that the magic pathway lies a little lower And that it is this road that most advertisers are inclined to use when it comes to selling their products.

Oh yes, sex sells! And what's more its sells anything from Lee Cooper shoes for men ("69 per cent of Italian girls want you to slip into them"), Peter Pan bras ("What I like best about Peter Pan is how comfortable it makes my husband feel") to Brahmi Amla hair oil ("My heart fills with passion when I think of my dark and silky possession," says model Mamta Kulkarni)

Of course, in Indian advertising when you talk of sex you are really talking about the woman as sex symbol And she appears in every ad, whether it is to sell glasses, mixer/grinders or even the motorcycle: which few women would ever dream of riding.

Nonetheless, you have the example of the Yamaha ad, where a glamorous, sexy babe is hoisted on to a bike to appeal to such hunks as would want to buy one. Explains ex adman-turned-editor at Television Eighteen, Rohit Vaid, "While most men desire a hard muscle-toned body for themselves, they don't want to go to bed with one Advertisers cash in on this and use the woman in advertising men's product as a way to lure the unsuspecting and willing male "

Swati Bhattacharya, creative whiz at Hindustan Thompson Associates, has a different take on the issue She says, "When the appeal of the traditional copy and visual look began to pale in the mid-80s, people began to look to the US for inspiration Unfortunately, this came in the form of nudity."

But in India, at least, this nudity or semi-nudity, if you want to split, *um*, hairs —is restricted to women alone. So, you can have a mini dress-clad Rageshwari nibble on Perk

chocolates, or a bikini-clad model sell Liril, but you'll never see Arjun Rampal in shorts selling Limca, or Coke. And even when Milind Soman stripped down altogether to sell Tuff shoes, it was in the company of his fiancee, Madhu Sapre.

But the use of women as sex symbols is not just restricted to the field of modelling alone. Take the case of the automobile exhibition that was held recently in Delhi's Pragati Maidan. Walking through the various stalls, one often heard murmurs of, "*Yeh* model *uchchi hai*."

Quite understandable, you would think Only these people weren't referring to the cars on display. They were, in fact, commenting on the long-haired, short-skirted beauties who had been

employed by the organisers to take visitors on guided tours, and extoll the various virtues of the cars on display.

But how often have you seen bare-bodied men in boxer shorts escorting visitors around an exhibition of household appliances? Never ever, we're quite sure.

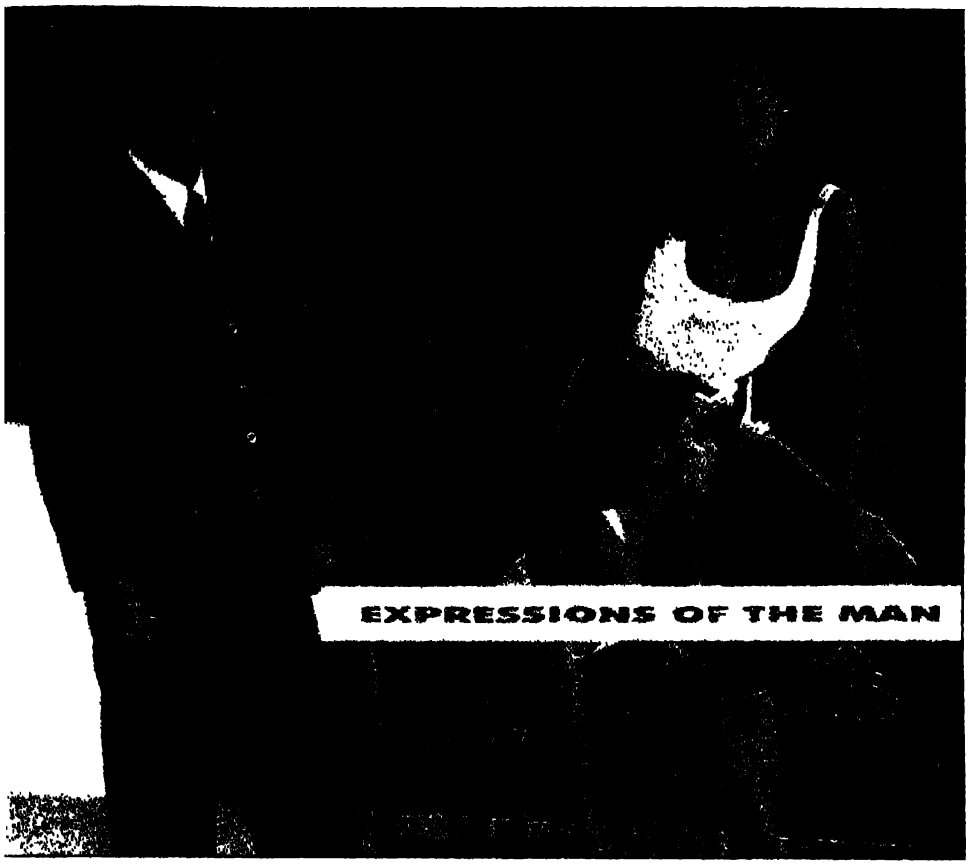
When it comes to the preponderance of naked female bodies in advertisements, though, who do we blame? Is it the fault of the advertising agency, which takes the safe way out, and relies on that tried-and-tested formula: sex sells? Or is it the client who insists that sex form a major part of the campaign?

Says Nakul Wahi, brand manager at Nestle for Maggi Sauces, "The client is only interested in showing his product How it is done is not his problem. It is the advertising agency that always comes up with a woman because of a lack of more creative ideas " Agrees Swati Bhattacharya of HTA, "It's the easiest thing to fire the gun from someone else's shoulder."

Maneesha Cleetus, creative consultant at O&M, Hong Kong, disagrees. She says about the Charagh Din advertisement for men's shirts, "The semi-clad woman is possibly there to detract from the shirt's flaws But I would say that the use of women in this way is usually the client's idea.

So, if you want to sell beer, you show a luscious, perfectly lipsticked mouth closing on the can; very suggestive, and oh! so effective. If you want to sell a man shoes, show the woman of his dreams slipping into them; and ten to one, he'll pick up the pair.

All of which makes one wonder: are women the superior sex because they have the power to sell; or are they the inferior sex because they are used as products themselves?



But what about women themselves? Aren't they supposed to have fantasies too? And can't advertisers appeal to them by making these come true?

In India? You've got to be kidding. The conventional wisdom is that the Indian woman is not attracted by sexy images in ads And that she would probably be put off by a product that sold itself on the basis of a bare male torso So, such ads —rare enough in themselves — are geared more towards homosexual men than heterosexual women

But as far as women are concerned; well, anything goes. Says Pradipto Nandi, who makes advertising films, "There is a difference between justice and right Sexist ads work so they are right But they are biased, so they are unjust Would I do them? At the risk of sounding filmi, yes, if the product demanded it "

Some advertisements can, however, get downright obscene. The Priya cinema hall in Delhi, for instance, advertises for its in-house magazine, *Interval*, with this advertisement Sharan Stone Spread(s) at *Interval*. Now available at Priya " And some people like Raji Madan, an architect, even buy this stuff. Madan says in his defence, "I love Sharan Stone And if she's asking, I'm giving "

Pooja Malik of HTA, Bombay, thought that, for a change, she would give the women of this country what they wanted But getting an evenly-tanned, well-toned, muscular hunk in swimming trunks to model her *avante garde* bejewelled costumes wasn't easy, in fact, nobody was even willing to consider the concept Instead, they wanted a well-endowed brunette who was willing to reveal all for the camera.

Because in the end, the customer is always right And if products continue to sell- and sell well--on the strength of a woman's planes and curves, why would anyone want to tinker with a successful formula?

So, what are we complaining about, anyway? The inequality of the sexes? Or why women are so much more successful than men, specially when it comes to selling anything from candy to crystal ■

AFTER THE GRAMMY

Life goes on for Vishwa Mohan Bhatt; he's composing tunes, collaborating with foreign artistes and watching Hindi movies, reports ***Dipti Dave***

These days his favourite heroine is Kajol. "She's such a natural," he gushes about the *Dilwale* heroine. Earlier, however, he used to swear by the charms of Madhuri Dixit, and before her, that of Sridevi. But during the conversation he interrupts to give Juhi Chawla her due as well. "She is very beautiful," he says.

He took 15 days to watch the Bollywood blockbuster, *Hum Apke Hain Koun..!* and saw the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Darr* in installments—once until the interval, and then after it.

The late Madan Mohan and R.D. Burman were his favourite composers, and the song that appeals to him most these days is *Kahna hi kya*, the hitnumber from Mani Ratnam's Bombay.

He's our Grammy man. But for the soft-spoken Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, this sobriquet is only incidental. "I just got lucky," he says diplomatically about the award he received. But he's now ready for another Grammy, this time in 1998 and has teamed up with the same company, Water Lily Acoustics, to record a CD titled *Silk, Jade and the Begging Bowl*, for the world music category to be released in May.

His face, flushed with the excitement of a satisfied performance at the Vijayotsava festival amidst the ruins of the Vijayanagar empire at Hampi recently, Bhatt willingly talks about his music and himself. For him, "unfortunately," popularity came when he, along with Ry Cooder, won the coveted Grammy award in the world music category for their album, *A Meeting by the River* in 1994.

Cashing in on the boom in fusion music, Bhatt has ventured into the territory where most exponents of Hindustani classical fear to tread. He recently performed a duet in Bangalore with Jie Bing Chen, a Chinese folk violin (called an *erhu*)

player.

Despite his aversion to duets, he says, "It was a unique experience to coordinate with a foreign instrument like the *erhu* and I would want to do similar shows in the future."

Bhatt is a visiting professor in 16 US universities which has probably helped by way of increased interaction with Western musicians. He recently recorded two albums with country musicians, Dabro (guitar player), Jerry Douglas and Bela Flack, in a Los Angeles church at midnight. "It was bliss," he reminiscences. "There we were in the silence of the night trying to make music in a church," he recalls adding that the natural echo enhanced the quality of their work.

"Playing music" since his early teens, the low-profile, 44-year-old Bhatt is the creator of Mohan Veena, rechristened from the Hawaiian guitar in 1970. Though the instrument looks like the Western guitar it makes the assimilated sounds of sitar, sarod and veena and has 14 extra strings with its ability to generate the vocal style *(gyaki ang)* and to incorporate the *tantrakari ang*, which is its greatest advantage over the sitar and sarod.

A foremost disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar, Bhatt, however, did not let his guru down. His is no "hippie" music. "If my instrument is capable of playing that kind of music (Hindustani classical) then it should be acceptable, and it was," claims Bhatt, replying to the early criticism his instrument generated.

Pavsunkar/Wide Angle

A. R. Rahman

Thanks to the Grammy, more and more young people are crowding his concerts. In this MTV era, Bhatt hopes to maintain a balance between classical music—which he feels is not for entertainment alone —and popular music. "Music today has come to mean both sound and sight. The visual factor has completely taken over. An album's popularity has more to do with the sleek video than the music," he says, but adds quickly, "We won't the Grammy in the world music category where a video is not mandatory."

Bhatt, for all his loyalties to the classical, is, however, not averse to composing "good" scores for films. He was recently approached by Mani Ratnam to work with A.R. Rahman "I may consider this offer because I think Rehman is the best we have, while Mani Ratnam understands music," says Bhatt, who has reservations about Bollywood producers "They often interfere with the composing so I have to be careful."

He has even composed music for the teleserial, *Geet Govindam*, and music for relaxation for Music Today. In another album by Music Today, *Meghadutam*, to be released shortly, singers Kavita Krishnamurty and A. Hariharan have sung to his tunes.

Originally, a Telangi brahmin from Andhra Pradesh now settled in Jaipur, the music gene binds the Bhatts more than anything. Bhatt is now learning vocal music from his 80-year-old mother. His elder brother, Shashi Mohan, is among the first three disciples of Pandit Ravi Shankar and his sister, Manju, also plays the sitar. Saleel, 24, his eldest son, plays the Mohan Veena and Sourav, 21, is learning the tabla and is interested in composing as well As for wife Padma, "she takes good care of us," he says, smiling

What does he do when he's not composing music? "Mostly travelling for my concerts and, well, watching the lovely ladies on the silver screen," laughs Bhatt And who knows, he may soon be scoring songs that they will lip-sync on camera, in their most fetching manner. ■

Kajol

Juhi Chawla

SKETCHES

DYE-ING TO BE YOUNG

All those who stayed black and beautiful

Indira Gandhi: Yes, yes, we know that she had one strategically-placed lock of hair which was pure white. It stood out from her high patrician forehead, and was a god-send to cartoonists, who need one particular feature to make a portrait come alive.

But if you're thinking that that bit of white meant that Indira Gandhi had let nature take its course, well then, think again. From the time that the late Mrs Gandhi stepped into her forties, she had her hair dyed. And performing the honours was none other than that high priestess of herbal beauty care, Shahnaz Hussain.

But Indira realised that a full head of black hair would look unnatural on somebody her age, so she would ask Shahnaz to tuck away one lock before beginning work. That way, she had a suggestion of white in her hair, and could easily claim that she wasn't one for denying age its due.

R.K. Dhawan: Talk about being more loyal than the Queen! Indira Gandhi's trusted aide wasn't going to be left behind in the dye-ing stakes. Only he wasn't as canny as his mistress, and ended up with a head boasting of the most unnatural shade of black; hence all those digs about Mrs G's raven-haired factotum.

Chandra Shekhar: His hair became something of a national issue when a video newsmagazine reporter asked him why he didn't bother to comb it. But even before that Shekhar had had to face many awkward moments in press conferences, when reporters wanted to know why his beard was white when the hair on his head was jet black.

Stumped for an answer, the former Prime Minister of India took refuge in anger. *"Aap ko koi problem hai kya?"* he asked the reporter, voice shaking with rage. Needless to add, the hack backed off.

Subramanian Swamy: Those who have known Swamy through the years are well aware that his hair has been — gently, but surely — turning grey all the while. And Swamy seemed to be quite at ease with this ageing process as well, wearing his salt and pepper strands with pride.

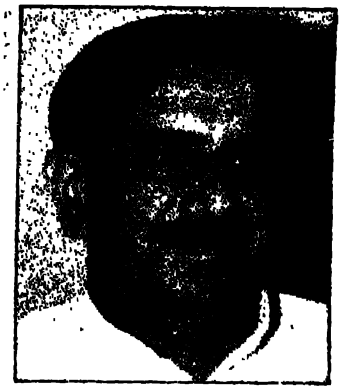
No longer. These days, Swamy's hair has been miraculoulsy transformed into a shade fit to rival Dhawan's raven locks. But such is the strength of Subramanian's personality that nobody dares to ask him embarrassing questions, of the kind that poor Chandra Shekhar had to field.

Vyjanthimala Bali: The actress-turned-politician has cropped her hair short, but it is still as dark as ever. But then, nobody should be too surprised by that. After all, she is from the world of show business, where illusion is all and reality only a minor nuisance.

Rajesh Khanna: He is the best example of how not to age. Not only has our Kaka gone fat and jowly, he has also lost an enormous amount of hair. Of course, what he has left is dyed to within an inch of its life.

But for the ex-Phenomenon of Hindi cinema this is not enough. His keen attention to detail entails that he also paint his scalp a matching shade of black, so that it doesn't shine through his sparse hair. Some, of course, insist that this is but a foul rumour. But nobody's willing to go near enough to find out. ■

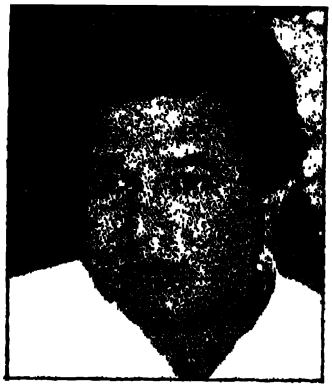
Indira Gandhi



R.K. Dhawan

Vyjanthimala Bali

Subramanian Swamy



Rajesh Khanna

In Karnataka the entrepreneurs can now dance their way to profits

If you have a tourism- releated project in mind, fill in and mail the coupon to :

The Director,
Department of Tourism
Government of Karnataka
I Floor, 'F' Block, Cauvery Bhavan,
K G Road, Bangalore 560 009.
Tel . 2215489 Fax · 080-2272403

Karnataka tourism invites investors

The tourism industry in Karnataka is poised for a big future. Drawing 18 million visitors annually and with a turnover of Rs.1,200 crore, the state boasts of a wide variety of tourist attractions covering history, architecture, art and culture wild life sanctuaries, beaches and metropolitan centres. All laid out in 1,91,791 square kilometres of Nature's choicest land

Incentives and Concessions for the Tourism Industry in the State

The Karnataka Government has a package of incentives and concessions for the tourism industry

● Investment subsidy ● Exemption from sales tax, luxury tax, stamp duty & concession in registration charges ● Power tariff relaxed ● Waiver of fee for converting agricultural land into commercial land ● Special concession for various categories ● Incentives for utilising non-conventional energy sources and also for a large tourism industry

Single Window Agency

The Department of Tourism has setup a Single Window Agency to clear the projects speedily It

● considers the applications of entrepreneurs and the locations of the project ● finalises the extent of land /building required for the project and enables the acquisition and sanction of same through the appropriate Government Agencies ● considers means of financing the project by way of subsidy, equity, loans through the Government agencies like KSFC, KSIIDC ● sanctions infrastructural facility by way of power and water

A few possibilities

● Developing Hotels, Beach resorts, Eco resorts and Convention centres ● Promoting Water sports and developing Golf courses ● Bangalore having International Standard Airport there is scope to develop airports in Hassan, Hubli and Mysore

Profit from leisure

Yes I am interested Send me more details
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Designation
Address
Tel Fax
Superscribe the envelope "Single Window Agency"

Karnataka. A lasting romance.

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Yes, I am interested. Send me more details.
Name _____
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Superscribe the envelope "Single Window Agency"

Karnataka. A lasting romance.

The Telegraph

21 APRIL 1996

POST MORTEM

The Swadeshi Indian

■ Shashi Tharoor evidently has great wit and an incisive mind ('Tharoor's India,' March 3).

It is truly an ignominy that India prospers within its five-star glitz and *crore pati* culture while life outside grapples with diminishing returns. It appears that the folk who form the vanguard of our society and the fortunes of whom are determined by the fate of that society, need to be educated in the art of a nation's survival.

India certainly needs globalisation but not of the kind that boomerangs on the people.
Shouri Ghose,
Calcutta

■ It's a tragedy that our Swadeshi gentleman who cares so much for his family (First Person, February 11) and country, and is so sincerely devoted to his motherland, is a resident of New York.
Manali Das,
Calcutta

■ It is heartening to learn that Tharoor is not dazzled by the opening up of India to Western culture, but is rather disillusioned by it.

Today, everyone seems to have his own definition of globalisation.

We need to ponder whether the neo-Western culture that is developing so fast, can effectively complement our heritage and values that we still nurture.

We cannot mindlessly give up everything in the name of liberalisation.
Joydeep Mitra,
Calcutta

■ The fruits of liberalisation are enjoyed by a select few. An ordinary Indian cannot afford to stay at the Taj Bengal, the Delhi Hilton or the Leela Kempinski.

Only the affluent class can enjoy a BMW, Cartier trinkets and Giorgio Armani oufits.

The free-market economy has Westernised our habits and thinking without improving our income and standard of living. No wonder politicians are caught in hawala scandals.

Should we allow this attack on our heritage and culture to continue?
Manoranjan Das,
Jamshedpur

Chandan Basu Mallick

Officially or unofficially, do we need this drink?

Broken Bond

■ It is a matter of great regret that Ruskin Bond's eminently readable column has been discontinued.

Could you please revive his column?
Dilip Kumar Mallick,
Hooghly

Right Prediction

■ Hats off to Bejan Daruwalla! He had predicted a favourable gain on March 18 for Scorpios born on November 8.

One of my dreams came true on that day: a letter of admission to a prestigious US university arrived on that day.
Arjun Pratim Dutta,
Calcutta

■ We cannot totally disbelief astrological predictions. Many times Bejan Daruwalla's words have come true in my case.
Pinaki Roy,
Patna

INSIDE

Basudev Pal

PAGE 4

HE IS a part-time industrialist and a full-time politician. Amar Singh of Calcutta is now a name to reckon with in Delhi's power circle.

PAGE 26

SHYAM BENEGAL is all set to release his new film, *Sardari Begum*.

Shyam Benegal

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Cover: Rupinder Sharma

COVER STORY

The Irresistible Rise of AMAR SINGH

How a Calcutta boy made good in New Delhi; ***Seema Goswami*** *has the inside story*

HE IS A FREQUENT VISITOR TO RACE COURSE ROAD, AND CONVERSES REGULARLY WITH NARAsimha Rao on his mobile telephone. Mulayam Singh Yadav wants him to accept a Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha ticket from UP. Madhavrao Scindia counts on him for political savvy. H.D. Deve Gowda uses him as an ambassador in New Delhi. And his close friends include such heavyweights as G. Venkataswamy, A.R. Antulay and Madhavsinh Solanki.

Chandra Shekhar called him "my brother" from a public platform. Amitabh Bachchan says that he is a member of his family. For Shyam and Shobhana Bhartia he is even more than family.

In Calcutta, Subrata Mukherjee is among his closest friends, but he also shares a relationship of mutual admiration with G.P. Goenka. In UP, industrialist Ashok Chaturvedi of the fast-growing Flex Group, is his confidante. And in Delhi, he is a member of K.K. Birla's inner circle, a position that led to his appointment as a director on the board of *The Hindustan Times*.

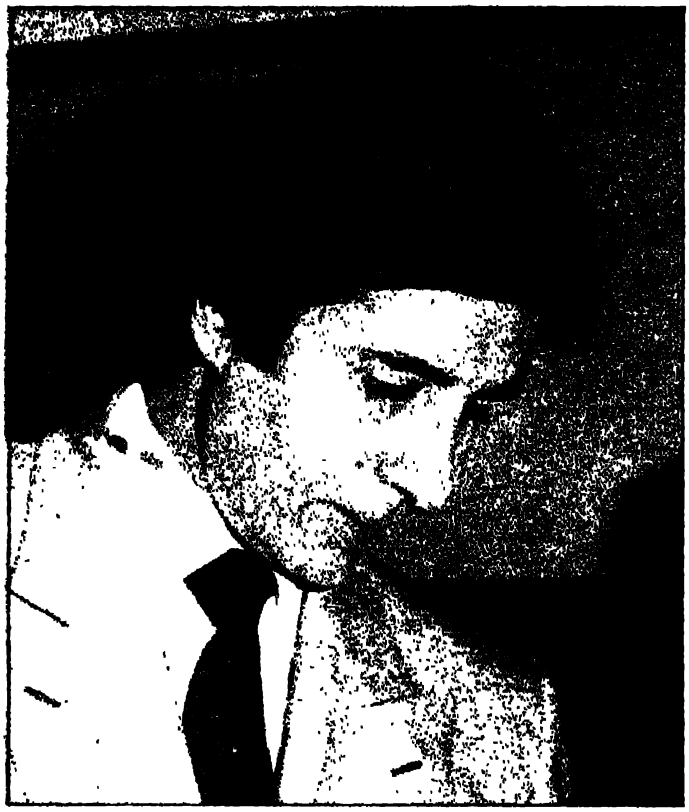
Subrata Mukherjee: Amar Singh's political mentor

And yet, you may never have heard of him. Amar Singh, the part-time industrialist and full-time politician, has shunned the limelight. When he has hit the papers, it has been because of his relationship with Bachchan or because of his Chandra Shekhar connection. For his own part, Amar Singh has avoided giving interviews. And when the publicity has been bad, he has fretted and fumed, but consciously refrained from demanding a correction or a clarification.

Consequently, while such terms as trouble-shooter and power broker have often been applied to him, the public at large knows little about Singh.

Few people realise that he is an industrialist in his own right. He has two units, one of which makes ethyl alcohol while the other manufactures packag-

Rupinda Sharma



Amitabh Bachchan: His friend and business partner

Chandra Shekhar: Close ties

ing materials He is now setting up a Rs 50 crore-power project in Karnataka; Amitabh Bachchan will be chairman of the company and an equity partner while Flex's Chaturvedi will be a director. Moreover, he is also a director of the State Bank of India and a member of its central executive committee

The industrial ventures are professionally managed, but the income allows him the freedom to indulge his first love: politics Hence, the network of relationships with a wide spectrum of the famous and the powerful. Many people are friends with the mighty, but few have associations that cut across so many party lines. And Amar Singh is not a man for casual acquaintances; each of these relationships is deep and long-lasting.

It is in keeping with the air of mystery that surrounds him that few people realise that despite his jet-setting lifestyle — breakfast in Bombay, lunch in Lucknow and dinner in Delhi — Amar Singh is a Calcutta boy.

His head may be in the clouds as he soars from height to height but his roots are firmly planted in Chittaranjan Avenue and Burrabazar

Born in January 1956 to a trading family in Calcutta, Amar Singh had a childhood that was less than idyllic. His father had inherited a shop that sold building fittings in the congested Burrabazar area of the city The family made a reasonable living.

But says Singh, "I had a very humble upbringing We used to live in a small flat on Chittaranjan Avenue near Mahajati Sadan There was no air-conditioning or even attached baths. There was no stress on education; it was just assumed that we would join the family business And there was no tradition of going on holiday. can you believe it, I have never even been to Darjeeling, despite having been born and brought up in Calcutta?"

Amar Singh was sent to the Saraswat Khatri Vidyalay in neighbouring Machua Bazar for his schooling But instead of learning anything of consequence, all he acquired here was an interest in politics. The headmaster and assistant headmaster of the school were at odds with each other and the assistant headmaster prevailed upon the young Amar to stage demonstrations against his headmaster. "The political bug that bit me then," laughs Singh today, "is still affecting my life."

Politics, however, was not all that was exercising Amar Singh's mind at this time Sensitive to the fact that his schooling hadn't been quite up to the crack, and that he couldn't even speak English fluently, he was determined to improve his lot. And the only way of doing this — as far as he could see — was to try and join a first-rate college like Presidency or St Xavier's.

And to everyone's surprise, Amar Singh succeeded in passing the entrance examination to St Xavier's and joined the English Honours course.

Of course, things didn't work out quite as Singh had planned; and some of it at least was his own fault. "Instead of concentrating on my studies," he says today, "I was only interested in forming a students' union. Needless to say, that made me universally unpopular"

Not that Amar Singh tried hard to make friends and influence people. He was ill-at-ease in an atmosphere where everyone spoke public school English, wore the best of clothes and drove to office in cars — for the most part, imported. "I still remember," he says, with a wry smile, "that Ajay Kanoria, who was an industrialist's son, used to come to college in a car which always had a hanger in it for his coat and tie. And he would drive directly to office after his classes"

Amar Singh, on the other hand, used to travel on the number nine bus, and walk to St Xavier's from the Park Street crossing. And while the rest of his colleagues used to hang around the gates of the nearby Loreto College and Flury's, Singh (who would only get one rupee from his father every day) would go back to help out with

the family shop.

These stints convinced him that the family business was not for him, and that he would have make a life elsewhere. Politics was the obvious choice, and Amar Singh joined the Chhatra Parishad, the student wing of the Congress, hoping to make an impression in Bengal politics in time.

His first political mentor was Subrata Mukherjee. then home minister in the Siddhartha Shankar Ray government. But the two became close only after the defeat of the Congress in 1977, and Amar Singh's involvement in Bengal Congress politics increased. As did the anger of his family, which couldn't understand why he preferred the hurly-burly of street politics to a safe, secure existence at the family shop. His father asked Singh to either join the business or leave home

Amar Singh decided he would be better off following his own destiny. So, he left home

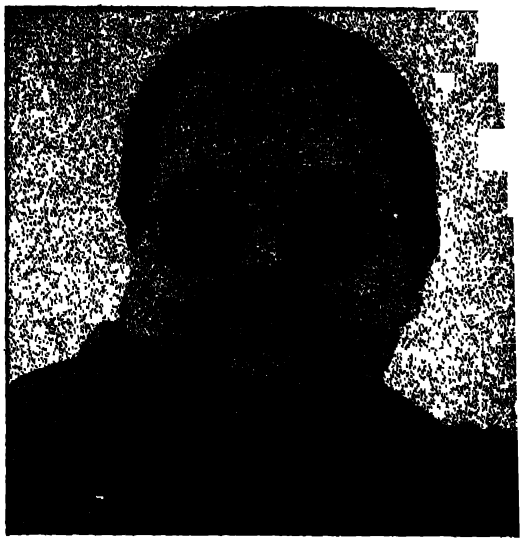
Thus began another phase in Amar Singh's life In which he stayed with friends, depended on their generosity to keep body and soul together, and studied law. It was around this time that he first came into contact with his major political contact Veer Bahadur Singh.

Veer Bahadur was only a minor minister in the UP government, but used to visit Calcutta often to address meetings held by social organisations. Amar Singh and he hit it off, and Bahadur Singh prevailed upon him to move to Lucknow. This suited Amar-Singh fine: his maternal grandparents lived in Lucknow, so he hada ready-made establishment to move into.

As he hung around the edges of UP politics, Amar Singh met another man who was to prove to be an important influence in his life: industrialist Shyam Bhartia, who was also the son-in-law of K.K. Birla. The year was 1980, and Bhartia's advice to Singh was that if he wanted to make it in politics, he should stick around in the Hindi heartland. No matter how strongly he felt about his Calcutta roots, no non-Bengali could hope to get very far in politics in that state.

Singh saw his point, and decided to shift base to Lucknow. But not to dabble in politics alone, there was also the small problem of making a living. Singh set up a small plant of ethyl alcohol in Ghaziabad — his family chipped in with the investment required — in 1985, named Easter India Chemicals Limited; a business which now has a turnover of Rs 20 crore a year.

His family, too, left Calcutta, and his last links with Calcutta seemed to have been severed

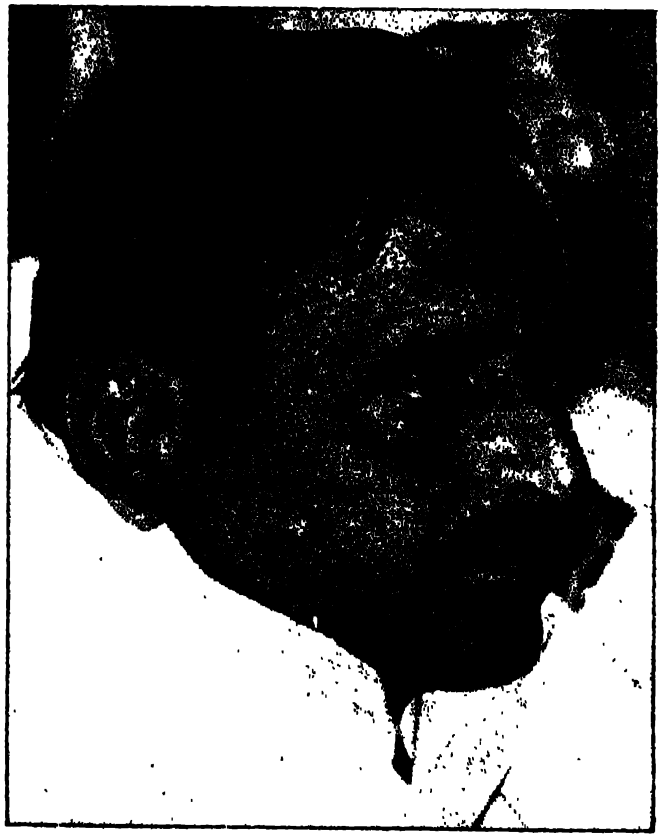


Amar Singh

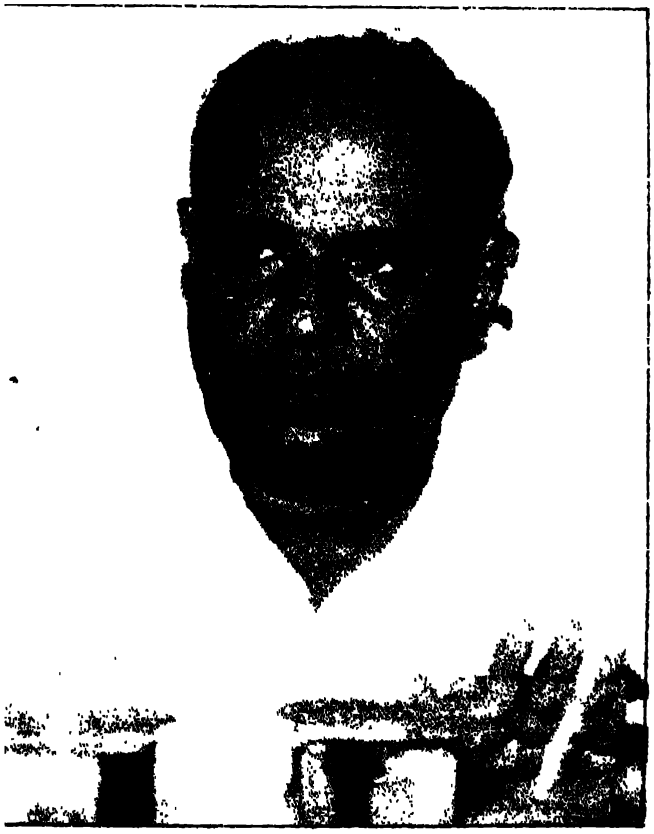
Not quite Even today, Amar Singh is a presence to reckon with in Calcutta Congress circles Whenever he visits the city, there are huge hoardings and banners put up, saying "Welcome Shri Amar Singh to Calcutta"

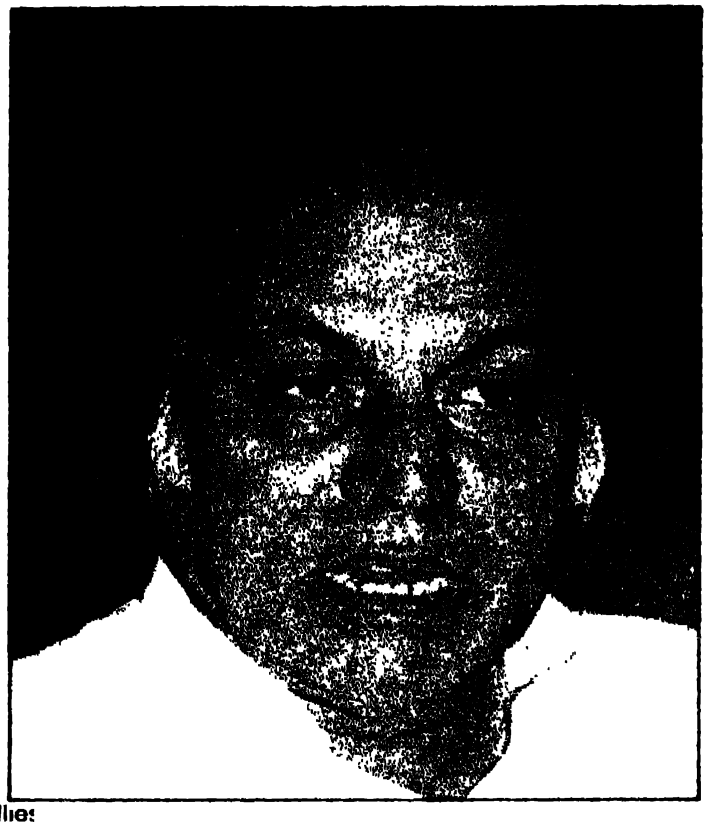
The ostensible reason for this, of course, is that Amar Singh is a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) from Madhya Pradesh. But not every AICC member who visits Calcutta gets quite the same treatment So, what makes Amar Singh so special?

Mulayam Singh Yadav: Wooing Amar Singh



H.D. Deve Gowda: Relying on Amar Singh





Madhavsinh Solanki and A.R. Antulay : Amar Singh's close allies

Singh has his own views on the matter "These hoardings," he says, "are not put up by the party They are put up by humble Congress workers, who see a ray of hope in me They know that I was one of them, and they feel that if I have got so far, so can they "

And got far, he certainly has Today, he lives in his multi-crore residence in Delhi's Greater Kailash, drives a Mercedes Benz, and is a regular at such upmarket restaurants as the House of Ming at the Taj Mahal Hotel and La Piazza at the Hyatt His Ericsson mobile phone is never out of his reach, and is constantly buzzing as everyone from the Prime Minister to Mulayam Singh Yadav tries to get in touch with him

In the run-up to the election, Amar Singh's life has become even more frenetic He intends to campaign for Mulayam Singh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh, even though he has been keeping in indifferent health of late (Singh is diabetic). But, he says, he will only do so after he has left the Congress, because it would be unethical for him for campaign for anyone else otherwise

As for his own political future, Singh is less certain how matters will develop "I am desperate to gain political legitimacy or leave politics altogether." And in Singh's mind, the only way to acquire the legitimacy he so desires is to become a member of Parliament.

But no, he won't be standing for election this time round. There are considerations of health, for one thing, and then, there is his disillusionment with the Congress party. "I'm still in the Congress," he says, with a troubled frown, "and have got many well-wishers in the party. But senior leaders in many states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and not happy about the selection of candidates. And the denial of a ticket to Scindia will have an impact in Madhya Bharat as well."

So, has Singh given up on the party?

"Well, around the time the hawala controversy broke, Narasimha Rao personally asked me not to leave the party. But given the way things are today, and the fact that no specific role has been assigned to me, it seems that I am not really wanted," says Singh

If he does give up on politics, then what? Well, there's always the business that appears to be going from strength to strength, and raking in crores for Singh.

But how important is money to Singh?

Amar Singh thinks hard and long about this one "Money never used to be important to me," he says finally. "But I have learnt the hard way that our's is a materialistic society, where it is important to have your own share. What's more, it is very important that I have the capacity to spend in my own circle where the others are even more well-to-do than I am "

Though Singh is careful not to comment, there is speculation in Delhi that now that he has turned down Mulayam Singh Yadav's offer of a Lok Sabha ticket, he will be nominated by the SP to the Rajya Sabha after the elections That will give Amar Singh the legitimacy he wants

The problem with this is that he will be identified with a single party At present, his low profile role in the Congress (as an AICC member) does not prevent him from hob-nobbing with — and being trusted by — politicians from all parties But Singh seems to think that Mulayam will not be overly possessive and that he will be able to maintain his personal relationships.

It is a heady prospect for the boy from Chittaranjan Avenue. Over the last ten years, he has gone from agit-prop on the streets of Calcutta to Armani bandhgallas and state-of-the-art laser disc systems Now, he will have the best of both worlds: political legitimacy and an industrialist's lifestyle.

"But," adds Singh, "I never forget where I came from. I am finally a child of the Calcutta streets. And that is where my heart still is. When my friends tell me that I am too direct in my approach, I tell them that this is my strength This is how I've got where I am. And this is how I will stay." ■

EXTRACT

Wielding the WILLOW

Extracts from Slow Turn, *a thriller set in the world of cricket*

BY MIKE MARQUSEE

Extracted from Slow Turn by Mike Marqusee; Published by Penguin India; Price Rs 150

The haze in the air cleared in the afternoon and though the heat was intense the atmosphere was more comfortable, at least for the spectators. Out in the middle Robin resumed command. He lost another partner (bowled Chaughiri, caught at short leg), but hardly blinked an eye, for him the occasion was one to relish, and he swung his bat in an arrogant full arc. He disdained easy singles now, which didn't make life any easier for his partners. Fours rolled off his bat to all corners of the field. Even the wily Chaughiri suffered, though as always Robin treated him with respect. It was an innings of deliberation, as much a part of his Grand Prix plans as the elaborate charade he'd been playing with the press. This was his answer to the old men who had dumped him unceremoniously in the off-season while he was toiling on a second-string tour of India. Between balls he patted invisible rough spots in the pitch, ignored everyone (including his batting partner), and managed to act as if he was alone and unobserved — in front of 50,000 people.

I left the balcony and sought distraction in the old newpapers scattered around the dressing room. But all I found were cricket reports and articles about the disturbances in Madras, articles that made even less sense to me after talking to Lakshmi the evening before. I returned to the balcony, put my feet up on the white-painted railing and watched, from under a large, floppy sun hat, tiny figures play out a finicky, infinitesimal drama in the centre of a baking concrete oval.

Robin moved inexorably towards his century. The crowd cheered for him, the same crowd that would bay for his blood if he gave any of their bowlers half a chance. Meanwhile, other batsmen came and went, concluding the pitch was impossible and Chaughiri unfathomable. Dour Donald Blackburn joined him and had limited success pushing the ball off his legs. But the show was Robin's. At tea he was 123 not out and returned through the members' enclosure to rapt applause. Cuthbart and Narayan stood in their places and roared, 'Well played', and 'Good show'.

We all clapped him into the dressing room. Kidleigh gave him a cup of his special tea nad babbled about the umpires and the wicket. Robin said nothing. Sweat matted his thinning grey hair and dipped from the refined point of his nose His gloves were soaked through and he tossed them aside with a wet thud. Dougie, suddenly softened by the spectacle of the exhausted captain, replaced them with a pair of new ones, clean and dry, from Robin's kit.

From the balcony I watched the milling, stretching, jabbering crowd. Suddenly I caught a flash of long brown hair, a swirl of white blouse and brown arms, I leaned over and shouted.

"Lakshmi!"

The long hair fell aside and above the white blouse was revealed an unfamiliar, middle-aged face. It disappeared in the crowd.

"That your bird then?"

I whirled around. Kidleigh had sneaked up behind me.

"Didn't know you fancied those coloured birds, DTS, ' he chortled.

"Leave it out," I spat at him.

He backed away nervously, still wearing that stupid grin.

I looked at the crowd. How absurd to think I could pick a single woman in this sea of strange faces. I was annoyed with myself. I should have dropped Kidleigh over the railing and let the spectators tear him to pieces. Instead I had acted as if Lakshmi were some guilty secret. I had my hidden secrets,

but Lakshmi was the least of them She had probably gone to work today as usual. Why should I expect anything else?

After tea Robin batted on for 20 minutes He seemed determined to punish the bowling and hammered 30 more runs before being caught in the covers for 155. It had been a classic innings on a slow pitch. The applause lingered after his return to the dressing room and he was forced to acknowledge it from the balcony with a raised cap — his (former) county cap.

Of course, they weren't clapping a simple display of batting, however skillful. The applause was about other things. It was about Robin's dismissal by his county club; it was about his status as captain-in-exile of the English Test side; it was about his age and the near certainty that never again would he grace the ground at Chepauk They were as much a part of the innings as the late cuts and off drives

Soon after Robin's dismissal Donald spooned a catch to midwicket and it was my turn in the middle I walked down the cool concrete corridor and emerged through the small door into the glare of the sun, the noise, and 50,000 pairs of eyes

I had my helmet under my arm and, suddenly conscious of my bruise and red ear, I pushed it on my head and pulled it down over my face. A murmur spread through the crowd and gathered like a little wave into a gentle ripple of applause.

It was the story in the paper. I blushed. The applause continued as I stepped on to the brittle, manicured outfield and made my way to the wicket. I felt I ought to acknowledge the crowd's apparent good grace and ever so slightly I raised my bat. Embarrassed enough already (it had never occurred to me that my injuries would be of the least concern to anyone else) I was tongue-tied when Chaughiri himself came up to me

"It's terrible for such a thing to happen to you in Madras It's not like that, you know, not usually." And he sighed and wandered slowly back to his mark, fingering the seam of the ball thoughtfully. Even the square-leg umpire shook my hand, said he hoped I was feeling all right and then opined that something really must be done about all this violence.

At the other end, leaning on his bat and barely supressing a smile, Ernie beckoned to me.

"They'll clap you to the crease, but see what happens when the ball catches a nick on the pad."

I shrugged and walked slowly back to my crease As I did I allowed myself to become aware of the crowd surrounding us like a vast saucer brimful of humanity. They were separated from us by a sea of empty grass, not to speak of wire fences and slouching police patrols, but they seemed to bear down heavily. Go slow, go slow, I told myself, as I usually did, largely because there was no alternative Hold out to the end of play Keep wicket intact. Keep score ticking over I took my guard and steadied my head to receive my first ball from Chaughiri

Like a hovering, apparently motionless bird, it hung in the air for ages, then dropped outside my off stump and moved into my front pad, which I had luckily stretched well down the pitch.

The noise, as Ernie predicted, was deafening, though Chaughiri himself showed no interest whatsoever. For the rest of the over I attempted to conceal my inability to decide whether to play forward or back to the leg-spinner and somehow survived I was relieved when the strike passed to Ernie at the other end.

I managed to avoid Chaughiri for a few overs and even took some easy runs off the other bowlers, which made me feel better. Though the sun was beginning to set behind the top of the stand, the heat was still intense and in notime my clothes, gloves, hair were soaked with sweat. I removed the helmet and passed it to the umpire, who placed it behind the wicket keeper. Injury or no injury, it was just too hot inside the damn thing. In any case, I felt peculiarly safe out there in the middle, among fellow cricketers, and the crowd seemed far away.

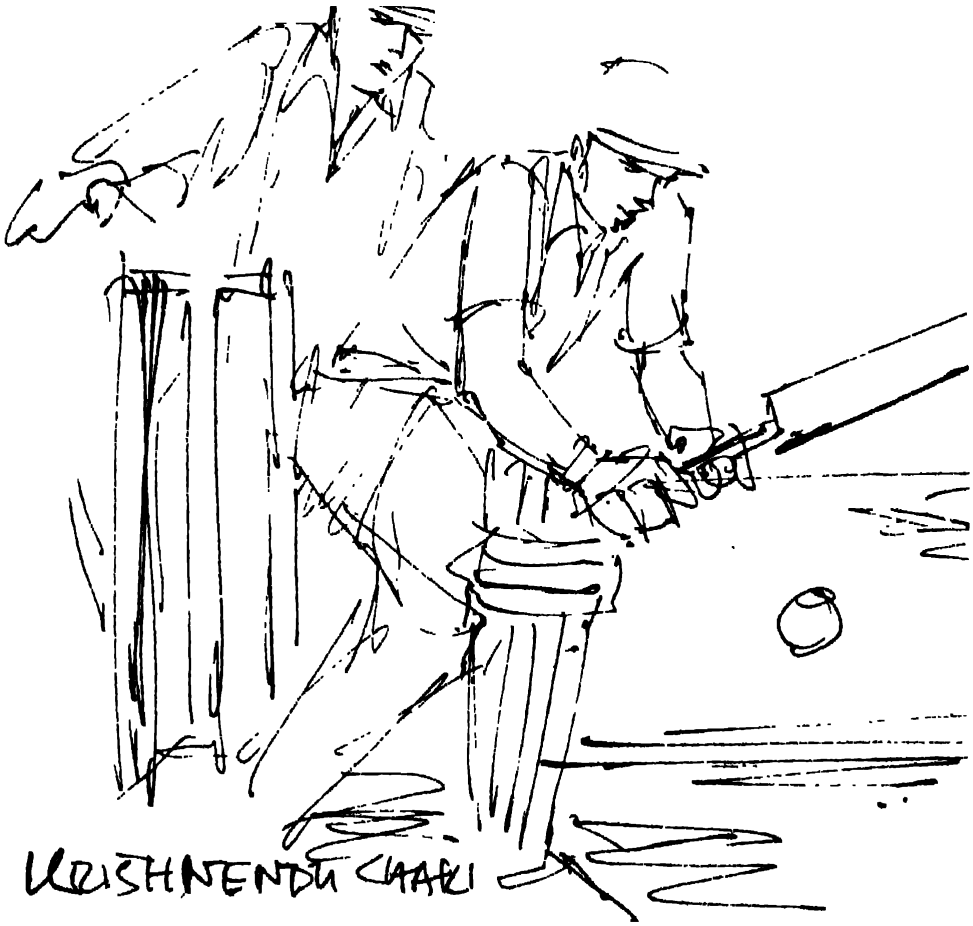
One of the fielders stared at my wounds.

"You look like you've been playing West Indians, not Indians," he said.

"I think I'll save that thing," I answered pointing to the discarded helmet, "and use it off the field from now on."

They laughed.

At the non-striker's end, I watched the famous Chaughiri action close up. After a run-up of our stilted paces, he brought his right arm over from behind the small of his back in a looping arc His wrist turned over so fast I could never make out exactly what he was doing with the ball and certainly could never read the googly Ernie cop-



ed well enough to the other end, though his scoring was only slightly faster than mine. He played back more often than not, used a lot of bottom hand, and poked his nose at every ball as if a very nasty smell was coming from it.

It's supposed to be easier for lefthanders to play leg-spin, but against Chaughiri there didn't seem to be much advantage. My sole intention was survival Nonetheless, I clipped one off my legs for two and the next ball I sneaked past square-leg to the boundary for four. I began to relax. The longer I stayed out there, the more it felt like any other cricket match. I listened to the Indian players talk among themselves in their curious argot, a mixture of Tamil and English in which phrases like 'extra cover', 'well bowled' and 'good length' pipped up incongruously.

I felt I had re-entered a private world, and yet here I was in front of a huge and utterly alien crowd, as public as if a spotlight had picked me out on a stage I know some cricketers for whom the whole game is an intensely private matter. Batting specially breeds this attitude. Total concentration is required: There can be a long wait between balls and the only way to deal with it is to turn inward, to conduct a kind of dialogue with yourself. This can become all-absorbing and even block out any consciousness of the paying customers. You know they're out there, but they seem not to matter, because in the end it's you who's got to decide how to play the well-pitched-up ball, whether to step down the track, or to glance the ball away to fine-leg.

My footwork, slapdash at the best of times, was well out of synch on this pitch. Somehow, my score reached 18. I could hear Dougie mumbling under his breath. "Keep your head down. Don't worry about runs. Runs will come. Concentrate." But with each ball from Chaughiri the middle of my bat seemed to shrink and it was always a relief not to hear the clatter of stumps or the hysterical shout of appeal.

I escaped to the other end. Ernie coiled himself into his cramped, tortured-looking crouch. Chaughiri delivered. The ball hung in the air for the longest time, then turned outrageously wide of the off-stump. Ernie prodded at air, then swore. I avoided his eye It's bad enough everyone else watching you without your team-mates looking on as well.

Ernie tapped the bat impatiently as Chaughiri flicked the ball from hand to hand like a card sharper. He turned and began his run-up, looking for all the world like a stiff-legged teenager learning to waltz.

In the air the ball looked to be a replica of the previous one. Ernie was already high into his backlift and followed through with a savage swish in the direction of mid-off.

A tiny click echoed round the ground. Chaughiri's indecipherable googly had sneaked between swinging bat and static pad and gently knocked against middle stump, barely dislodging a single bail There was a silent split-second as the crowd craned necks to confirm what had happened, then uproar Ernie stiffened and walked back to the pavilion with a glum, mortified stare. The cheering was prolonged and passionate. It was what the crowd wanted to see, and Chaughiri had delivered the goods with all the elan of a master magician calmly making a volunteer from the

audience vanish into thin air.

The funny thing about this kind of spin bowling is how hostile it is. Its gentility, its sheer artful slowness, disguises aggression and violence. When you bat against it you are under a very personal form of attack. In which any weakness you might have ever displayed will be used against you. The bowler wants you and no one else, he wants you removed from the field of play and he is willing to lie, cheat and flatter to get it.

I was joined at the wicket by off-spinner Geoff Robinson.

Geoff has a casual slouch on the field, like a lean, ghostly version of Clive Lloyd. As he approached me he wore a surprised look, as if amazed to find himself the object of so many foreign gazes.

"Skipper says shut 'em out for the rest of the day," he informed me when we met in the middle.

I nodded agreement.

"How's the face?" he asked brightly, as if injecting a personal note in a business conversation

My glove moved automatically towards the tender ridge on my forehead. "I've got enough to worry about out here without that," I said, and brought the hand rapidly back where it had belonged.

Geoff dealt with the remainder of Chaughiri's over with rock-like immobility Then it was my turn against a younger bowler at the other end. His gentle off breaks looked easy enough, but somehow I couldn't get the ball off the square. Suddenly Chaughiri seemed to have blocked all the gaps The young bowler's reward was a maiden over and a round of applause. He looked quite pleased with himself.

As the fielders switched over and arrayed themselves in their menacing spider's web of close-catching positions, there was a disturbance at the far end of the ground A man had climbed and mounted the wire fence and held a banner aloft between outstretched hands He shouted fiercely.

The umpire at the bowler's end muttered under his breath. The players exchanged glances. They seemed to shy away from me and Geoff, who were left baffled by the incident. On the man's banner were flamboyant, circular, swirling Tamil characters, and from his high, uncomfortable perch, he claimed something equally incomprehensible in a loud, hoarse voice.

Within seconds a mob of police had converged on the man. Swiftly they mounted the fence to pull him down. There was confusion in the crowd, some cheers and some very aggrieved booing. The man struggled with the first policeman to reach him, flailing and twisting away to keep his banner aloft. In the meantime, a second policeman had made enough room to grab him from the other side. With a sudden lurch both policeman and demonstrator fell off the fence into the crowd behind. The police were now separated by the fence from their comrade and the demonstrator. There were shouts and screams. Police filtered through the gates into the crowd, *lathis* held threateningly across their chests. Five of them frog-marched the demonstrator along the aisles and out of a sight under the stands.

The ground was seething The booing and shouting came to a stop and were replaced by a furious murmur, as if the simmering cauldron of the ground was not quite ready to boil over. The police formed a neat ring around the boundary fence.

"Come," said the umpire, looking at his watch. "Enough time wasted. Play, please."

Chaughiri flicked the ball in the air absent-mindedly, his eyes wandering vaguely over the agitated crowd

"What was that all about?" I asked him.

His head tilted ambiguously and his mouth twisted into a pout

The banner said, 'Release Imprisoned Strikers,' he answered in the neutral tone of someone translating for an illiterate foreigner.

I watched Chaughiri torment Geoff Robinson while Geoff struggled to maintain his perfectly strokeless defence But my mind was elsewhere. Arrests and disruptions at cricket grounds aren't so uncommon anywhere in the world, but now my hand unconsciously touched my damaged forehead. I kept thinking of the young man in the T-shirt. Strangest of all, I found myself worrying about Siva's party tonight Who would be there? What would they expect of me? If Lakshmi didn't turn up, would I even bother to go? And now I was supposed to stand out here and block the ball for another 35 minutes. I felt I had been cast in a role I wasn't suited to play.

I felt vulnerable and not just to Chaughiri and his close catchers and the (purportedly) unreliable umpires. For all I knew my erratic attacker might be lurking somewhere in the stands. And if he wasn't there, then perhaps someone else with the same intention was. There had been no reason for my being attacked in the first

place, so what was to prevent me from being attacked again? Strange as that logic sounds it was what I was thinking when my musings were interrupted by Geoff's breathless call for a single following an edge to third man

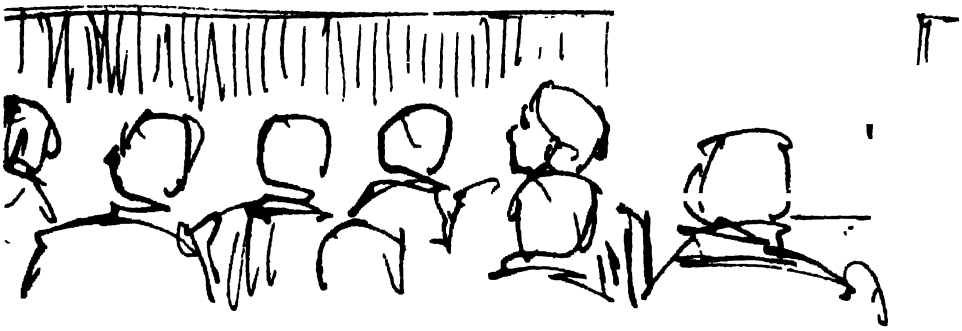
I reminded myself of Robin's injunction Chaughiri bowled one on the off-stump, nearly over-pitched, but it caught me by surprise I met it with the bottom of a hastily lowered bat It dropped and spun at my feet. I picked it up and tossed it back to the bowler The next delivery turned into me, not very fast and I pushed it gently to the on side Short leg pounced on it There was no question of a run

I played two more deliveries defensively back down the pitch. I looked at my name on the scoreboard and the feeble figure next to it. 23 That had been my typical innings these last few years A slow, somewhat chancy progress to the mid-twenties, abruptly terminated

The next ball was short I moved off easily out of the crease, legs criss-crossing comfortably, and drove it firmly along the ground between the bowler and mid off. A four. Scattered applause At least, they hadn't completely forgotten I was out there.

I felt better I felt I was at last taking matters in hand.

Chaughiri seemed unconcerned. He skipped in, precariously balanced and delivered. I followed the ball out



of his hand on its high trajectory and began moving forwards to drive

Then I saw the thing dip and swerve, as if it had a life of its own Too late I saw the idiocy of my intended stroke. Still lurching forwards I didn't have to look behind to know the keeper had the ball in his hands and was whipping off the bails The cheers said it all

My exit was accompanied by the same polite applause that had greeted my entrance. It was a bad time to lose a wicket Dougie pointedly ignored me as I showered and changed. Robin, luckily, was busy elsewhere.

"Checking his shares," said Paul Walker, who was sipping cold tea and rocking in a chair by the balcony

Dougie at last condescended to acknowledge my existence "This came for you."

It was a typewritten note on thin, tissue-like paper: *I will pick you up in front of your hotel at seven. I. Kumbaikonam.*

I was careful to hide my delight from Dougie He would have regarded it as unbecoming in a man who had just been comprehensively stumped.

Forty minutes later we gathered in the club room in the pavilion for the daily 'meet the press' ritual. Robin joined us. Tea and lemonade were served (fresh lemonade, loaded with sugar and ice). Players from both sides mingled, chatting about the heat and the pitch and the standard of hotel accomodation. Everyone remarked on my injuries and everyone apologised that 'such a thing' should happen 'in our city'. Did Indian mugging victims in London receive similar treatment? The Indian players wanted to know all about the cricket scene in England and in particular the situation in the northern leagues, where several hoped to play as professionals in the coming year. They were full of admiration for Robin's innings and keen to know my opinion of Indian cricket. I was happy to tell them I was most impressed

In one corner Robin held court The reporters quizzed him over the latest turn in his county dispute. He answered with a face as straight as his bat. He spoke in his most deferential manner but was, as always, full of quotable material.

"All I've ever sought is a contract that refelects my contribution as batsman and captain. I've spent my whole career with one club and I would much prefer to keep it that way. I'm no advocate of football style transfers and big fees. That sort of thing only destabilises the game and creates an elite of highly-paid super stars. I want to see better conditions and fairer rewards for everyone in the game."

When Robin had finished with the press (abandoning Chaughiri to their merciless probings), he spoke to Mr Narayan who flitted about shaking hands and smiling at everyone. For a moment I watched them in conversation. Then Robin looked up and caught my eye. Excusing himself, he walked over and pulled me to a quiet corner.

"You spoke to Siva?" he asked out of the corner of his mouth, while smiling stiffly at a gang of passing cricket officials.

"Is this a good place...." I stared nervously around the crowded room.

"Never mind that," he snapped, keeping his voice low and his face expressionless.

"Well I talked to him. I told him about ..."

I spoke into a craggy sunburnt ear.

"He's not interested. He's going into politics. He doesn't need it now."

"Yes, I'd heard that," Robin mused. "They're mad enough here to elect him, I'm sure."

"He said to wish you luck. He thinks the idea is workable."

I'm sure I don't need advice from Siva Ramachandran. Thank you. You'll be seeing him tonight?"

"How do you know?" I was startled.

"Narayan mentioned it," he said casually. "I'd go myself but I have some business calls to make."

"I'll bet you have."

He looked at me sternly, "Sarcasm can be an unpleasant character trait, David. I suggest you avoid it in future.

I smouldered but said nothing.

"You know my commitment," he was lecturing me, his freshly scrubbed features haggard at the end of the long day "If I have a plan I stick to it. There's little point in moving the field to cover the gaps."

Ostentatiously I looked at my watch.

"Tell Siva," he commanded, "the last thing we want is to interfere in his political career. It's his support we're looking for, not his time."

"He's not interested."

"He might be yet, remind him of the Coromandel Coast Investments scheme That should set his mind at rest

"What?"

"Just remind him "

I agreed, but swore to myself it would be my last flight as carrier pigeon. The two stars could pass their own cryptic messages in future.

"And get Fraser to have a look at that head of yours." He moved closer and whispered, "There's a great deal at stake here. Our little proposal could stir up quite a hornets' nest."

He plunged back into the crowd, receiving compliments on his century with the blank politeness of someone too used to both praise and blame. ■

ART

HARMONY PREVAILED

***Vaishali Honawar** reports on the art exhibition organised by Tina Ambani in Bombay*

K Khosa's *Joy*

You've got to say this for the Ambanis. When they do something, they do it in style. And in all fairness, one has to concede that the Harmony show, organised by the Reliance *bahu*, Tina Ambani, was not so much a display of money power as it was an exhibition of the most stunning works by some of the best talents in this country. What's more, the inauguration of this art show, held in Bombay on April 2, was an event at which the glitterati showed up in full strength.

Adi and Parmeshwar Godrej were in attendance, as was Harsh Goenka, who pioneered the trend of holding such events (remember his 'Bombay' exhibition held last year?) Ashok Advani of the Business India Group was also present as were such first-division designers as Shahab Durazi and Tarun Tahiliani.

But among the socialites, who were clad in gold and weighed down with gold, Tina Ambani, the lady behind the show, stood out in her flaming orange ensemble, flanked by her more soberly-dressed husband, Anil. The Ambanis were the perfect hosts, mingling with their guests and making sure that everyone had a drink. But Tina steered clear of journalists, everyone of that tribe who tried to approach her for a quote was fobbed off with the standard reply: "She is so busy."

Once you got beyond the society ladies, you realised that there was a fair amount of art on display as well; 138 paintings and 36 sculptures which were the work of 96 artists from across the country. The ubiquitous M.F. Husain contributed two paintings but wasn't present at the inauguration himself because he was in the US, attending the Sotheby's auction. But Jehangir Sabavala, who had contributed two of his works, both untitled, was there in person.

Though the theme of the exhibition was harmony, the artists interpreted this with considerable lattitude. Jogen Chowdhury's *Santiniketan* and Manu Parekh's *Flower and Animal at Window*, were both a little removed from the harmony theme. The other artists on display included S.H. Raza, with his characteristic use of colour, and N S Bendre.

The response to the exhibition was, on the whole, positive. Certainly, the artists themselves were more than happy with the display that they had got. Said Jehangir Sabavala, after a quick round of the various halls in which the exhibits were housed, "It's a wonderful exhibition. There's a great deal of good work on display and it comes up to the expected standard."

There were some, though, who confessed to being disappointed. Latika Katth, head of the department of sculpture at the Jamia Millia University in Delhi, for instance. "The exhibition does not come up to

S.G. Vasudev's *Earthscape*

Tina Ambani lighting the ceremonial lamp at the Harmony show

the national standard one would expect," she complained. "There's too much work by all kinds of artists, not necessarily good." Katth herself contributed two metal and stone sculptures, titled *Monument to Silence* and *Silent Whispers*, both of which were priced at Rs 5,00,000

But then, most of the exhibits on display had rather steep price tags attached. apart from the Husains, the Sabavalas and two of the Razas which were marked 'not for sale', having, apparently, already been bought by the Ambanis themselves. Anjolie Ela Menon, basking in her recent success at the Christie's auction where she out-priced

Manu Parekh's *Men in Benares*

Husain, was asking for Rs 85,000 for a tiny painting and Rs 2,25,000 for a slightly larger canvas. Despite the high prices, both paintings were among the first to be sold.

Some works were more reasonably priced, though. Samir Mondal was asking for only Rs 35,000 each for two brilliant triptychs titled *Harmony I* and *Harmony II*. Prabhakar Kolte's works, too, weren't too expensive.

Not that everyone there was keen to buy. There were, of course, those who had just come to be seen sipping delicately at their tomato juice and eating the canapes on offer. Then there were those who had come to have a look at the exhibits and to marvel at the fact that so many Indian artists had been persuaded to display their creations under one roof.

But then, as they say, money and organisation can work miracles. And Tina Ambani had both behind her: not to mention her own charm and considerable persuasive powers. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	0630	1 2 3 6	IC 742	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC 742	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-743	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-321	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9-322	[illegible]	
M9 323	1220	2 6	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/103	0850	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
PF-301	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF-302	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PF 302	[illegible]	
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1030	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-721	1250	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2 161	1350	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2-161	1200	6	D2 162	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0600	daily	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 305-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-402	0715	4	D5-401	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-744	1115	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 761	1615	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9F 102	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MUMBAI					
IC 676	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 202	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2 102	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 673	1945	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 212	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W-211	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 309	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 305	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 10[illegible]	[illegible]	
M9 307	1700	daily	[illegible]		[illegible]
D2 104	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
IC 203	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
S2 020	0850	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-304	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 402	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S-805	1720	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
S2-070	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
M9-306	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9-305	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-456	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
4S-415	1205	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 617	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-701	1240	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 257	[illegible]	4 7
PF 401/9[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
GOA					
M9 304-121	0850	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
D5-601	0500	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC 7[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 101	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 511	[illegible]	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	daily
IMPHAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1405	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1440	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
PF 301	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1020	[illegible]
SHILLONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	1935	daily
SILCHAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 256	1405	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	0700	[illegible]	IC 254	0940	[illegible]
M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	1010	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 323	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
IC 211	1140	[illegible]	IC 213	1810	[illegible]
VARANASI					
D5 401	1230	3 5	D5 406	1835	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	M9 112/301	1335	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 541	1115	[illegible]	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	4	D5-401	1530	3

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
[illegible]	0850	[illegible]	TG-312	1240	1 3 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 732	1730	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	1105	[illegible]	IC-856	1730	4 7
TG 311	1355	[illegible]	IC 732	1305	2 5
AI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 409	1825	6
BANGKOK					
RJ-185	1445	4	RJ 184		
KUALA LUMPUR					
KL-876	0420	7	KL 8[illegible]		
BUCHAREST					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	FO 075	1100	5 7
KATMANDU					
KB-105	0850	2 6	KB 106		

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0700	1	IC 226	0920	1
BG 698	1735	[illegible]	BG 697	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG 002	0630	4 5	BG 001	0830	4 5
BG 002	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG 001	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC 724	1300	[illegible]	IC 723	1520	1 2 3 [illegible]
BG-094	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 [illegible]
BG-094	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	4
BG [illegible]	2100	1	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DOHA					
QT 064	[illegible]	[illegible]	QT [illegible]	[illegible]	2
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	[illegible]	BI [illegible]	[illegible]	
KATHMANDU					
RA 214	2155	[illegible]	RA 213	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 747	1055	[illegible]	IC 748	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
RA 142	[illegible]	3	RA [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
SU 532	[illegible]	3	[illegible]	[illegible]	3
PARO					
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
SQ 41[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BI 14[illegible]	0630	3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
LZ [illegible]	1730	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
IC-[illegible]	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	1

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]		Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]		Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Tootan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3029	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3035	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3031	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3071	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	14 30	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	13 40	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	20 15	Lal Quila Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express	20 25	[illegible]
[illegible]	22 00	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	20 00	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	15 50	[illegible]
[illegible]	20 55	Mughal Sarai Express via SBG Loop	12 30	[illegible]
[illegible]	18 20	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10 25	[illegible]
[illegible]	12-40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	4 25	[illegible]
		Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulakruma (Secunderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express		
		[illegible]		
		Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]		
		New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]		
		Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express		
		[illegible]		
		Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express		
		[illegible]		
		Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]		
		Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]		
		Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]		
		[illegible]		
	14 [illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Howrah & Cuttack Monday [illegible]		

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37.

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: Uma Bharti's hair

Early life: First emerged as two well-oiled pigtails, which graduated to become full-fledged plaits. Those were the days when Bharti was preaching to congregations throughout the world about Hinduism, quoting from the *Gita* and the *Vedas* at great length.

Next stage: Came when Bharti had entered politics, and Parliament. Surrounded by the well-groomed beauties of New Delhi, Uma began to get a wee bit tired of the long-haired look. So, one afternoon, she drove to the beauty parlour at the Kanishka hotel in New Delhi, and asked them to chop off her lustrous locks.

Result: A particularly fetching hairstyle, that ended well above Bharti's shoulders, and brought her brown eyes and well-defined cheekbones into prominence.

Did the experiment work?: For a while, at least, it did. Uma paid regular visits to Kanishka to get her hair trimmed and maintain the style she loved so much. And certainly, she looked much better in photographs as a consequence.

Political fall-out: Uma's mistake was to admit to the hair-cut in print. Not the most savvy of politicians at that time, she hadn't quite realised what admitting to frequenting the Kanishka would do to her public image. So, she was dismayed to find that everyone had seized upon the fact that a self-styled *sanyasin* like her was getting her hair cut at a (relatively) up-market Delhi hotel.

Around election time, her hair-cut even became a campaign issue, with her opponents trying to embarrass her by references to her expensive and flamboyant lifestyle.

Could we possibly date this?: Well, this was around the time that Delhi was agog with rumours about the Uma Bharti-Govind Acharya affair. According to the gossip, the two had been romantically involved for some time, and Bharti had even sought the

Uma Bharti

Govind Acharya

Sadhvi Rithambara

BJP leadership's permission to marry Acharya

And did the rumours die down?: Yes, as soon as Uma Bharti announced that she was taking *sanyas* and shaved off her hair to complete the *sadhvi* look She had, said Bharti, been hurt beyond measure by such irresponsible talk (to which, you understand, there wasn't a grain of truth), and believed that the only way to counter it was to seek refuge in saffron.

Who was most upset by this decision?: Strangely enough, it wasn' Govind Acharya — so perhaps, Uma was telling us the truth, after all. It was Vasundhara Raje, the daughter of Vijaya Raje and a colleague of Bharti's in the BJP, who was most put out.

Until now, she and Uma had been on par as far as appeal to the electorate went. But if Bharti re-styled herself as a *sadhvi* and went to seek the people's blessings wearing *bhagwe vastra*, then Raje was bound to lose out. Also the BJP, being a Hindu rightist party, would always give more prominence to a woman of the cloth rather than to a Maharani clad in chiffon

Should she have been worried?: Not in the least. Those who have seen Vasundhara campaign at elections can vouch for the fact that she has the rare ability of striking a chord in most people's heart. And that despite being a Gwalior princess, she has the common touch. So, certainly, she had nothing to fear from Bharti, whose style is combative rather than conciliatory.

Bharti's real rival: Was none other Sadhvi Rithambara, she of the vituperative tongue and fascist world view. Both Rithambara and Bharti essentially appeal to the same constituency: that which comprises communal bigots of all descriptions, who believe that the Babri demolition was cause for celebration and that all Muslims should be despatched to Pakistan forthwith.

Did the cropped look endure?: Not, as it turned out, for very long. After the usual photo-opportunities had been taken care of, Uma allowed her hair to grow out. There were no trips to the local barber shop this time around, to maintain that length. Maybe all that bad publicity the first time around (remember Kanishka?) had put her off regular trims.

Result: Bharti's hair soon grew to quite a respectable length, just brushing or falling below her shoulders. She took to oiling it regularly and wore it in an old-fashioned plait. When it grew too long or developed split ends, one of the women who form part of her entourage, would cut off an inch or two.

End of story?: Not quite. These days Uma can be seen sporting the shorn look again. She recently appeared on television with hair that would do an American Marine proud, the *choti* very much a thing of the past.

Was she beating the heat?: Coping with the exigencies of electioneering, more likely. Now that Bharti has to go out and ask for votes on behalf of the BJP, it makes good political sense to reinforce the *sadhvi* image. After all, if she had her hair done up in a braid or bun, how would she be any better than Vasundhara Raje?

Will the ploy work?: Why ever not? And even if it doesn't, it never harms to try. As they say, it's better to be shorn than sorry ■

Vasundhara Raje

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says the sun has changed signs leading to selling, travelling, trading and borrowing for you. People who have separated will get together, thanks to your unceasing efforts. Travel stars are in the ascendant, thanks to Mercury. Also you will impress those who really matter.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

A promotion is due to you and should come through. Those in production and sales do well. Love tugs at your heart and will not be denied. Form, design, colour, symmetry, chemicals, food and music will all edge forward in your life the next 27 days. At the same time, expenses will be heavy.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Try to meet deadlines. It in for a job, prepare for an interview. A chance to travel should be taken up. People will complain and coax you for their own selfish ends. Therefore, judge the situation carefully. Love could be intense and sudden. A hobby can be converted into a vocation. Keep a tight hold on purse strings.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

You will excel in work and at play and thus feel happy and confident. You can now pull out all the stops and make things really happen according to your sweet desire. You could even try taking risks and winning. Cancerians are in for major achievements in their field of activity.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

You will be straining every sinew and nerve to advance. Passion, too, will dominate. Property matters, renovation, decoration will also figure for Leos. Health safeguards will help you. Addition to your wardrobe will improve your image. Collaborations, travel and ceremony are the spin offs.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Time for healing, uniting, coming to terms with yourself and others. There will be mutual satisfaction, as your life and that of others, revolve around one another. Sex appeal and originality will distinguish you. You will make new friends and hold on to old ones and that's simply wonderful.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Loans, funds, finances and employment will practically take up all your time. Partnerships are also highlighted. Love could be placed on a pedestal but finally you will have to face reality. Poets, artists, pshychics, writers, editors and dancers do a grand job, says Ganesha.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

The mating season will be on despite the heat and the sweat. You'll reunite with people. Perfect your work techniques and streamline your procedure if in sales management, teaching, trading and most certainly, managing corporations. You may get very confidential information which could help you.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

A job switch, funding, taking care of pets, hiring or firing workers or servants, taking care of health and hygiene, are the strands this week. The trick is not to waver from your objective. A dash of romance and adventure keeps you involved. Shortly, you'll locate a teacher and grow wise.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Luck of the draw, will be yours so go in for a lottery, if you feel like taking a chance. A love relationship will be strong and durable. Your karma will now help you to be happy, as well as successful. The focus is on style and panache. You will win plaudits. Just be long on confidence and conviction.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Home, property and travel are a grand triple-header for Aquarians. You must go in for diversity, be it politics, management, sales pitch, literature, cinema, music or research, as you will be innately versatile. Property value, marital status and family values need to be emphasised. Bonding will be close.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Communication, beautification and reunion is the message of the sun's entry into Taurus. Brothers, sisters, relatives and old friends will again appear in your life. Stand tall. Don't give up on principles. All will turn out well. An addition to the family is possible. You will do well in exams.

BIRTHDAYS

April 21: Moon conjunction Venus symbolises money, beauty, comforts, luxury, buying, selling, bargaining and trading. It is here that you will excel and be happy.

April 22: Moon sextile Mars refers to energy, enterprise, industry, factory, research, sports in particular, ardent romance and even marriage.

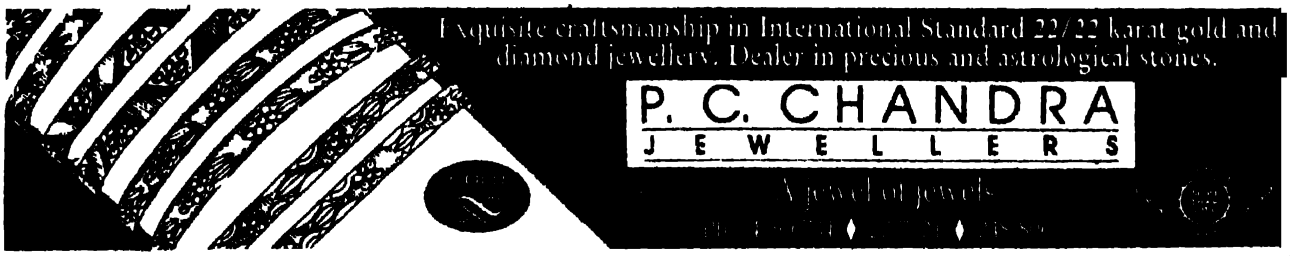
April 23: Moon sextile sun is great for politicians, bureaucrats, builders, contractors, photographers, producers and musicians.

April 24: Sun Uranus square means just keep an eye on financial fluctuations if in stocks, shares, speculation and industry. Risk taking is not advisable as a rule. Joy comes through the home.

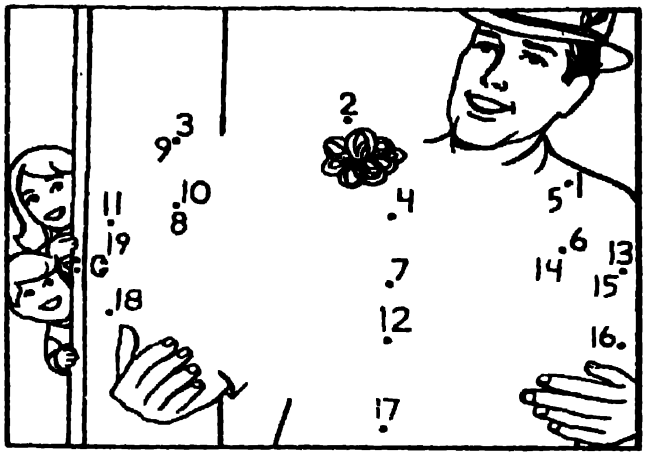
April 25: Moon-Saturn trine indicates consolidation and a blue print for prosperity over the years. Focus will be on creativity.

April 26: Moon-Saturn conjunction means you will have to be a little careful in secret matters and journey. Enemies could be active.

April 27: Moon sextile Venus, trine Mars leads to luxuries, comforts, finance and romance. Your dreams could come true. Be ready to acquire new skills.



JUNIOR WHIRL — HAL KAUFMAN

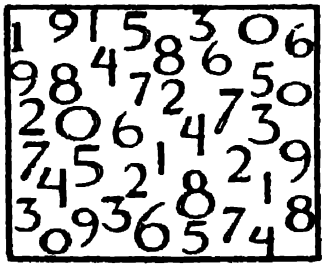


HERE, HERE! H-e-r-e'-s Grandpa, and guess what he has in his arms. Draw connecting lines from dot 1 to dot 2, etc.

YULE DO! Follow directions. 1. Remove a shopping centre and a present remains: MgAiLfLt. 2. Remove a green tree and an animal remains: PdleNeEr. 3. Remove Santa's transport and a sky object remains: SsLtEaDr.

1 MALL, gift 2 PINE, deer 3 SELD, star

SUM DIVVY! It is possible to divide the diagram at right into four segments of approximately the same size and shape, with each segment containing numbers 0 through 9. It may be done with scissors or a pencil (if a pencil is used, a ruler will help too).

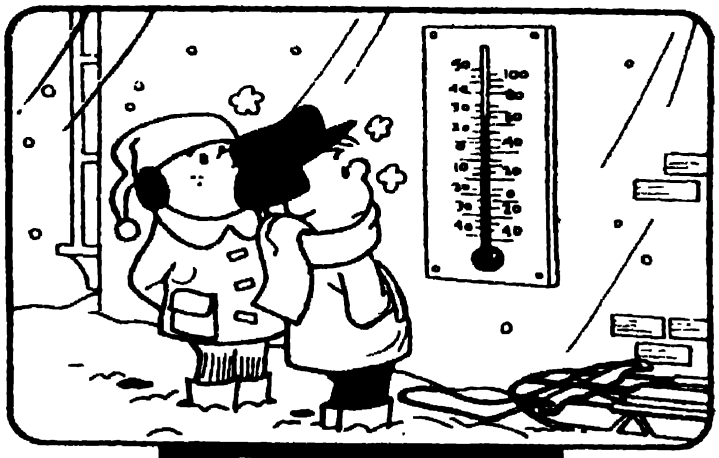


Remember, the diagram is to be divided into a total of four pieces, each containing digits 0 to 9.

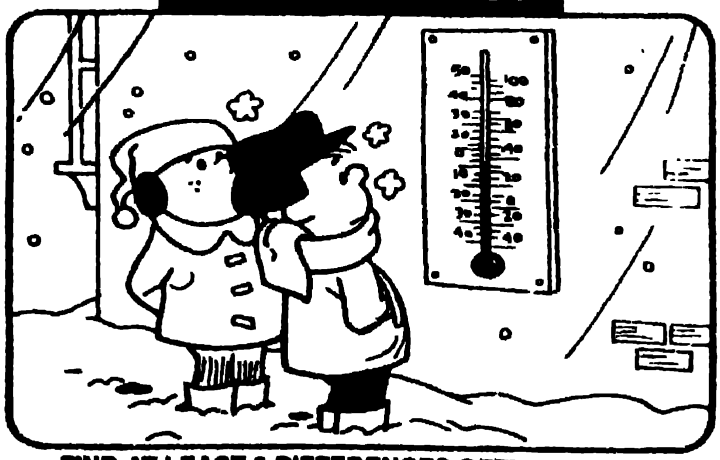
Hint: It can be done with just two straight cuts or lines. It's that easy — think simple.

Simply draw or cut from corner to corner

HOCUS-FOCUS



HOCUS-FOCUS



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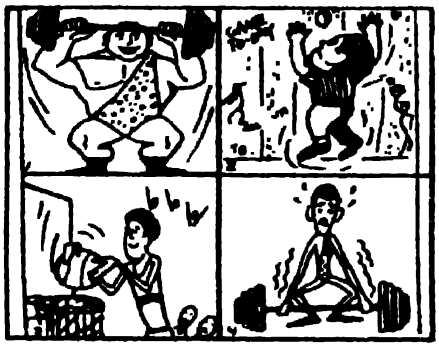
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences. 1. Window is smaller. 2. Tassel is shorter. 3. Pocket is missing. 4. Scarf is shorter. 5. Temperature is lower. 6. Sled is missing.



OPPOSITE WORDS TO PONDER

YOU are asked to insert a word of opposite meaning for each of the terms below; Examples (See illus.): Tall, short; big, little, etc. How quickly can you comply

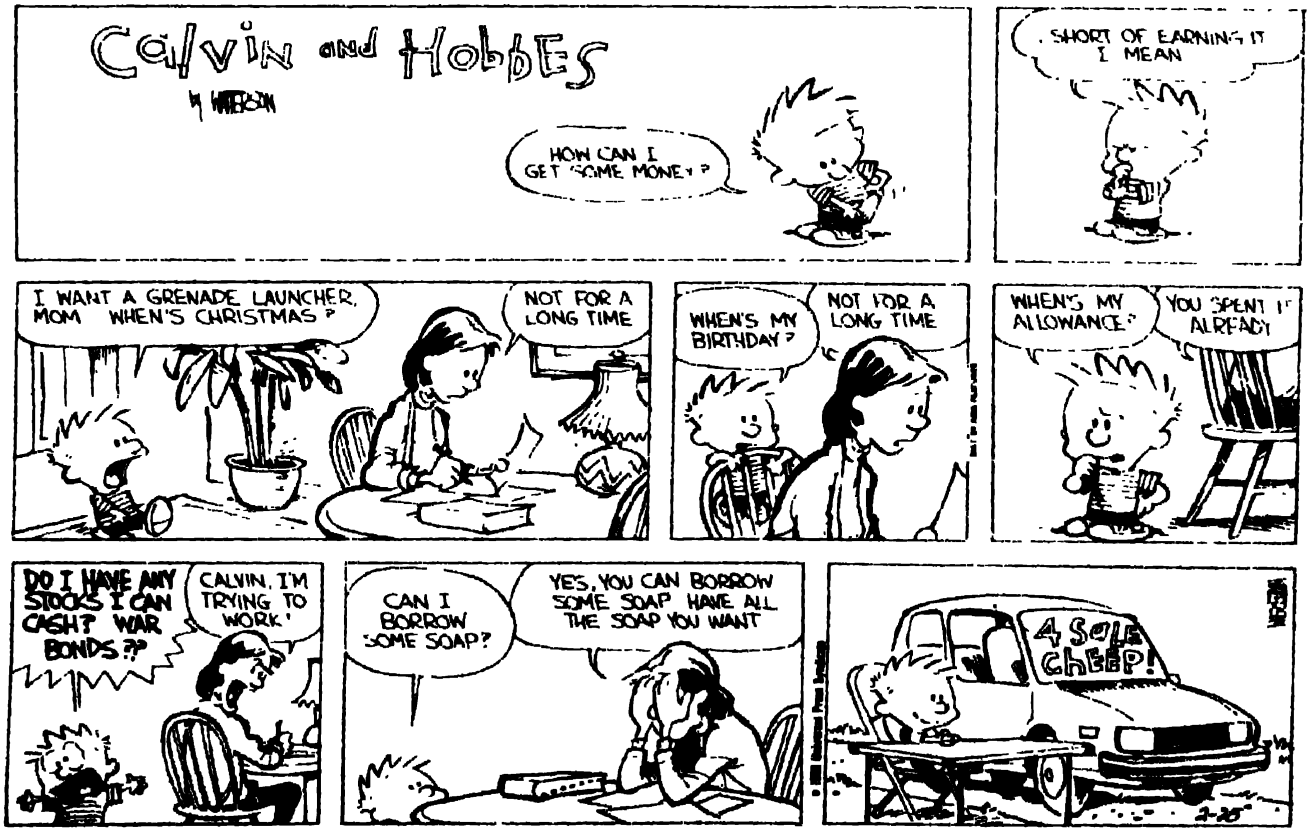
Smart: —	**Strong:** —
Give: —	**Fast:** —
High: —	**Win:** —
Good: —	**Buy:** —
Pro: —	**Wet:** —
Hit: —	**Sick:** —
Sweet: —	**Full:** —
Fake: —	**Love:** —
Rich: —	**New:** —
Stop: —	**Heavy:** —
Day: —	**Open:** —

Answers may vary
Time limit: 2 mins

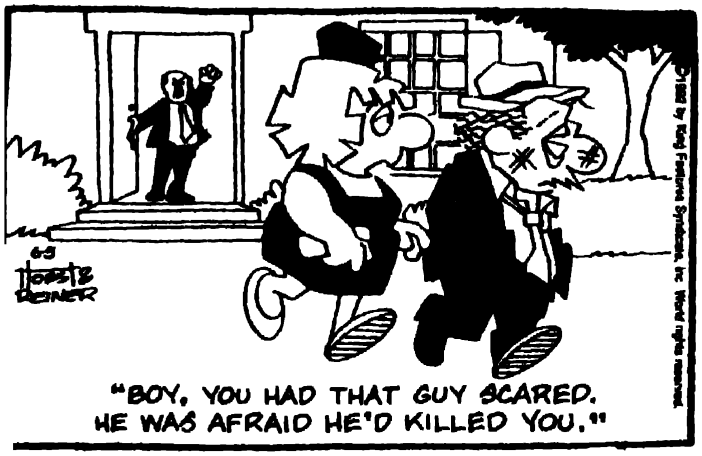
Respectively top to bottom Dumb, take, low, bad, con, miss, sour, real, poor, go, night, weak, slow, lose, sell, dry, well, empty, hate, old, light, closed

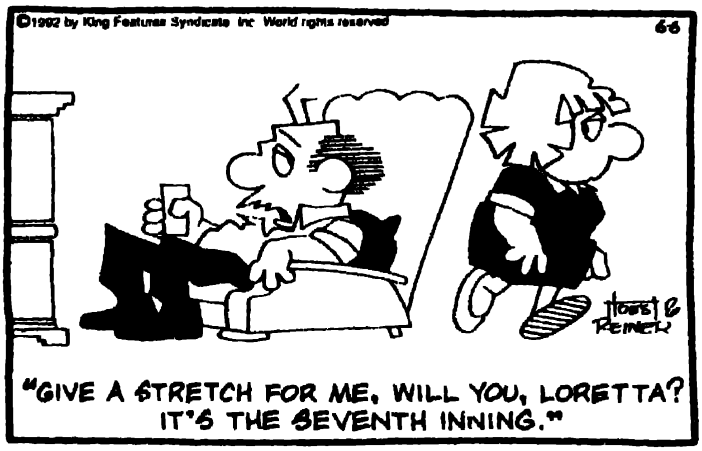
ARCHIE

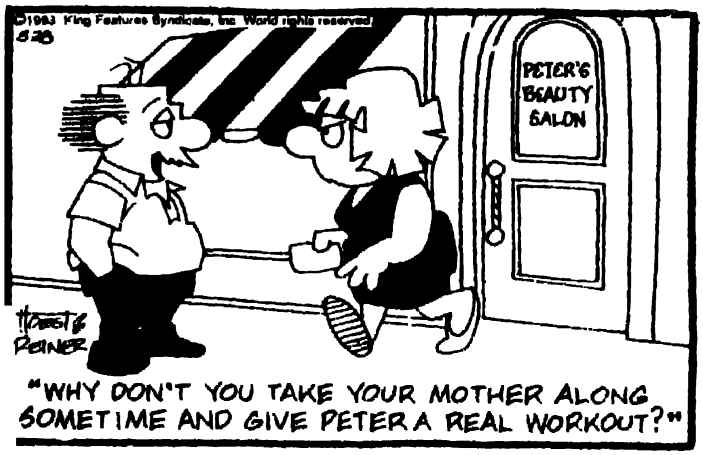
CALVIN AND HOBBES WATTERSON



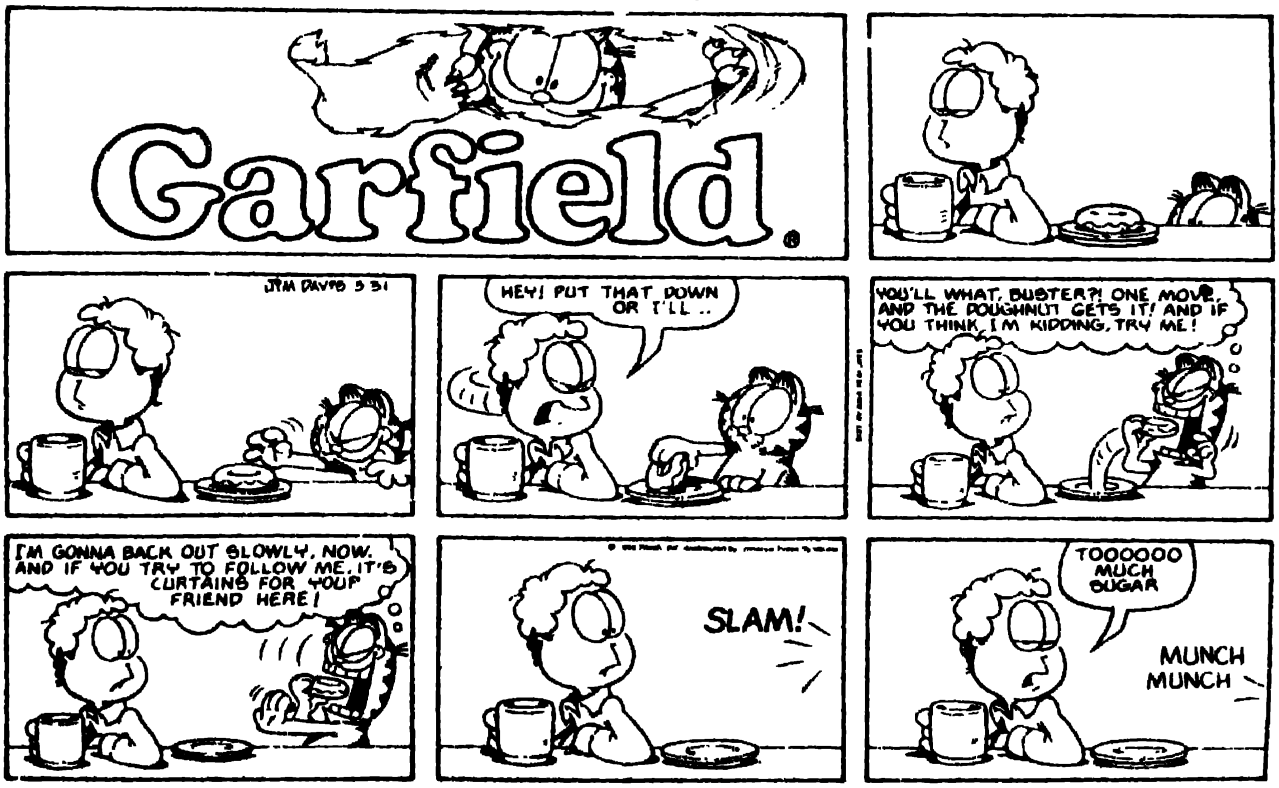
THE LOCKHORNS



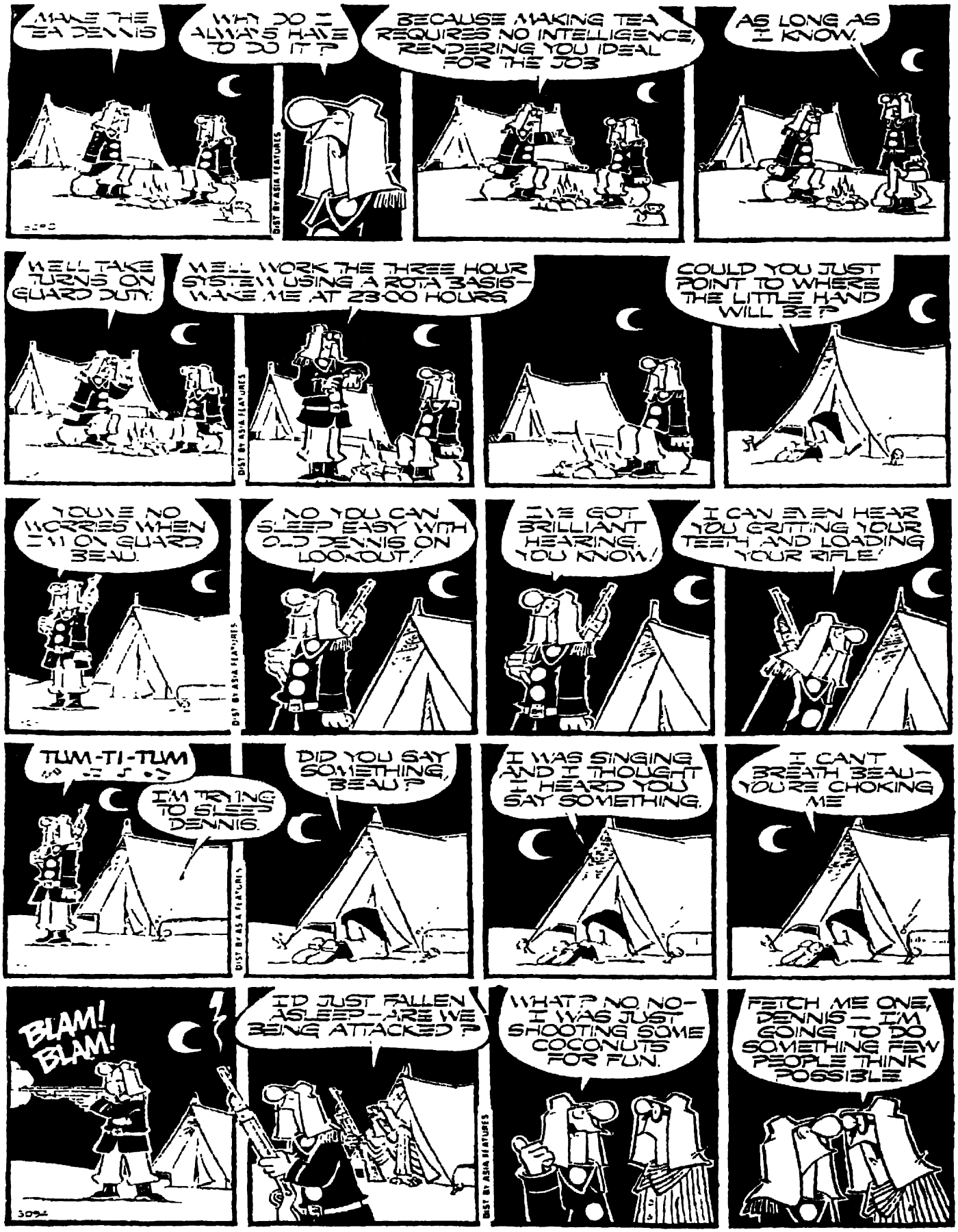


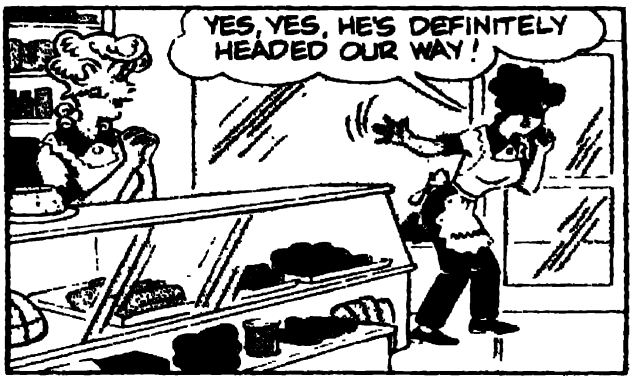


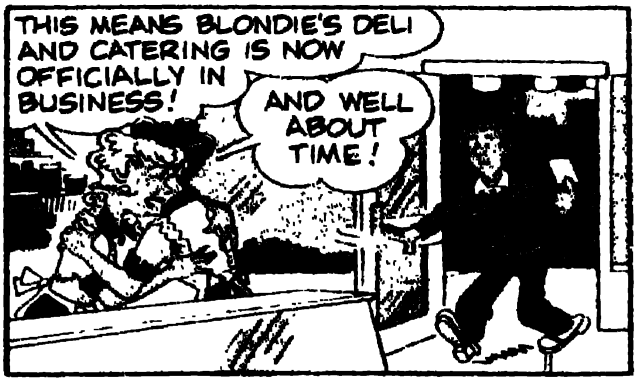
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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THE RIGHT DIRECTION

He brought art cinema in India to life with Ankur; *and now Shyam Benegal is all set to release his new film,* Sardari Begum, *reports* ***Vaishali Honawar***

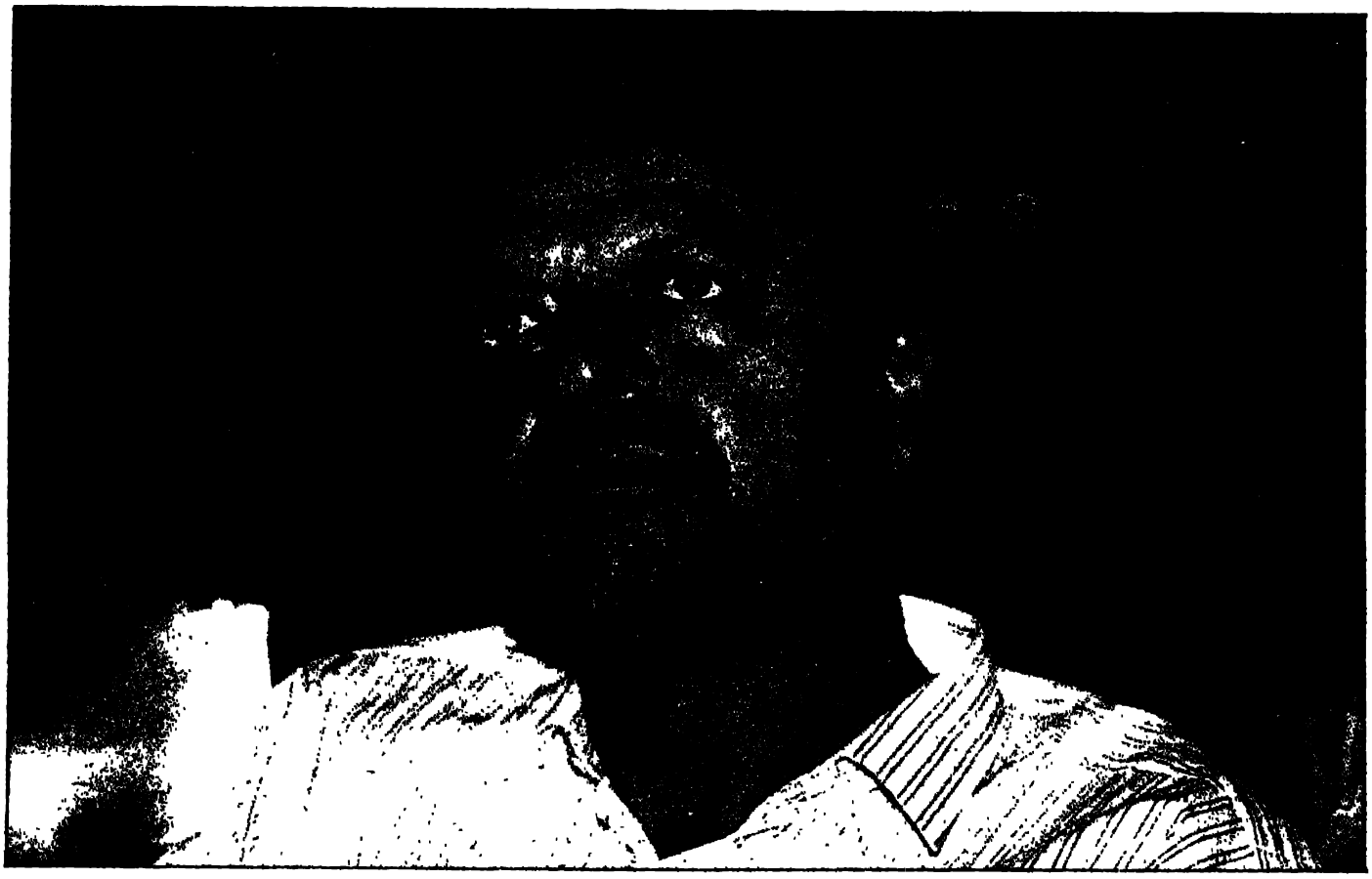
There is something very relaxing about being with Shyam Benegal. Perhaps, it is the way he talks, with an ease of manner which almost makes you forget that you are sitting with the man who made Indian audiences take cinema seriously. Perhaps, it is the cool, lazy ambience of his simply but tastefully-appointed office which stands on one of the messiest roads in Bombay city.

Book cases line one wall of the room, reflecting his eclectic tastes and eye for detail. there are volumes on Nehru, on cinema, on Bombay city, a Sanskrit dictionary, and a series of books on Hindi grammar. Above his little table in one corner of the room are posters of *The Making of the Mahatma*, his ambitious venture on the life of the young Gandhi, the loose ends of which he is busy tying up.

'Articulate, intellectual, involved...' such words are often used to describe Benegal and he is doubtlessly all of these. But there is something more to him which is not as easily described. Gentle, perhaps, is the word that comes closest, and then it is not a description most critics of his films would agree with. For there has been nothing gentle about his films, each one a stark re-telling of the truth, a brutal narrative of life as it is, without the rose-tinted lenses that most Hindi film makers use. Films like *Ankur, Manthan, Nishant, Suraj ka Saatvan Ghoda* which are all about exploitation, helplessness, anger spiralling out of control. But despite these violent emotions, what comes through is Benegal's sensitivity as a film maker and as a man who cares deeply about the subjects he handles.

There is too his tremendous versatility. The man who started his career with the sensitive *Ankur* went on to handle with equal finesse such diverse films as the biographical *Bhumika*, the epic-scale *Junoon*, the humorous *Mandi*, the child-like *Charandas Chor* and the rather complicated *Kalyug*. Not to mention the many tele-serials

Shyam Benegal



A still from *Gaman*

he brought to our living rooms, including *Bharat Ek Khoj* and *Yatra* among others.

At the moment he is putting the finishing touches to his newest feature film, *Sardari Begum*, which is the story of a *thumri* singer in old Delhi; a work of fiction, he emphasises at the start. It is like most of his other films in that it comprises a cast of relatively new faces and was made on a fairly tight budget. It has a strong narrative structure; but then, telling a story has always been Benegal's single-greatest passion.

The film revolves around female characters, once again a Benegal speciality for he simply loves to go into the complexities of a woman's character, plumbing its depths as he explores her relationships. "But it's not as if I want to always present women as victims," he says. "There is something very interesting about women, particularly in India, because the social pressure on them is so much more than on men due to the way Indian society is. What I intend to show is the ability of women to handle the situations they have been placed in."

Sardari Begum then is about a classical singer who finds her place in the sun for a brief while and then fades into obscurity, only to make single-column news when she is killed in a communal riot.

"Basically it's a film about a woman who makes it on her own in life, about the kind of music she sings which is now on the decline. It is also about the world of a singer and her relationships as a human being. She's a different person to different people and this subjec-

Farida Jalal in *Mammo*

tive attitude of people is very exciting to explore in cinematic terms," explains Benegal

The story develops through a young journalist who is assigned to work on Sardari Begum's story after her death. As she interviews people, including the singer's husband, her daughter, her relatives, her first patron, the music company and the directors who gave her an opportunity to record, the narrative leaps backward and forward in time. Later, the journalist discovers that Sardari Begum had actually been her aunt and was kept away from the family for having broken the code of honour by becoming a singer This new bond, so to say, further involves her in the story.

Sardari Begum, as a teenager, is played by debutant actress Smriti Mishra, while her older version is portrayed by Kiron Kher, wife of actor Anupam Kher Rajina Rajbisariya, another new face, plays the journalist while Surekha Sikri, who has worked with Benegal in *Mammo*, plays Sardari's music teacher The only star in the cast is Amrish Puri, an old Benegal favourite, who plays Sardari's first patron

After *Bhumika* and *Mandi*, this is Benegal's third film where music plays a prominent role. While his other films have made use of some hauntingly beautiful melodies, as in *Manthan*, the music has been there strictly to enhance or supplement the narrative "I do use songs in my films, but not to punctuate dramatic or comic sequences, the way most Hindi films do I am concerned with the narrative elements and other aspects which in my way of thinking are more interesting," says the film maker.

The film's music — light classical - has been composed by Vanraj Bhatia and the lyrics are by Javed Akhtar There are nine songs in the film, including a couple of *thumris*.

The screenplay of *Sardari Begum* has been written by Khaled Mohamed who also wrote the screenplay of *Mammo*, another film by Benegal which was screened at the Bombay International Film Festival last year Interestingly, Mohamed, who is the editor of *Filmfare*, has in the past been rather heavy-handed in his criticism of Benegal's films. But that obviously doesn't bother the film maker who, in fact, seems to find the whole thing quite amusing. "It's true that he has been very critical of my films, but I don't worry," he laughs "I don't automatically become an enemy of all the people who criticise my work."

The story is based in the *mohallas* of old Delhi and old Agra but Benegal has shot it entirely on location in Bombay's Film City, using elaborate sets. Financed by Plus Films, it is almost complete now and is expected to be released by the end of April.

One of Benegal's greatest successes as a filmmaker is the fact that he has managed to get people to actually go to cinema halls to watch serious films, though certainly not in the large numbers that mainstream cinema draws But unlike other serious filmmakers, he is not complaining about a lack of audiences for good cinema in India

"There is no such thing as a single Indian audience," he says "The Indian audience is made up of so many different kinds of people. But just because filmmakers tend to make one kind of film, it is assumed that there is only one kind of audience"

Indian audiences, he says, have been forced to remain "in a state of suspended adolescence If you orient them continuously with bad cinema, where relationships are naive and eve

Neena Gupta in *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda*

Rajit Kapur, Rageshwari and Shyam Benegal

rything is reduced to black and white, what can you expect? Is that how life is?"

According to him the real reason why serious films do not succeed is the lack of an infrastructure for reaching the right kind of audiences "In a country of 900 million, there are at least 15 million who would like to see my films. But how do I get to those people, that's the question. We have to develop the right marketing niche," says Benegal.

Working with stars cannot solve the problem for him "because their image creates certain expectations. For example, Amitabh Bachchan has the image of the angry young man fighting the ills in society. When people go to see his films, they expect to see him in that role. If I present him as something else, people will not accept him So what's the point in casting a star? '

The other reason why he doesn't cast stars is that they cost a lot of money and he usually works on small budgets. But if there were an opportunity, he says, there are many stars in mainstream cinema such as Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan and Sridevi whom he would love to work with. "But unless my film requires their star image, there would be no point in my taking them," explains Benegal

Though his cinema is all about reality and its shades of grey, Benegal is not dismissive about mainstream cinema, particularly such hugely successful but less-than-realistic films as *Hum Aapke Hain Koun. !* and *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jaayenge*. "Films like *HAHK* reinforce certain attitudes which are necessary in the upwardly mobile urban community of India This community is losing its traditional bearings and that makes them very insecure," says Benegal "Films like *HAHK* and *DDLJ* allow you that identity with tradition and custom and make you feel all's right with the world These films tell you that you can be modern and have your tradition too It's a formula of a most credible kind "

On the other hand, he feels, serious cinema too has to make an effort to cater to audience needs if it is to work. "Cinema cannot work if a film maker insists on staying in a bubble of his own which has nothing to do with the rest of the world," he says gravely. "A balance has to be struck between the creative urge of a filmmaker and audience tastes. Those films fail which do not make contact."

There have been in recent years such film makers as the hugely-successful Mani Ratnam whose films attempt to strike a balance between reality and fantasy. Benegal finds Ratnam very populist but also "an intelligent filmmaker. He has style, credibility and a sense of style. He knows how to get to the audience mindfully, not mindlessly He has learnt his lessons well, as Hollywood has "

But on the whole, he feels, cinema in India has not really evolved "There was a time when people made films with social content, films which were closer to the soil. In the past, each studio had its own particular type of film, Wadia Movietone made stunt films, Sohrab Modi made historicals, New Theatres made films with social content, Sagar Movietone made fantasies," explains Benegal "But with the breakdown of the studio system everyone is just getting into ways of making a fast buck There is no longer any creative control. Everything's come down to simple supply and demand "

But he, for one, is going to continue making films his way. There are several projects he has in his mind — "each one a dream project" — and he is going to work on them as and when the money comes in. Shyam Benegal, for one, is not going to lose his grip on reality. ■

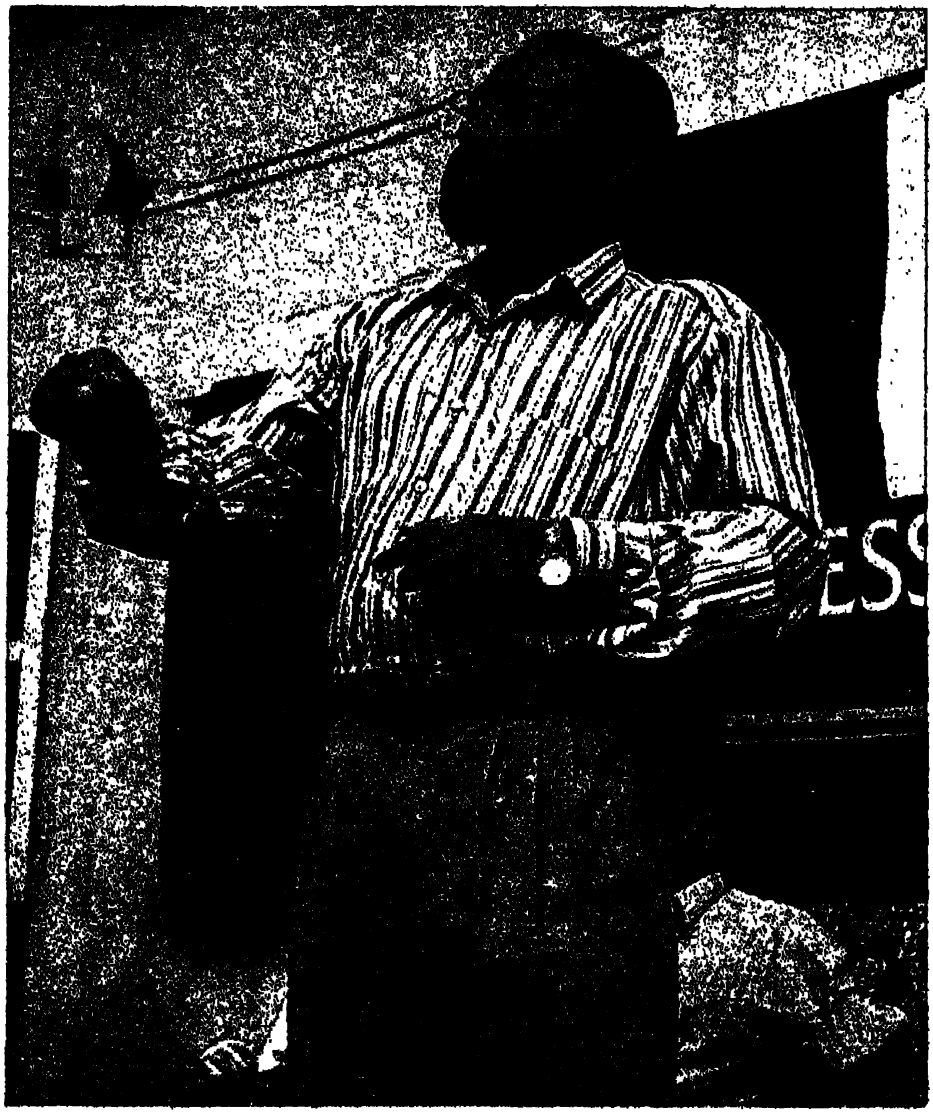
***K. J. ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM**, Delhi's 'demolition man' has done for the capital what G.R. Khairnar did for Bombay. He has struck terror in the hearts of unscrupulous property developers and land grabbers, reducing to rubble vast unauthorised commercial structures. As a social crusader, he heads an NGO, Janashakti, which aims to fight corruption. He is also known to have pioneered the total literacy programme in Kottayam, the first town in India to do so.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Chilled beer in Delhi summer after a hard day's work.
What is your greatest fear?
To be forgotten by friends.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
John F. Kennedy.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

John F. Kennedy

What do you dislike most in others?
Selfishness.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My singing.
What is your most precious possession?
My self-respect.
What objects do you always carry?
My gun and my ego.
What makes you most depressed?
The state of affairs in this country.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
I love everything about my appearance.
What is your favourite word?
Thanks.
What is your favourite journey?
Back to my village.
What is your favourite dream?
To run this country in 2006 AD.
What is your nightmare?
That somebody may kidnap my sons.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My dreams.
What is your source of sustenance?
My inner self.
On what occasions do you lie?
When it does not hurt.
What is your greatest regret?
Never regretted.



What has been your happiest moment?
When my sons hug me.

What is your nig

What brings tears to your eyes?
Sight of poverty.
How do you relax?
At the disco.

What do you envy most in others?
Ability to sing.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a man who made India dream.
How would you like to die?
Instant death, preferably bullet death after I have made India dream.

Classic

shirting

fabrics

from

Raymond.

Raymond has a wide range of shirting fabrics that includes cotton, silk, polyester, linen and blends in stripes, plaids and prints.

Raymond

SINCE 1925

Classic

shirting

fabrics

from

Raymond.

Raymond

SINCE 1925

The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Managing Well

■ Indian Airlines has come a long way since its turbulent days when it suffered phenomenal losses, ministerial highhandedness and was run by an inept management ('High Flier', March 10).

But thanks to Probir Sen it has become everyone's favourite domestic carrier; competing with other private airlines which are employing various tactics to woo passengers.

The latter may boast of special on-board facilities but most of the time they are not up to the mark. Also the arrival and departure timings are not always correct.

Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore

Indian Airlines: Grand take-off

■ The cover story eulogised Probir Sen as the dynamic IA chief who assiduously contributed in turning the airlines from a loss-making concern into an airline which bagged the best domestic carrier award.

This brings to mind a remark of H.G. Wells: "In the country of the blind, a one-eyed man is the king."

Whiz-kids are non-starters in India in an era of license, permit and quota raj.

To drag in the name of a highly respected and globally admired Russi Mody was in bad taste. Mody's academic and professional record is impeccable: schooling at Harrow, undergraduate studies at Balliol College, Oxford.

He could have been another Robert McNamara or Ian McGregor.

A brilliant US manager, McGregor was hired by Margaret Thatcher to bring the ailing British Steel and British Coal to sound health.

Sadly, Mody was born in India.

H.B. Roy,
Kuala Lumpur
(Malaysia)

■ We are proud of Indian Airlines. It should paint the words, 'My India is great' on all its aircraft.

Prakash Agarwal,
Nadia (W.B.)

■ The cover story appears lop-sided. The whole objective of the story was to extol the virtues of Sen and denigrate others of consequence at Indian Airlines.

Russi Mody, too, had paid a lot of attention to in-flight service, on-time performance, and discipline, and his efforts did bear fruit.

Ishita Dutt,
Jamshedpur

■ Probir Sen's real credit lies in challenging the agitations of the Indian Airlines pilots who were making unreasonable demands.

Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Raveena Tandon

PAGE 4

THERE WAS a time when Bombay actors and actresses had little backgrounds, family or education, to recommend themselves. But today, they come from upper-middle class, if not rich, families and are educated and speak excellent English.

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
20 INNER EYE
21 JUNIOR WHIRL
22 COMICS
26 PANORAMA
30 FIRST PERSON

COVER STORY

THE CHANGING PROFILE OF THE FILMSTARS

Sunil Shetty

These days, most Hindi film heroes and heroines are both rich and hip, and come from the most respectable of backgrounds: ***Lata Khubchandani*** *reports*

PITY POOR MAMTA KULKARNI! SHE HAS ONLY TO APPEAR on the sets for her co-stars to snigger behind her back, make her the subject of the most nasty practical jokes, and make fun of everything from her accent to her clothes. The word heard most often at these times is "vern". An abbreviated form of "vernacular", it is used to sum up Ms Kulkarni, who never went to convent (or public) school, doesn't know Tom Cruise from a Tom Collins, and speaks English with a *ghati* accent.

If this ribbing was good-natured and just restricted to the odd remark about how Mamta pronounced "beaches" so that it sounded like "bitches", it could

have been possible to dismiss it as part of the customary horseplay that takes place on the sets. But no, there is an edge to this attack, and Mamta is left in no doubt about the fact that she is the odd one out in a club of insiders.

While this can't be too good for Mamta's morale, it's not really Ms Kulkarni's feelings that is of the greatest importance here. What is far more relevant is what such incidents tell us about the changing character of the film industry itself.

Gone are the days when girls — and boys — from lower middle-class backgrounds, with little or no education to boast of, entered the film industry. When women such as Nargis and Madhubala, who originated from the *kotha*, became the foremost actresses of their time. And when Dharamendra, a farmer's son from Punjab, created box-office magic with his brawny good looks.

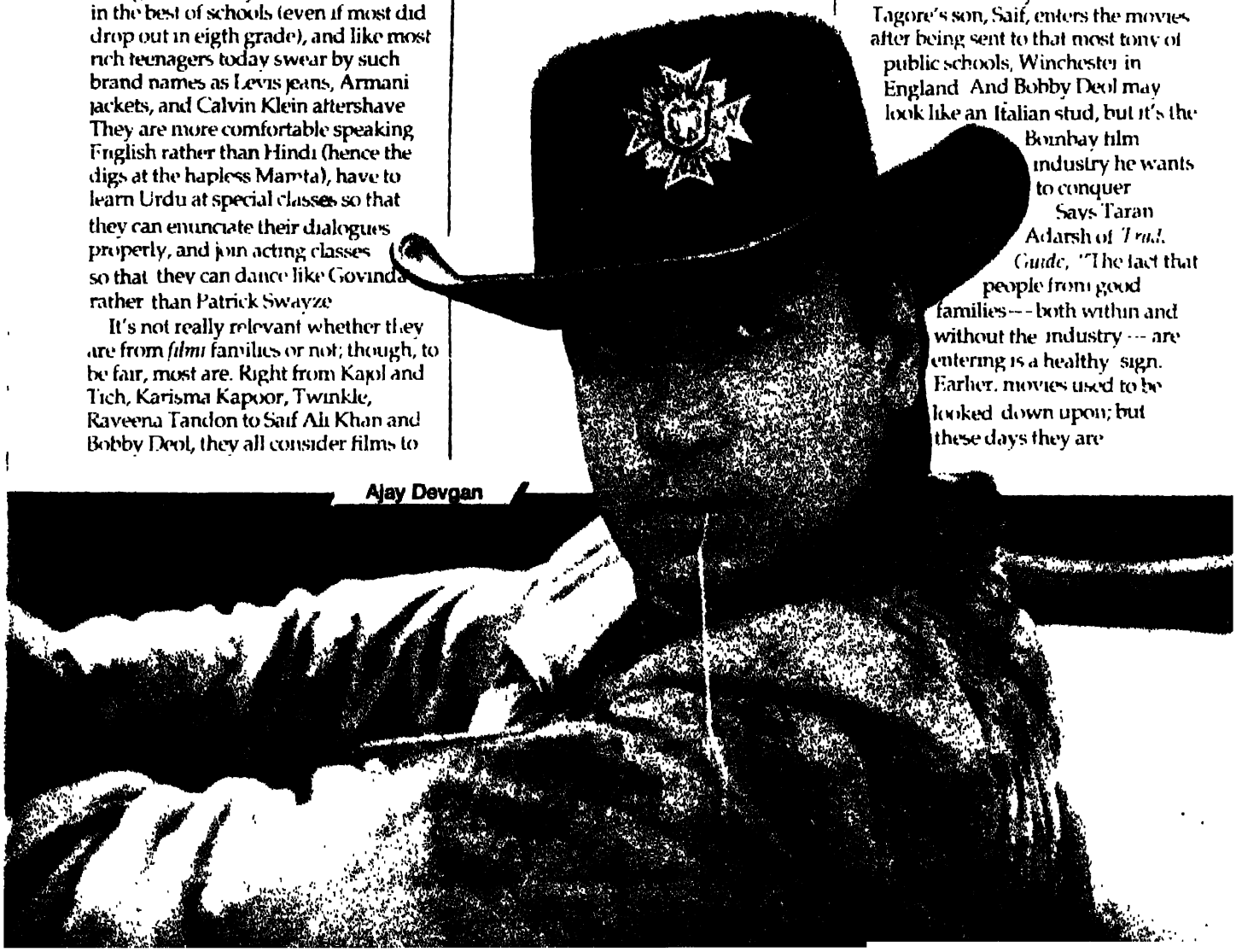
Today's stars are different. For the most part, they come from moneyed — or at least, upper middle-class — backgrounds, they have been educated in the best of schools (even if most did drop out in eigth grade), and like most rich teenagers today swear by such brand names as Levis jeans, Armani jackets, and Calvin Klein aftershave. They are more comfortable speaking English rather than Hindi (hence the digs at the hapless Mamta), have to learn Urdu at special classes so that they can enunciate their dialogues properly, and join acting classes so that they can dance like Govinda rather than Patrick Swayze.

It's not really relevant whether they are from *filmi* families or not; though, to be fair, most are. Right from Kajol and Tich, Karisma Kapoor, Twinkle, Raveena Tandon to Saif Ali Khan and Bobby Deol, they all consider films to be a family business. The Sunil Shettys and Shah Rukh Khans, who were not even tangentially associated with the industry, are rare.

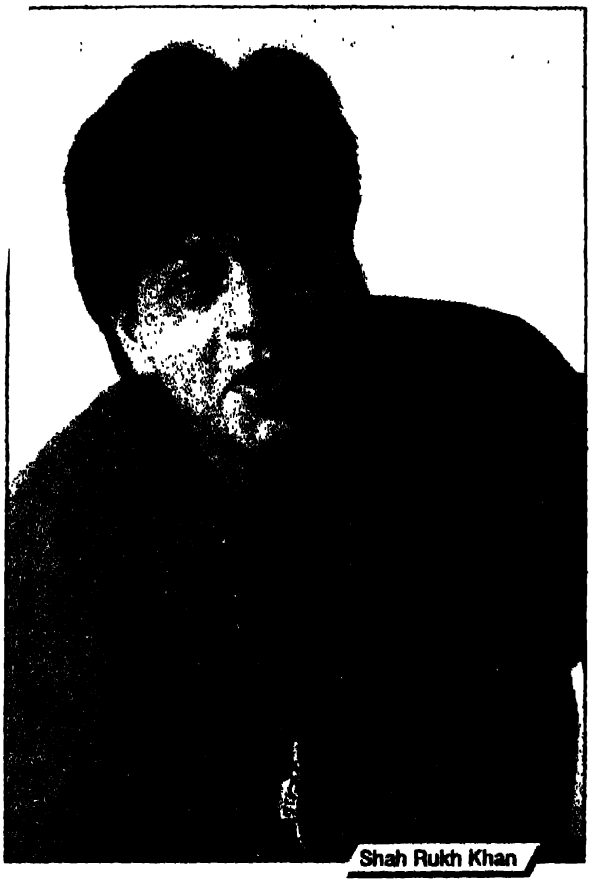
But what is important is that all of them come from the same kind of background: rich, Westernised, and very, very hip. Even ten years ago; their parents would have refused to let their sons and daughters enter films — no matter that they had made their livings from that very industry. Movies were regarded as a big, bad world, from which the young and innocent had to be shielded. When it came to the next generation, it was either business or law, medicine, or some such other noble profession that was required.

No longer. Today, Randhir Kapoor happily sits back and watches his daughter Karisma execute a bump-and-grind routine to *Sarkaye lyo khatiya*, producer Ravi Tandon gives his daughter Raveena all his support in her film career, and Rajesh Khanna happily waddles on to stage to present his daughter Twinkle an award for the best newcomer of the year. Sharmila Tagore's son, Saif, enters the movies after being sent to that most tony of public schools, Winchester in England. And Bobby Deol may look like an Italian stud, but it's the Bombay film industry he wants to conquer.

Says Taran Adarsh of *Trade Guide*, "The fact that people from good families — both within and without the industry — are entering is a healthy sign. Earlier, movies used to be looked down upon; but these days they are



Ajay Devgan



Shah Rukh Khan

regarded as a respectable profession."

The movies may have changed beyond recognition from those early days when the studios ruled the roost. But then, so have the stars who rule today.

The actor who best personifies the New Film Star is, of course, Shah Rukh Khan. A Delhi boy, who studied in the prestigious St Columbas School, and came from solid upper middle-class stock, Khan entered films via television. His parents were in business in Delhi — they owned a restaurant among other things — and Khan grew up believing that he would, in time, take over.

But fate had other plans in store for him. Shah Rukh, who had begun acting in television serials for a lark, found himself being offered film roles on that basis. And Khan, who had just lost his mother — his only surviving parent — decided to move to Bombay to get away from painful memories.

The rest, to repeat that well-worn cliche, is history. Today, Shah Rukh is the top-ranking hero in Bombay after the runaway success of *Dilwale*

Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, despite the fact that he doesn't fit the image of a conventional Hindi film star. Not for him, the *nakhras*, the huge entourage, the flashy clothes, or even the starry bungalow

Shah Rukh and wife Gauri live modestly in a flat that Khan has bought recently with his advertisement earnings (he is the one actor who hasn't priced himself out of the market). Gauri drives herself around in a Maruti, and both husband and wife are most comfortable in jeans and T-shirts. When Khan gets some time off, he'd much rather spend it playing video games at home rather than watching previews of his rivals' films to see how they re doing

For Shah Rukh, films are just a job even if it doesn't always last from nine to five. Once his shifts are over, he comes back and shuts the door against the movie business. He'd much rather settle down to a good book (an avid reader, he says he is quite happy reading even the signs put up in hotel rooms, if there's nothing else available) than attend a film party, dressed in his best Versace shirt. And his best friend, Chikki Pandey, is connected with films

only tangentially, he is Chunky's brother.

For the most part, Shah Rukh is just like any other young professional. He could just as easily be a corporate lawyer, a chartered accountant, even if he is an incredibly good-looking one

Sunil Shetty, on the other hand, is an entrepreneur along with being a hero The Shettys are restauranteurs and own a boutique, Mischief, in Bombay, and Sunil is still very involved in these enterprises For him, films are at best, just another career option. And even so, Shetty insists that he will retire as a hero in another two to three years He may turn producer then, if it seems like a lucrative prospect, but otherwise it would be back to business

The other Shetty of filmland, Shilpa, also comes from a business family And while she may announce that she will not rest until she is number one in the industry, Shilpa stumbled into films only by accident She was trying desperately to make it as a model, and was turned down by every agency because she wasn't considered good-looking enough.

When nothing seemed to work, Shetty decided to try her luck in the movies. Her mother was there to support her all the way, even accompanying Shilpa on to the sets, and soon *Baazigar* had made Shetty a recognisable face. Of late, Shilpa's career has ground to a halt, but Shetty is far from worried. After all, she could always complete her management course and join the family business

Even Jugal Hansraj, who first achieved fame as the child actor in Shekhar Kapoor's *Masoom*, says films are only one option open to him, not his entire life "I m interested in photography and have even studied it," he says. "I was thinking of a career in advertising, but when the opportunity to act came, I was only too happy to take it."

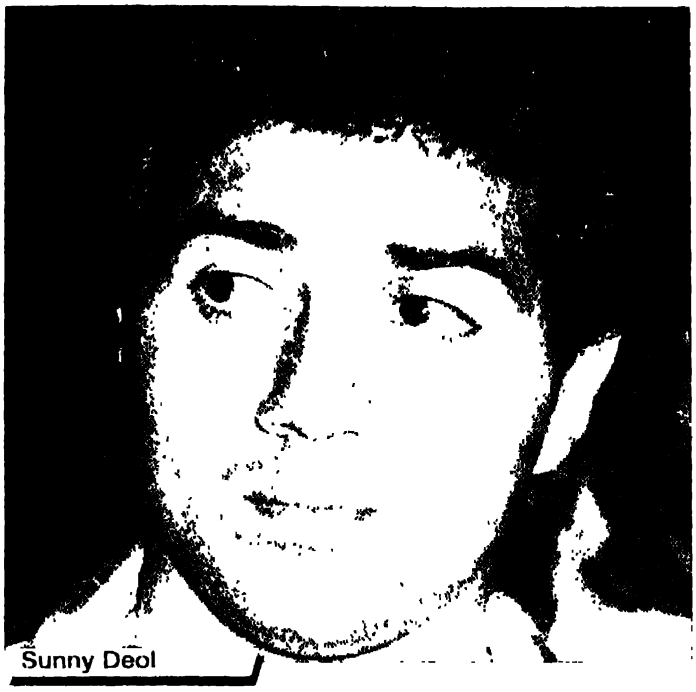
Among the heroines, Manisha Koirala is as far removed from filmland as you could possibly imagine A member of the Koirala family, which has given Nepal a Prime Minister and is part of the elite in that country, Manisha used to visit India quite often But films only became an option when Subhash Ghai offered to launch her in *Saudagar*.

To this day, Manisha considers herself a cut above such other heroines as Mamta Kulkarni and Urmila Matondkar, who don't come from as up-market a background as her. Unlike most Hindi film heroines of yester-year who disguised their rum and whiskey in Cokes, Manisha makes no secret of the fact that she enjoys a drink. And like any other liberated young woman in her twenties, she has had her share of affairs, all of which she readily admits to.

As does Pooja Bhatt. Daughter of Mahesh, the man who loves to shock, Pooja epitomises the New Woman. When she was in love with Kamal Sadanah, she moved in with him, not worrying for an instance as to what people -- and the gossip magazines would say. When her fancy hit upon Bobby Deol, she walked out on Sadanah. Then, Bobby began spending all his time (this was before *Barsaat*) in her house, even though his orthodox family disapproved heartily of Pooja.

But even Deol didn't last for long. Pooja, whose attention span appears to be as short as her hair, soon turned her sights on Sohail (Salman Khan's younger brother) and Bobby was history Today, Bhatt is very much a member of the Khan household, even if it is without the benefit of marriage, and keeps up her smoking-drinking-dancing lifestyle with nary a care about what the bad publicity will do to her.

Kajol is another one who doesn't care


Sunny Deol

Madhuri Dixit

about appearances. The first-born of Tanuja and Shomu Mukherjee, she is not the stuff of which Hindi film heroines were thought to be made of. She doesn't wax her upper lip runs around without make-up most of the time, wears glasses when she's off-camera, and spends her spare moments on the sets reading a book.

Even her relationship with Ajay Devgan has been conducted on fairly unconventional lines. Rather than hiding him as most actresses would have done ten years ago, Kajol came clean with her feelings for him. Not just that, she even cuddled up to him after shootings, blissfully unconcerned about who might be watching. And when she was presented with the Filmfare award for best actress, the first person Kajol thanked was her boyfriend, Ajay.

Like Kajol, Twinkle, too, is a child of the film industry. But her parents had little thought of her joining movies when they sent her off to boarding school in Panchgani after they split up. But like most industry brats, no sooner was Twinkle back in Bombay than she was dreaming of films, films and films.

If Raj Kapoor had been confronted with a daughter who wanted to be an actress, he would have probably reacted by marrying her off to the richest industrialist he could rustle up in a hurry. But Rajesh and Dimple reacted differently. Khanna, who had resolutely refused to let his wife act in movies after he married her, announced that he would back Twinkle all the way. And Kapadia (who has long been involved with Sunny) helped launch her daughter in a Deol home production with Bobby.

Not that the Kapoors themselves are sticking to Raj's views on this matter. His elder son, Randhir, for instance, took the bit between his teeth when daughter Karisma decided to enter films. Separated from his wife Babita, Randhir didn't have much control on his daughter's actions anyway. But it is unlikely that the film industry would have welcomed Karisma with open arms, if her father had made clear that he disapproved of her ambitions.

But Randhir had no intention of doing any such thing. He was there to give tips to his daughter all through the shooting of her first film, and was present at the premiere along with Babita, both very much the proud parents. And neither Randhir nor Babita have batted an eyelid even when their daughter has performed the most provocative of dances, no, not even when they verged on the vulgar.

Director Ravi Tandon offered the same behind-the-scenes support to his daughter, Raveena, though he didn't launch her in a home production as say Dharamendra did for his two sons, Bobby and Sunny. And Tandon, who was earlier reviled for her fat thighs and puppy fat, soon hit the big time with *Mohra*, and is today known as the *Mast mast* girl even though she hasn't had a hit for a long time.

But Raveena at least was connected with the film industry. Akshay Kumar, with whom her name has been frequently linked, wasn't. Having led a peripatetic life, which included stints in Bangkok (where he worked as a waiter) and in Calcutta (where he was the glorified peon in a travel agency) Akshay or Rajiv Bhatia as he was then, arrived in Bombay, trying to figure out a way to make a living.

He began as a photographer's assistant, but his good looks soon brought him modelling offers. Once his portfolio was respectable enough, Akshay decided to try his luck in films, after all, he'd tried everything else. And much to his surprise and everyone else's, he soon became the heartthrob of the masses.

But then, with his designer jeans and sweatshirt, rippling muscles acquired after hour-long work-outs on the Juhu beach, and his international background, Akshay epitomises stardom today. As does Sait, with his English education and his Nawabi background. Or even Karisma, who's happiest in the Harvey Nichols department store, splurging on such Italian designers as Giorgio Armani and Dolce and Gabbana.

The days of the Madhubalas, Waheeda Rehman and Dilip Kumars are long over. Long live the Twinkles and the Kajols. ■

EXTRACT

Reconstructing the SCANDAL

A new book by journalist Sanjay Kapoor traces the history of the hawala affair

August 1993. It was just a month ago, that Vijaya Rama Rao had taken over as the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation from a dapper Vijay Karan.

An officer of Indian Police Service, Andhra Pradesh cadre, Vijaya Rama Rao, came to Delhi with a big reputation. While he had no experience of working in the CBI, he had acquired investigative experience in the state CID. The two strongest points in his favour were that he was a man of very high integrity and that he had the ear of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Another great advantage for him was that he had not been posted in Delhi in the past, he was in Albert Camus' words, the classic *Outsider*.

One day he came across a sketchy report about the 'Jain hawala scandal' and how the CBI had been sitting on it for the last two years. Vijaya Rama Rao was outraged. He did not know what

CBI Director, Vijaya Rama Rao, leaving Supreme Court after the hawala hearing

Extracted from** Bad Money, Bad Politics* ***by Sanjay Kapoor; Published by Alka Paperbacks; Price Rs 95

the newspapers were referring to. He was also furious with his officers for not telling him about the scandal.

That day as soon as he reached his office in the CGO complex he began informally asking his officers about the scandal. Most of the officers feigned ignorance. The memory of O.P. Sharma's exit from the agency in unsavoury circumstances was still fresh in their minds. They knew that hawala was bad news and it was better to stay away from it.

An exasperated Vijaya Rama Rao, called a meeting of all the senior officers and asked them what they knew about the so called 'Jain hawala scandal'. In bits and pieces information began to flow in. Vijaya Rama Rao wanted to know the status of the diary. He was informed that Jain's diary was a part of the court records and it was safely lying in a brown packet in *maalkhana*. Assured of the fact that the diary was safe, Vijaya Rama Rao knew that the case could be reconstructed. He also wanted to know whether Surender Jain's statement had been recorded. The Director was told about the existence of the O.P. Sharma bribery case and how Jain was a witness in that. Rama Rao was also informed that they did not want to rub Jain on the wrong side, lest he became hostile.

Vijaya Rama Rao saw through their defense of inaction of more than two years, and got down to work. Rao carried on with the meeting till well over midnight after he had understood the nuances of the case.

The hawala scandal was handed over to Amod Kanth, another high profile policeman from Delhi cadre. Kanth took the case after the diary was retrieved from the recesses of the CBI.

After the press conference by Ram Jethmalani, a public interest litigation was filed in the Supreme Court. The petitioners behind the PIL were Vineet Narayan, Rajender Puri, Kamini Jaiswal and Prashant Bhushan. The lawyer for the petitioners was Anil Dewan.

Dewan who had little experience of such matters was recognised as a man of integrity. His specialisation may have been company matters, but this did not stop him from putting up a spirited performance when the matter came up at the admission stage in front of the Supreme Court. The bench had Chief Justice, Venkatachalliah and Justice S.P. Bharucha. Anil Dewan in his petition had taken the help of the evidence garnered through newspaper reports (specially *Blitz*, August 10, 1991) and the video tape made by Vineet Narayan.

S.K. Jain (top) and N.K. Jain (below): Brothers in crime

The petitioners wanted their petition to be investigated in accordance with law. Besides appointing a special prosecuter and booking the guilty in the case, the PIL also wanted the court to ensure the sealing and securing of *panchanamas* and all seized articles and documents, from the aforesaid four Jains specially the books of accounts diaries and loose documents. The PIL also pleaded that the police diary in which the preliminary interrogation of J.K. Jain, from whose house diaries had been seized, should also be taken into possession.

The Supreme Court asked the petitioners to amend their PIL and

Justice Venkatachalliah

come back. The pages of Jain diary and a few respondents were removed. The revised PIL was presented in front of the Supreme Court on December 15, 1993. Justice Bharucha, who had a close look at the PIL was disturbed by the suggestions that Jain's statement had not been recorded after the raid in May 3, 1991

The SC which began in a conservative fashion, asked the CBI to furnish its reply to the charges levelled against it in the petition It also wanted the documents, if they had indeed been recovered from Jain's house, to be put in a sealed cover and made available to the court. The petitioners could see light at the end of the tunnel.

The CBI had been sent into a tizzy by the Supreme Court order Most of the senior officers were divided about how they should tackle the situation The PIL had given them a fair idea about the extent of understanding of the petitioners. They were definitely not being themselves on merely newspaper reports or a video cassette. They had a lot more Even Vijaya Rama Rao wanted everything to be given to the court.

The counter affidavit filed by the CBI, by and large, endorsed the litany of allegations levelled in the Public Interest Litigation. CBI tied itself into knots when it told the court that they had tried to interrogate Surender Jain and J.K. Jain, but they avoided to appear before them and even went abroad The CBI could secure their presence only in September 1993, through the immigration authorities It was as clear as day, that the CBI had stirred only after Jethmalani addressed his press conference But the admission by the CBI, that there was a diary and the coded entries, signified a major improvement on what was earlier being palmed off as truth. The battle to take the matter to its logical conclusion, had just begun

The CBI in its counter affidavit lent considerable credibility to the diary. It revealed that S.K. Jain had taken the plea that the payments had been made from the proceeds of black money generated by his company. Jain, by taking this line, did not want punitive action against himself under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA)

J.K Jain, his employee, had told the Income Tax Authorities that Rs 58 9 lakh in cash and Rs 10 5 lakh in Indira Vikas Patra was his black money The CBI affidavit did not throw any light about how J K Jain generated such huge monies, it also did not show how Surender Jain countenanced his employee making so much of money.

Surender Jain told his inquisitors, that the entries had been made by J.K Jain at his behest The CBI was very coy about revealing the identity of those who figured in the dairy as codes This was in spite of the fact, that the names of those who had received money from Jain had been bandied around in the Press and there had been no denials

The petitioners continued to punch holes in the defense put up by the CBI. The counter affidavit mentioned the fact that even though the story had appeared in *Blitz* on August 10, 1991, the agency had done practically nothing. The counter affidavit also alleged that an attempt is being made to help Jain wriggle out of TADA. FERA and the application of COFEPOSA.

CBI's initial diffidence to follow up on the case was slowly giving way to greater purpose. Amod Kanth, travelled to London in April to record Mohini Jain's statement Mohini brought up the London link of the hawala chain Mohini refused to offer much help and the CBI found it difficult to establish dual criminality. Even in Dubai, where they had gone to examine Tarikbhai, the CBI team did not meet with much success and came back disappointed.

Surender Jain was busy in a damage control exercise. He was meeting his friends in the government who had

Vineet Narayan (top) and Rajender Puri (below): Two of the petitioners

some access to Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao This had become a pattern of sorts for the harassed Jains Whenever the case came up for hearing in the Supreme Court, or, there was a flurry of activity, they would go around building support for their case

Jain also displayed moral indignation when criminality was attributed to their business activities. Jain even wrote a letter to Madhu Limaye, the veteran socialist leader, clarifying his position on payments to Bhartiya Janata Party leader, L K Advani. Limaye in a well argued piece in *Mainstream* had linked the payments to politicians with the security of the country.

Similarly, Jains had taken unkindly to representation by the General Secretary of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) where he had protested against the manner in which Jains walked into the offices of the public sector undertakings well after office hours. The trade union leader had also alleged that Jains never entered their names in the visitors' diary The net outcome of the representation was that Surender wrote a stinker to the Chief Executive of the company and demanded action against the office bearer of NTPC union His clout was evidenced when the trade union leader was transferred out of the unit, where he was working

By September 1993 Surender was hopeful that both the courts and the agency would take a lenient view towards him. His powerful patrons had assured him that it was a matter of time before his misery ended

The SC bench presided by Chief Justice Venkatachalliah kept tabs on the progress made by the CBI Every time the matter came up for hearing in the SC, it generated considerable enthusiam, but the court could not break the impasse Around the month of October, the SC bench of Chief Justice first revealed its thinking on the matter, when they began talking of handing the matter to the special prosecutor or a retired judge The petitioners had their own views about it The stalemate continued Soon Chief Justice Venkatachalliah retired The next time the scandal came for hearing, there was a remarkable change in circumstances.

The case found itself in the bench of Justice J S Verma Justice S P Bharucha and Justice Sen Justice Verma who had a reputation for being a tough no-nonsense judge immediately took charge of the case He was outraged by the manner in which

CBI was perceiving the hawala scandal What took the apex court's goat was the manner in which the CBI had employed dual standards to treat the evidence that it had collected in the last few years The court felt that even a "*thanedar* would do a better job" "There is something rotten in the State of Denmark", is how the three judges reacted to the CBI's handling of the case

The attitude that the bench adopted during this hearing put the fear of God in the CBI Scathing in their remarks, the SC bench said, "If we are meant only for punishing people for petty offenses and letting people who spend lakhs on birthdays go scott-free, we had better close down the courts" Justice Verma said, "It is hard to believe that one can perpetuate such a fraud and get away with it" The tough judge felt that the Jains were too hot to be handled and the only way to keep them quiet was to allow them to do what they wanted to

The Supreme Court's comment sent shockwaves in the government The CBI director, Vijaya Rama Rao also countenanced the changed circumstances and was bracing up for the worst. The Supreme Court was not finished with the investigating agency The hearing was called the next day

Balram Jakhar: Another accused

The judges made it clear that they would not sit idle and allow the government to carry on with its business of 'cover up' "One thing is clear, and beyond doubt that there have been significant periods of inaction Who is responsible is a different question", said Verma He further went on to add that the case would be taken to its 'logical conclusion'.

Now the SC decided to have weekly hearings of the case. The idea was to monitor the progress of the case and put the foot on the pedal so that the investigation gets accelerated. On December 5, the Supreme Court came to the conclusion that there was no other agency which could fill in for the CBI They took an undertaking from CBI director, Vijaya Rama Rao, that he would personally look after the investigation. Another key official revenue secretary, M.P. Sivaraman, looking after cases pertaining to income tax and foreign exchange violations was also drafted into the probe In spite of the tough attitude displayed by the Courts, the SC bench had a very high regard for the two officers The countdown for Jain's conviction had begun

The CBI, which now came under the microscope of the SC, had little room for manipulation While the middle rung officers had their reservations about the case, Vijaya Rama Rao got down to giving shape to the diktats of the SC For almost a week, Rao equipped himself with every aspect of the case, and came to the conclusion, that the

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CACHE

hawala scandal could be seen as a case of corruption. This line of action was zeroed upon, after the CBI came to the conclusion, that they could not make much headway if the foreign angle continued to take precedence over the issue of bribing public servants.

A special team was formed under the Special Director, Amod Kanth, DIG, was expected, to do the bulk of the job. The CBI discovered a truth which was always known to those who mattered in the capital. The premier investigation team found that Jain was an agent of some foreign companies, and therefore he had something to do with the award of contracts in the power and steel sectors. For the first time, the CBI came to finding out the mystery behind the horn of plenty which was used for corrupting every one around

The CBI found that Jain's companies had won more than 200 contracts in the coal, steel and power sector While the registering of Preliminary Enquirey (PE) under the Prevention of Corruption Act was a major improvement, there were still fears that the case may just loose its way. Around this time, the CBI sent a report to the Directorate of Enforcement recommending action against 15 persons including S K. Jain, his brothers B R. Jain and N K. Jain and employee J K Jain All this while, the two agencies did not have the benefit of the statement that CBI had recorded of the Jains In fact the Enforcement agencies had reacted violently, when they were dragged for manifest inactivity in the case. The truth was that the CBI had not sent the statement of J.K Jain, made after the raid, to any of the agencies.

V.C. Shukla, one of the accused, with P.V. Narasimha Rao

L.K. Advani: Caught in the scam

The CBI had made considerable progress in linking Jain to the many deals that the government had awarded his companies The CBI had managed to acquire files of 122 contracts, which the BECO and his other companies had got

After the preliminary investigation was over, the CBI found material to register a regular case of corruption against him Charges under Prevention of Corruption Act and FERA were slapped against Jains.

Vijaya Rama Rao summoned his junior officers and wanted Jains to be arrested so that they did not go around tampering evidence Rao was told that there was no need to arrest Jain as he was not a hardened criminal and he could be called whenever he was needed. Rao was not convinced, Jains had to be arrested. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC-741	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 743	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 327	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-323	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/131	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
PF-301	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 721	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2 181	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2-19[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	
BANGALORE					
IC-771	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W-511	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-305/1[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-40[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-544	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-769	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VF 106	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BOMBAI					
IC-67[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W-202	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2-102	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-273	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 21[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 309	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-305	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-10[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2 104	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
IC-261	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
S2 026	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-304	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-402	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S-405	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
S2-006	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-302	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 856	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
4S-816	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S-812	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-701	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PF-301/305	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
M9-304/121	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
D5-601	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-703	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-703	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
9W 611	[illegible]	daily	9W 612	[illegible]	[illegible]
PF 30[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	4S 011	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 816/8[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4S 81[illegible]/815	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 3[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 32[illegible]	1610	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 7[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2120	[illegible]
9[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
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JAIPUR					
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JORHAT					
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LILABARI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 345	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
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M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 342	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D2 102	0700	1	D2 401	1630	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

BAHRAIN					
RJ-185	1410	4	RJ 184	[illegible]	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL-876	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
BANGKOK					
KB-105	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 106	1020	[illegible]
			KB 106	1240	[illegible]
[illegible]	0625	[illegible]	TG 315	1240	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	1105	[illegible]	IC 732	1740	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	1105	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TG 314	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 731	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 406	1915	5	AI 405	[illegible]	5
BUCHAREST					
RO 074	2130	5 7	RO 075	1100	5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 698	173	[illegible]	BG-697	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG 692	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG-691	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 692	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 994	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2020	[illegible]
DOHA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
BA 214	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
SU [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	SU [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PARO					
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Himgiri (Jammu Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Gorakhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express [illegible]		
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah. 3503535-37

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Romi Kapil Dev

First achieved fame: As a national hate object well, at least, the hate object of every young Indian female below the age of 20, when she hooked 'Haryana hurricane', Kapil Dev. Their engagement pictures—with Romi looking pretty in pink and sporting an enviable rock—made it to every newspaper and magazine, and the teenybopper brigade was less than thrilled. After all, Romi may have been presentable enough as far as Bombay college kids went, but surely India's foremost all-rounder deserved better.

Did he? Kapil certainly didn't think so. He was delirously happy at having convinced Romi to take him on, and clearly believed that she was the best thing to have happened to him. And that's not to say that Dev's standards were low, prominent among his earlier dates was the ravishing actress, Sarika.

So, were they well suited?: Depends on what you mean by well-suited. As far as socio-economic background went, they were miles apart.

Kapil was the scion of a lower middle-class Punjabi Khatri family which dabbled in business and had fallen on hard times since his father's early demise. His brothers had raised him well— one of them even

Marshneill Gavaskar: Devoted wife

contessed that no matter how hard times were, he always ensured that Kapil, the sportsman of the family, had enough milk to drink—but he didn't have such benefits as a public school education. So, he was less than fluent in English and very uncomfortable on the cocktail party circuit, or even at five-star restaurants.

In joke That Kapil and another Punjabi team member were on tour in England, where they would spend every morning scouring the local papers for news from back home. One day, they saw a headline reading, "More killed in Punjab." Both players were shocked. One turned to the other and asked, "*Yaar, more* (a peacock in Punjabi) *nu kyon marnyaa* (Why did they kill the peacock?)?"

And what about Romi? She was the quintessential Bombay girl, who had grown up in an affluent upper middle-class household. Well-educated, poised and articulate, she was everything that Kapil was not. Perhaps that was, in fact, what

attracted him to her.

Yet, in some ways the couple appeared to be made for each other. Both of them were from good Punjabi stock, both subscribed to the same conservative family values, and both were entirely committed to making their marriage work, no matter how much the cricket groupies wished otherwise

Did Romi prove to be the regulation cricket wife?: Well, yes and no. She was certainly devoted enough to make an appearance at nearly every match that Kapil played; much like that other symbol of wifely devotion, Marshneill (Sunil) Gavaskar And she would even accompany Kapil on some of his trips abroad.

But unlike some other willow wives, Romi, like Sharmila Tagore before her, managed to carve out a career and a persona for herself as well While Sharmila was one of the foremost actresses of her time, Romi took on the job of managing Dev Features, a syndication agency part-owned by her husband, and was by all accounts quite successful at it

So, is Romi the hard-nosed businessperson of the two?: She certainly more than pulls her weight as far as business goes, but Kapil appears to be the more driven of the two Romi may have the management skills, but it is Kapil who susses out the business opportunities and explores them to their mutual profit

What does Romi suss out?: The houses of the rich and famous, of course She hosts a television programme that takes viewers into the living rooms of celebrities, and does quite a commendable Indian version of *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*

Is everything perfect in Paradise, then?: Not until recently. Kapil and Romi's lasting regret was that they hadn't managed to have any children of their own Romi had had several miscarriages, and it was beginning to look like the couple would have to give up on their attempts to start a family

Happy ending: Some months back Romi gave birth to a little girl, much to the surprise of the media her pregnancy had been kept a well-guarded secret And now, Kapil and Romi, who have always lived by the axiom that two is company, are learning that three makes for absolute bliss ■

Romi and Kapil Dev: From the album

Sharmila Tagore: Not just Mrs Pataudi

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 – April 20

Pending work must be completed on schedule. Garner information about stocks. Keep your contacts with foreign representatives fully buzzing, announces Ganesha. The moon's first quarter will also lead to buoying, soaring conception and artistic pursuits. Do socialise and keep yourself busy.

Taurus
April 21 – May 20

You will feel revitalised, ready to take on the world single-handedly. However, it would be much better to have all the support you can. Gains accrue on or before May 7. Do make it a point to socialise: do the corporate rounds, attend meetings and functions. Travel and trips on the cards.

Gemini
May 21 – June 20

You will be in good spirits. Luck and good timing make you a winner. But expenses will be heavy. Protect your good name. Lost things will be found. An old acquaintance, a relative pops in your life. News, views, documents, contracts, letters and calls will decidedly shape your future this week.

Cancer
June 21 – July 20

You will be riding high on money, social whirligig, status and success. You will exchange love, information and joy with older people. Love will burst the banks and that should be exciting. Most importantly you will have a sharp sense of direction and motivation, so vital for triumph.

Leo
July 21 – August 21

All arrows point to pressure, responsibility, prestige, career, business and professional relationships, leaderships, and above all, deadlines and dramatic issues. On May 5, Jupiter becomes retrogade, so give your best shot now. Learn to cheer and motivate yourself and others as well. That is the key.

Virgo
August 22 – September 22

A long distance call, letter, fax, contact could mean travel, clothing, childbirth, fashions, computer programming, collaborations, a political or a charitable project working happily for you. Your artistic and culinary talents come to the fore, Ganesha says a week to move and get things done.

Libra
September 23 – October 22

You will deal in words as others in small change and foreign exchange. Do repair or have repaired, mechanical objects. The astro menu has unique possibilities of loans, funds, joint-finances and public issues. If there are any loopholes in the law, they will be corrected so walk the narrow path of virtue.

Scorpio
October 23 – November 22

Domestic adjustments are possible, so also travel. Alliances of all sorts, that is from simple companionship to elaborate collaborations and platonic admirations are foretold, says Ganesha. Clandestine arrangements also come in the same partnership bracket. Avoid unnecessary hassles.

Sagittarius
November 23 – December 20

Attention revolves round job, health, financing, pets, buying and selling, and this will continue right through May. You could well be in a mood to replenish your wardrobe. Romance and dilly dallying may not go well together, so, be firm of purpose and direct in your dealings.

Capricorn
December 21 – January 19

Time to burn the candle at both ends. Time also paradoxically, to spruce yourself, go in for fashions, foibles and even fads. Photography, management, painting, music are a few choice hobbies, which could be a vocation. Mercury, in good placing with Neptune, leads to extra work.

Aquarius
January 20 – February 18

The homefront, property, assets in general, s/v shares, jewellery, vehicles, are highlighted. Help from known and unknown quarters comes to you and that changes everything for you. Get set to travel, have a home away from home. Enemies will try to bully and cow you down by abrasive tactic.

Pisces
February 19 – March 20

Like the Aquarians, the puzzles fall in place for you. Optimism and faith will work wonders because of Jupiter-Neptune combination. You will communicate with vivacity and verve and thus put your message/ideas/point of view across. Travel and commuting will be unusually important, even imperative.

BIRTHDAYS

April 28: Saturn trine Pluto leads to happiness, though instant success may not be quite there. Those in chemicals, construction and arts do well.

April 29: Mercury trine Neptune is excellent for writers, teachers, lawyers, musicians, painters, filmstars and directors. You will come up in life whatever be your station.

April 30: Moon trine Uranus will boost your earnings, make you sensitive to public opinion and relationships and thus, you will be popular.

May 1: Moon trine Venus is a superb trine which leads to comforts, luxuries, money, buying, selling, leasing, housing and even a marriage. This is a time to start cracking. Get your priorities right.

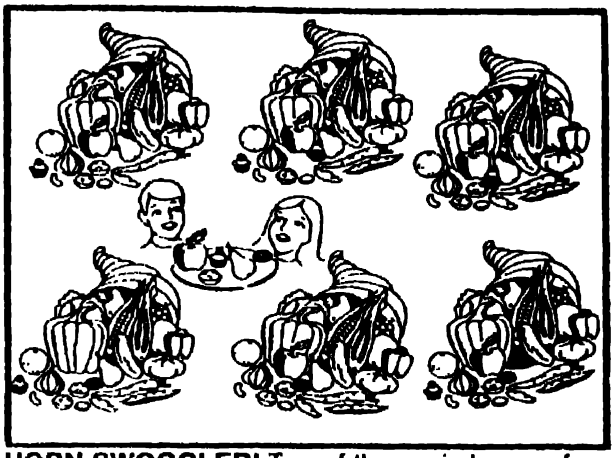
May 2: Moon-Neptune square speaks of tensions and even psychological posers in relationships. Think staright, talk staright but expect others to be narrow-minded.

May 3: This full moon is well aspected by Jupiter, the planet of money, joy, wisdom and good luck, and therefore, these you will have and enjoy.

May 4: Moon conjunction Pluto is an exceptionally powerful conjunction for industrial bankers, politicians, producers, detectives, spies, military leaders and corporate executives.

JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN

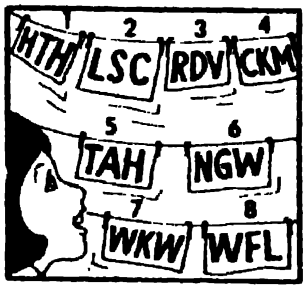


HORN SWOGGLER! Two of these six horns of plenty look enough alike to be twins. Which two is for you to decide

SUN AGE! Take a half, a third and a fourth of this preteen's age, and the total will be one more than the age itself. What age is that? Time: One minute

The preteen's age is 12

WASH OUT! Unlikely as it may seem, each grouping of letters aired out at right is taken from an English word. No 1, HTH, for instance, is taken from the word EIGHTH Just for fun, see if you can discover a source word for at least one of the seven That's right, just one

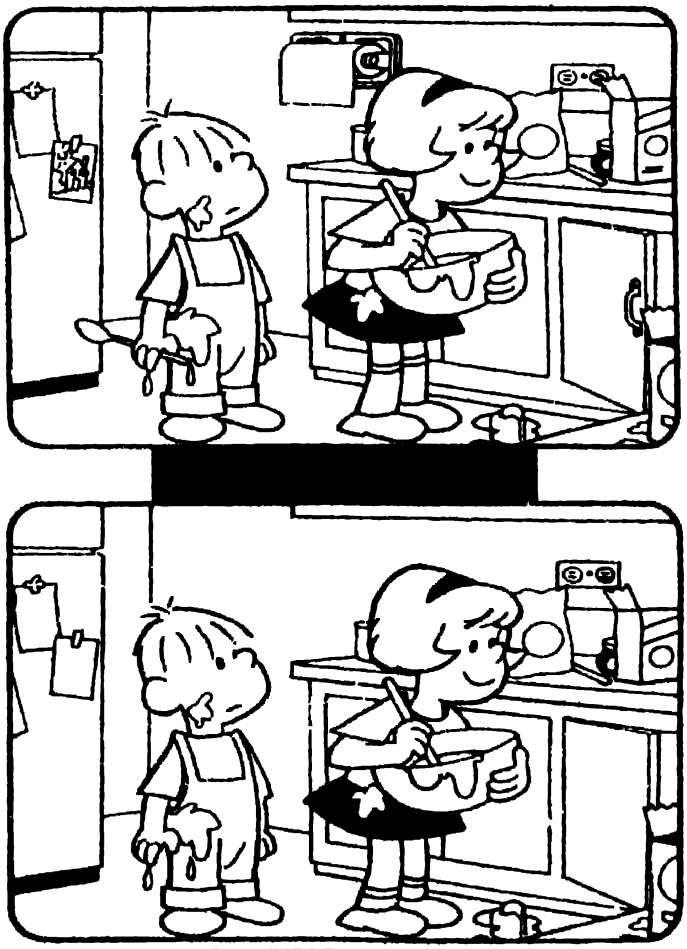


Perhaps you can do better, but be forewarned it is far from easy

More than one answer may be possible in some instances

1 Eighth 2 Hoolscap 3 Aardvark 4 Blackmail 5 Cheetah 6 Kingworm 7 Awkward 8 Snowflake Or did you find others?

HOCUS-FOCUS



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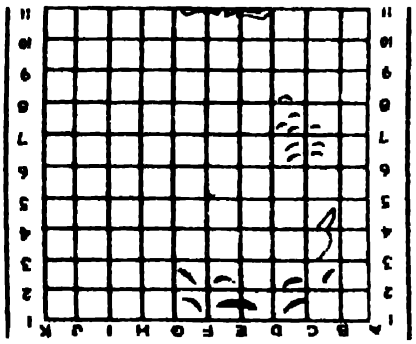
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1 Picture is missing 2. Spoon is missing. 3. Paper towels are missing 4. Socks are shorter 5. Handle is missing 6. Box is different



FUSS & FEATHERS DRAWING CARD

It may seem like a lot of fuss and feathers, but its worth it to see what's hidden in the diagram shown. A sharp pencil and ruler will help.

Begin at intersection 9-D, draw to 9-G to 10-J, 9-I,9-J, 8-I, 8-J,7-I, 7-J, 4-G, 4-E,5-C, 4-D, 3-D. 2-B, 4-A, 5-B, 8-B to 9-D.

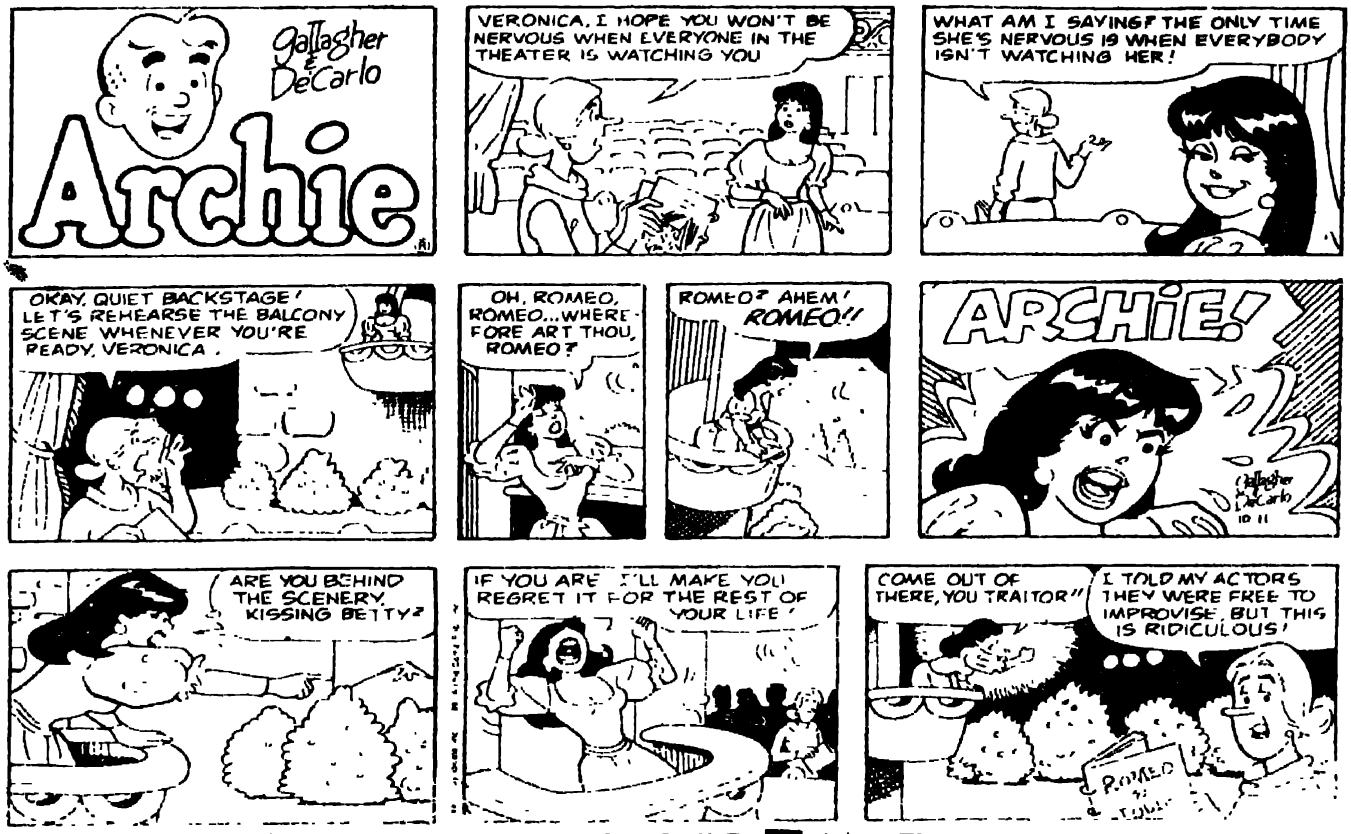
Draw from 6-D to 9-G, 10-F, 9-F, 10-E, 9-E. Add 10-E to 11-E. Add 10-F to 11-F.

Begin at 2-B, draw to 1-D,1-F, 2-H, 4-J, 5-J, 6-I, 5-I, 3-G, 3-C Add 1-D to 3-E, 4-E, 3-D Draw 2-H, 3-G, 4-G. Add 1-F to 4-F. Draw 3-I to 4-H, 5-H, 5-I,5-I, 4-J.

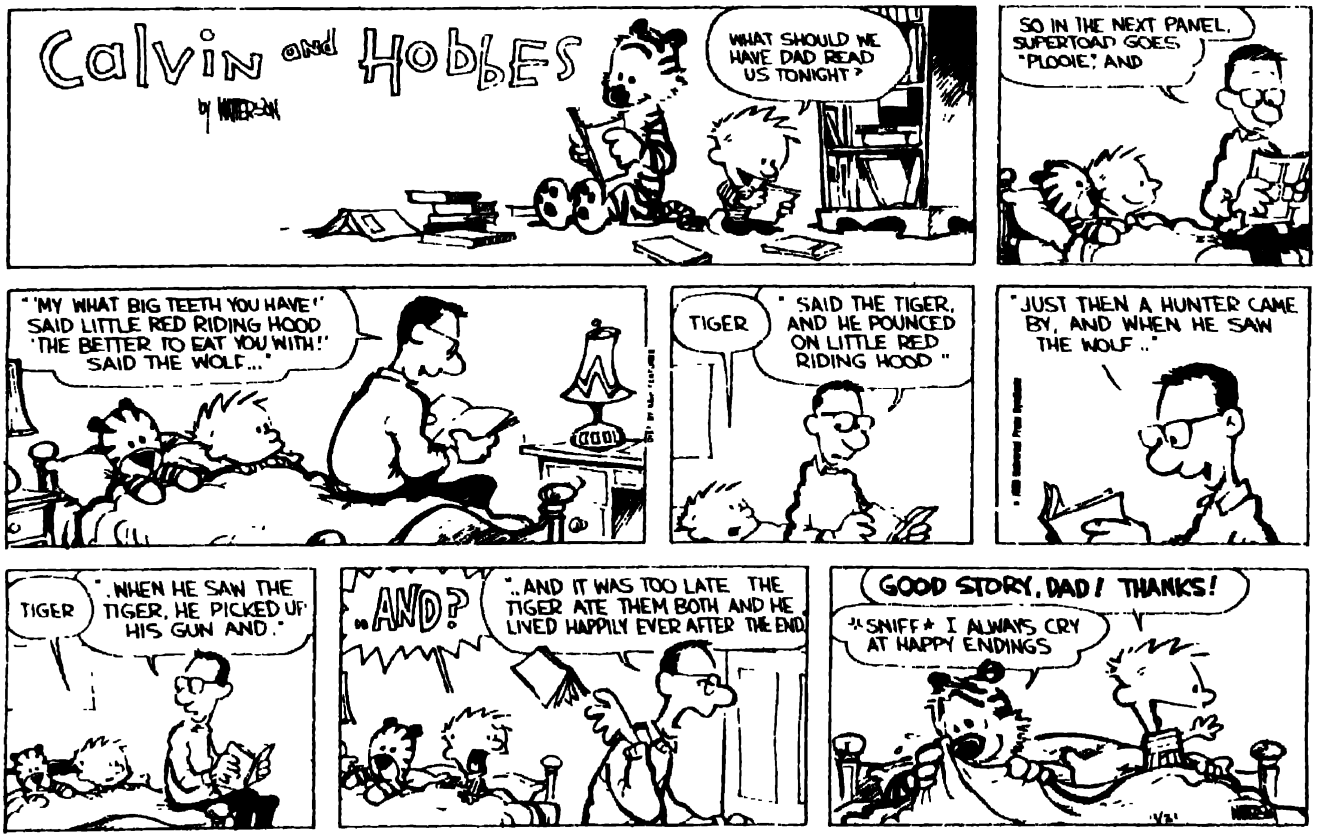
Add 5-F to 6-G, 6-F, 7-G, 7-F, 8-G, 8-F. Draw 6-H to 7-I. Add 7-H to 8-I. Also 8-H, 9-I Add 4-A to 4-B. Then 4-D to 4-E. Also 3-C to 4-D.

Draw small circles below 3-C

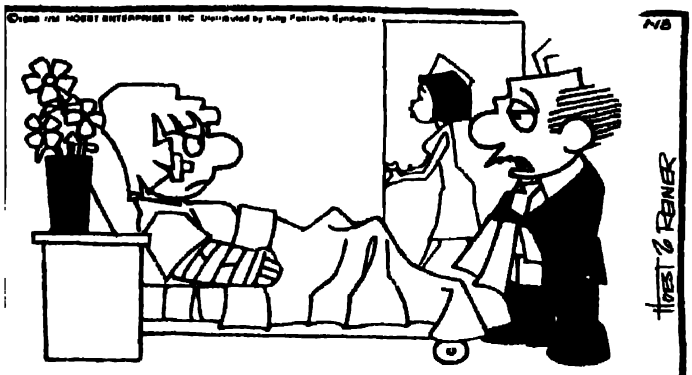
ARCHIE



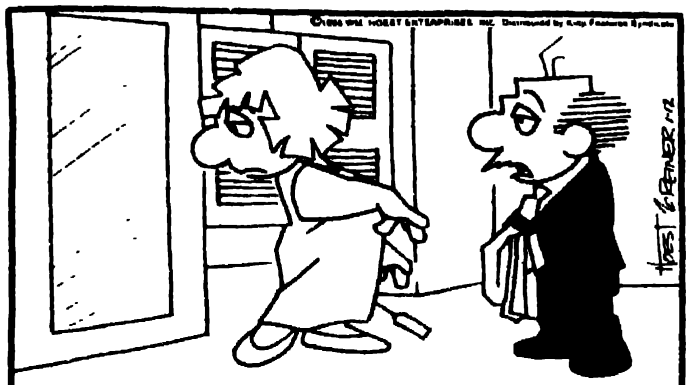
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



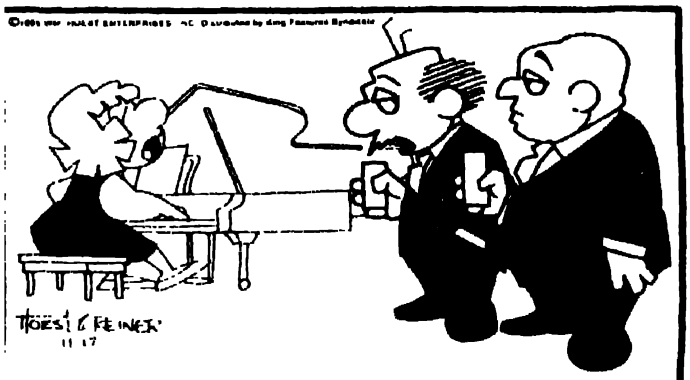
THE LOCKHORNS



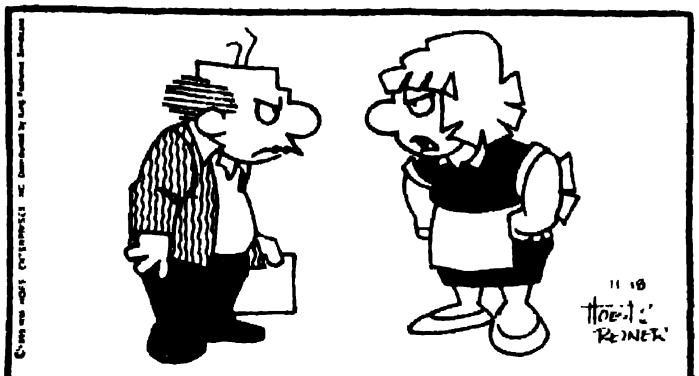
"THE CAR IS FIXED GOOD AS NEW, LORETTA ... WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?"



"IT'S TOO BIG AROUND THE PRICE TAG."

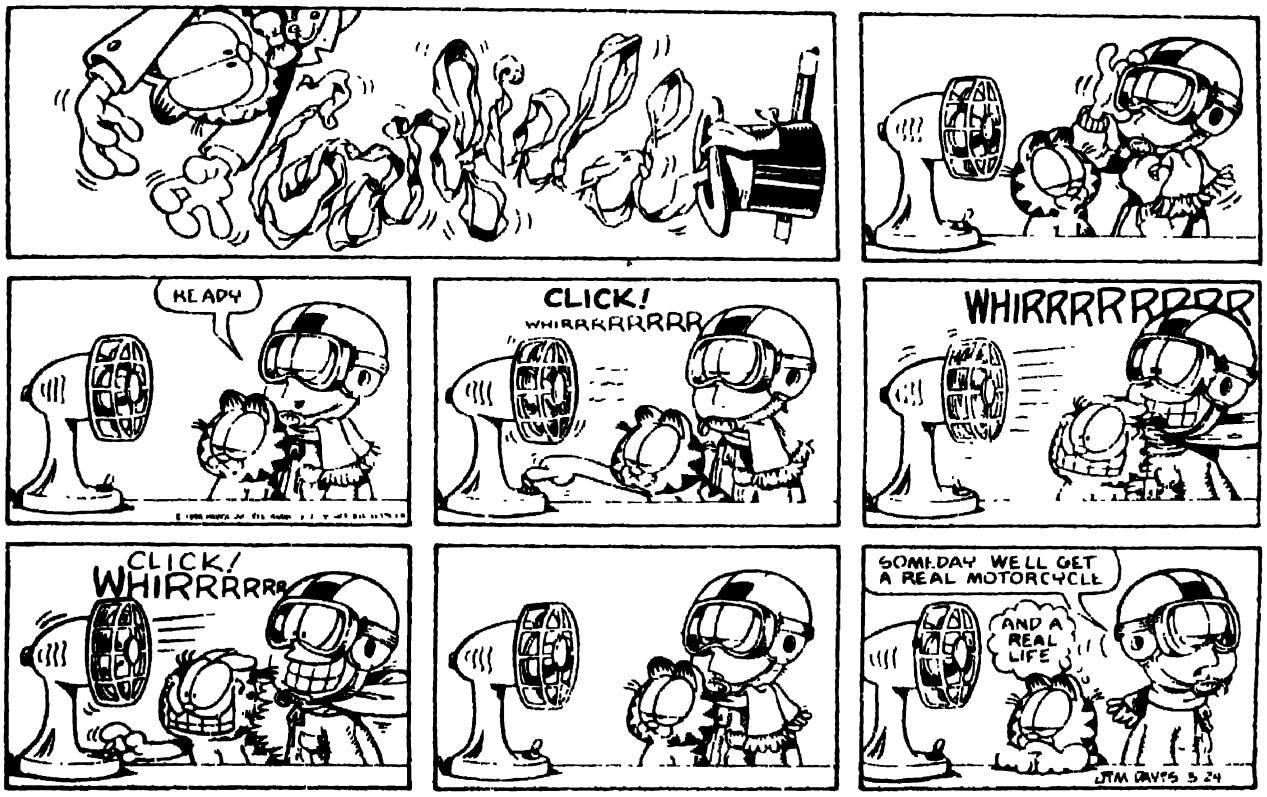


"LORETTA'S STILL TAKING SINGING LESSONS AND I'M STILL TAKING TRANQUILIZERS."

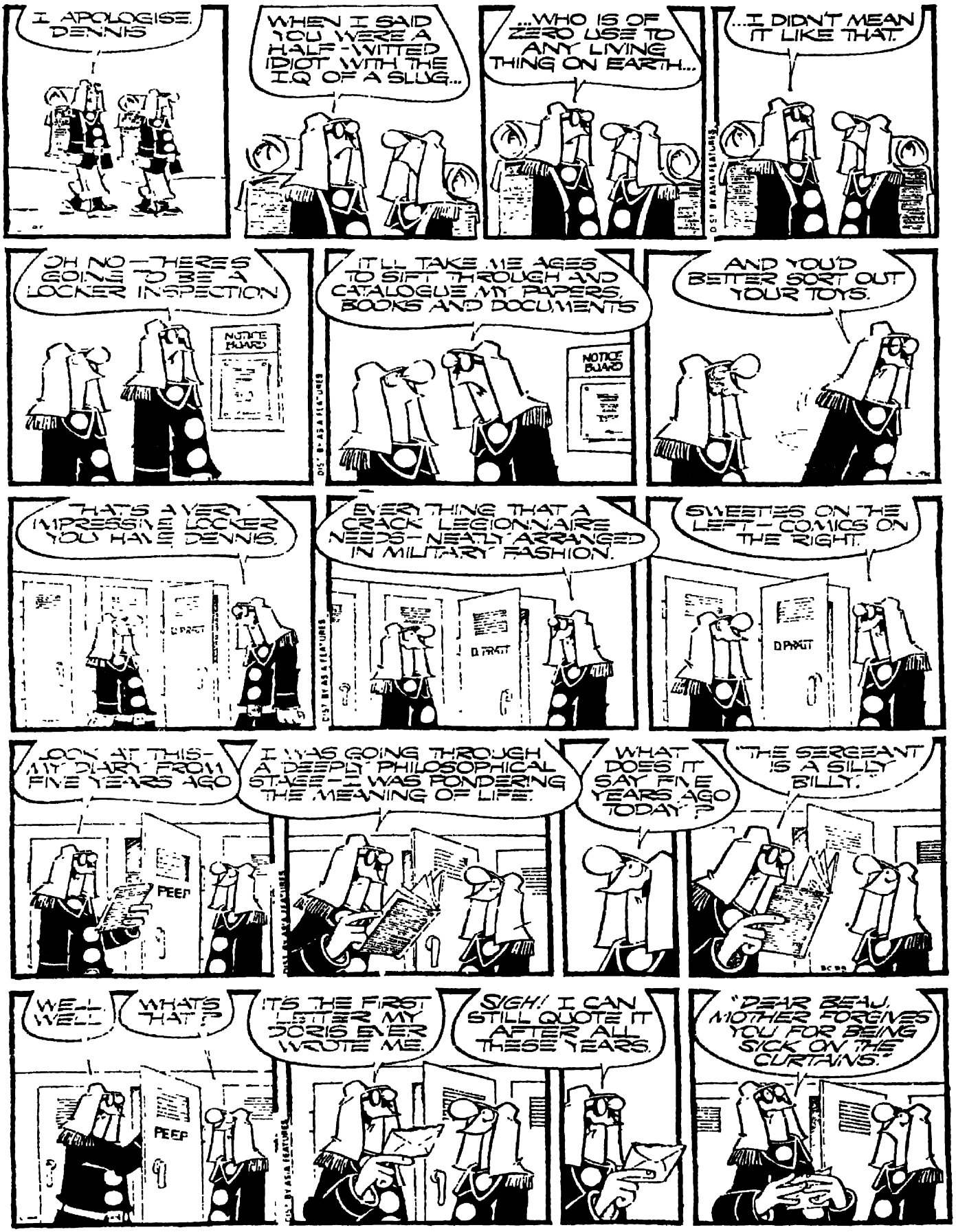


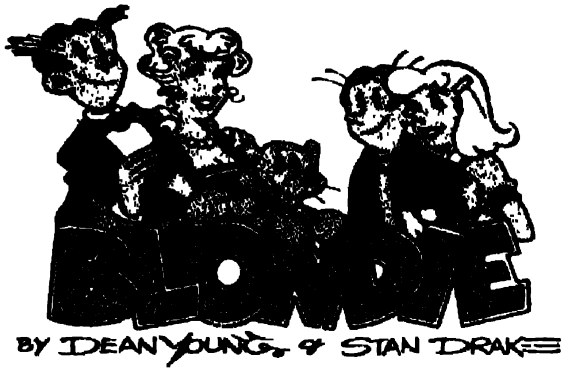
"HOW COME WHEN YOU DO IT, IT'S 'CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM,' BUT WHEN I DO IT, IT'S 'BASHING'?"

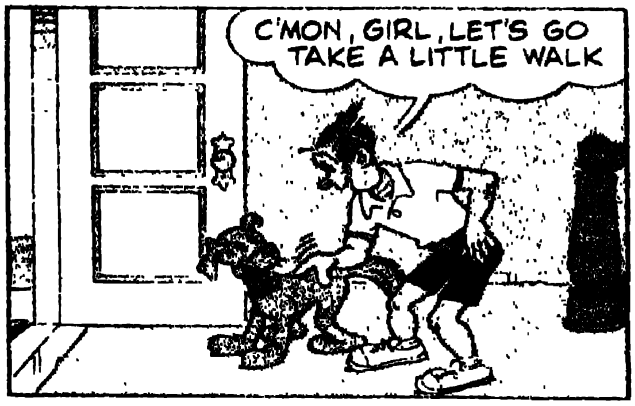
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

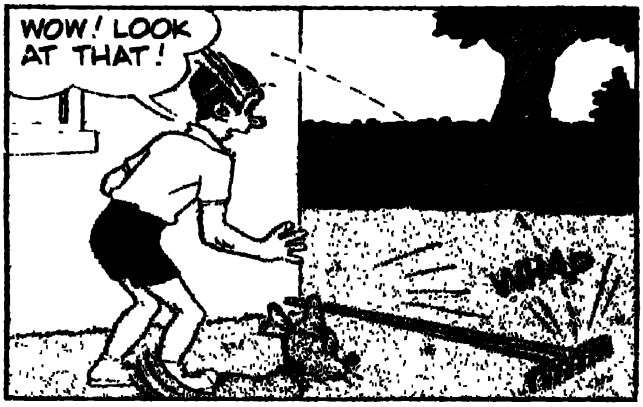


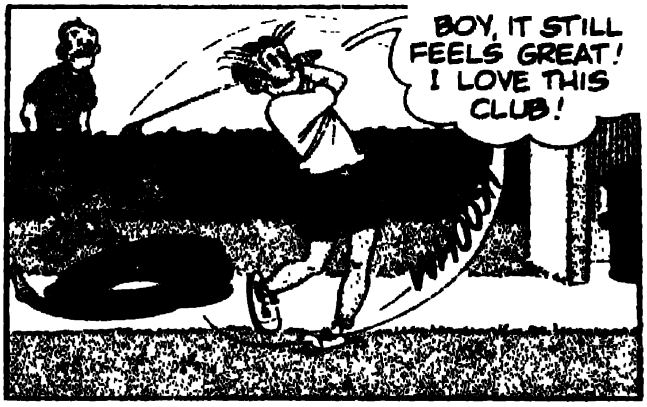
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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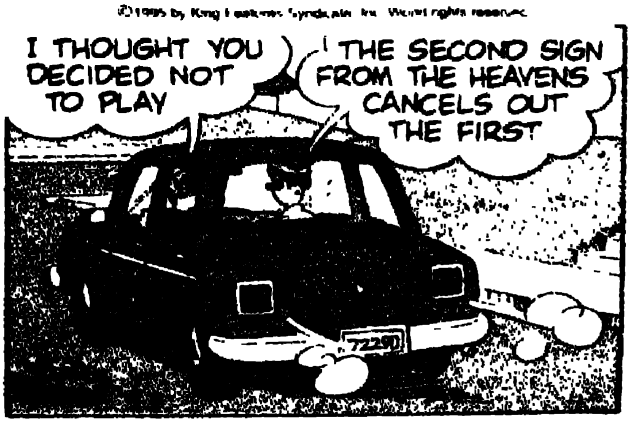
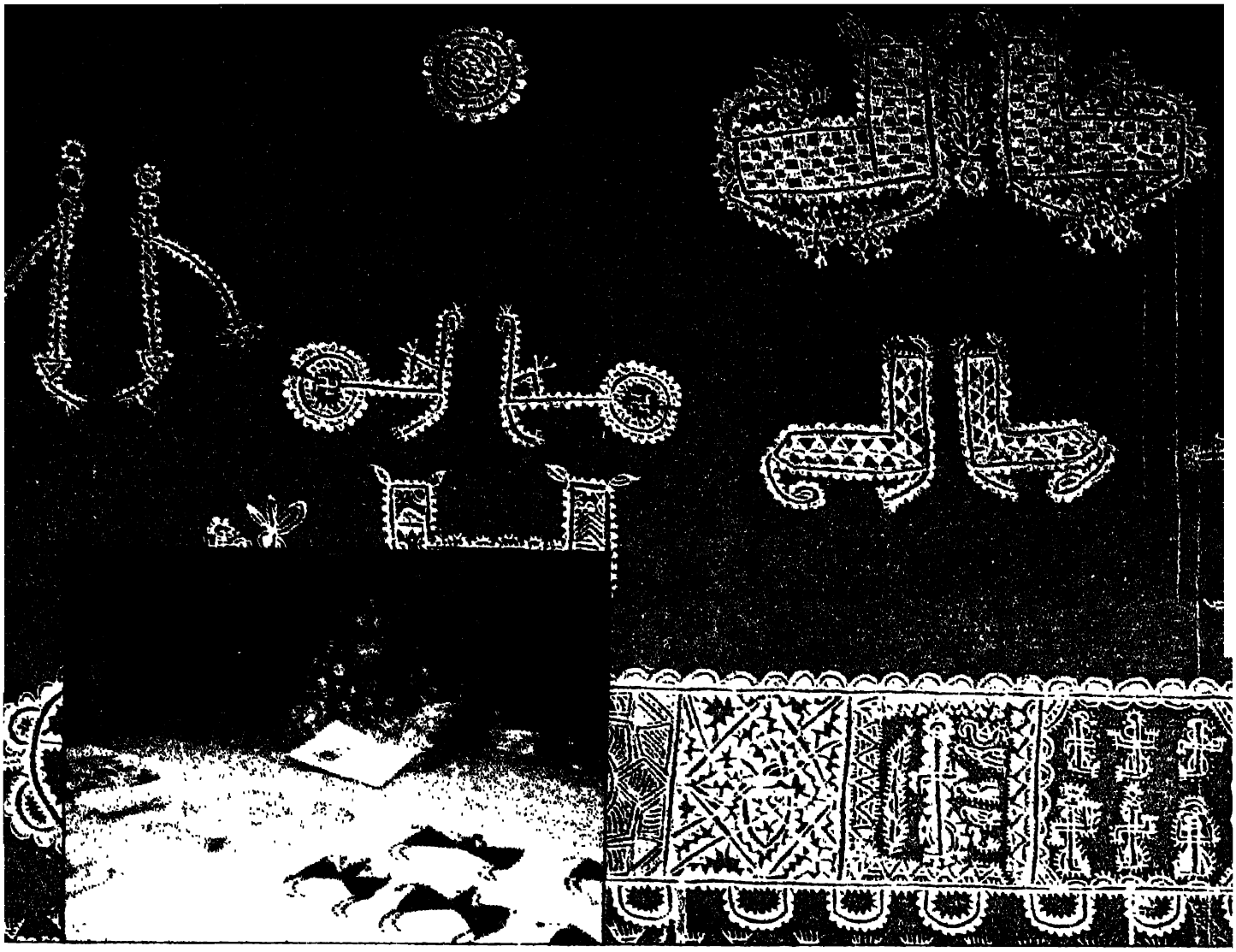




A wall painting; (inset) tribal artist, Buri Bai, from Bhopal

PANORAMA

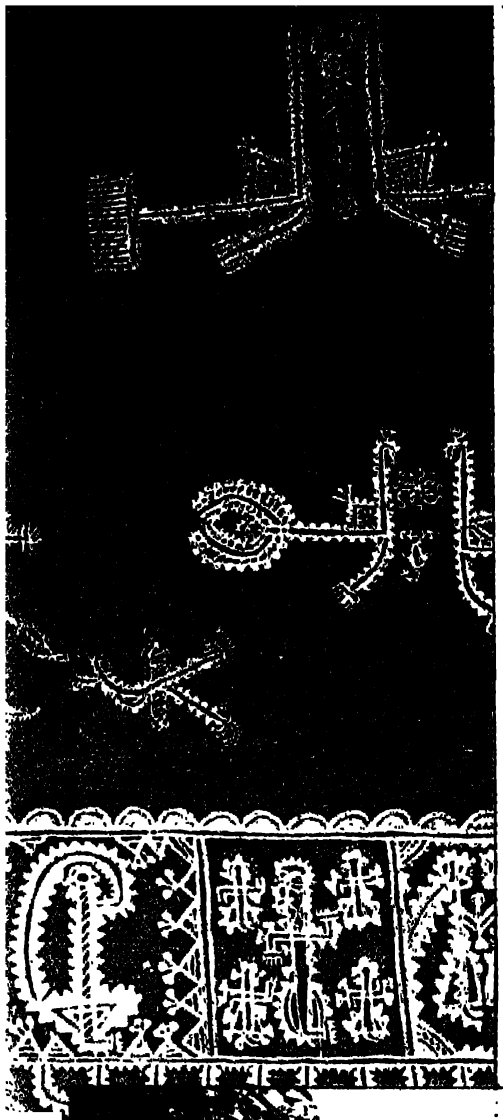
THE CRAFT OF THE MATTER

The National Crafts Museum in Delhi is a showpiece of Indian creativity, reports ***Samita Bhatia***

Buri Bai, a Bhil tribal artist from Bhopal, sits on her haunches, working on a half finished painting. As she painstakingly colours a gargantuan red lizard, you can't help but watch her utterly mesmerised, as she makes her life back at home come alive on the canvas. Buri Bai, whose face was extensively tattooed when she was 16, is visiting the National Crafts Museum for the third time.

And for her, at least, it has been a lucrative time. Chunky silver bangles jangling on her wrist, she gleefully informs you that two *goras* bought five of her paintings just yesterday, and simply loved them. But, she adds in the next breath, sales will slow down as the heat intensifies. She much prefers the winter, when the tourists — specially foreigners — come in droves.

Welcome to the most active museum in the country. It's been written about extensively, draws over six lakh foreign and domestic visitors into its ethnic environs annually (and num-



bers are going up all the time). And if the Taj Mahal tops the list of 'must-see' spots on the itineraries of international travellers, the Crafts Museum comes a close second VIP visitations are common and John Major, Hillary Clinton, the prince and princess of Japan are among the luminaries who have wound their way through its inviting passages.

If it has been dubbed as the busiest museum in the country, it is for a good reason. Watching the craftspersons at work has opened a whole new world for school children, art students, artists, designers and even the craft trade as a whole. Some 80,000 students attend the regular creative workshops organised throughout the year, also taking help of the specialised library of more than 10,000 books and periodicals pertaining to traditional Indian tribal and rural arts and cultures And above all, craft demonstrations are on throughout the year and visitors can watch 50 master craftspersons at work who double as folk performers very often.

Jyotindra Jain, senior director, National Crafts Museum, explains the purpose of the complex as he has always visualised it, "While being somewhat hesitant to assume a conventional role, the Crafts Museum asks many questions of itself and strives to identify its task in a complex situation of Indian arts and craft traditions," he says

Jain explains that the core collection of the Crafts Museum was put together to serve as reference material for the craftsmen who were increasingly losing touch with their own traditions in terms of materials, techniques, designs and aesthetics of their arts and crafts due to the sudden changes caused by modern industrialisation. "Thus, it is primarily addressed to craftsmen who have now been brought into a close and integral relationship with the Museum ," says Jain. "Their visits provide them with the opportunities to meet their new urban patrons Besides, it is here that craftsmen feel free to confine to their tradition or to innovate in response to their new contemporary environment."

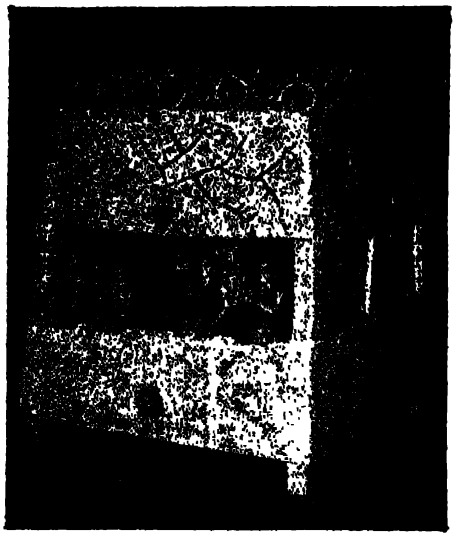
That's perhaps why Narain Raut of Orissa could be found making a stunning soapstone Ganesh while Ganga Devi of Mithila was painting multi-storeyed motor cars or scenes of a 'ride in a roller coaster' in her paintings Meanwhile, Tiju Ram from Bastar moulded iron to make figurines and candlestands and was delighted with the average of Rs 500-1,000 that he managed to earn each day

But Man Sundari Swami from Bika-

A view of the village complex

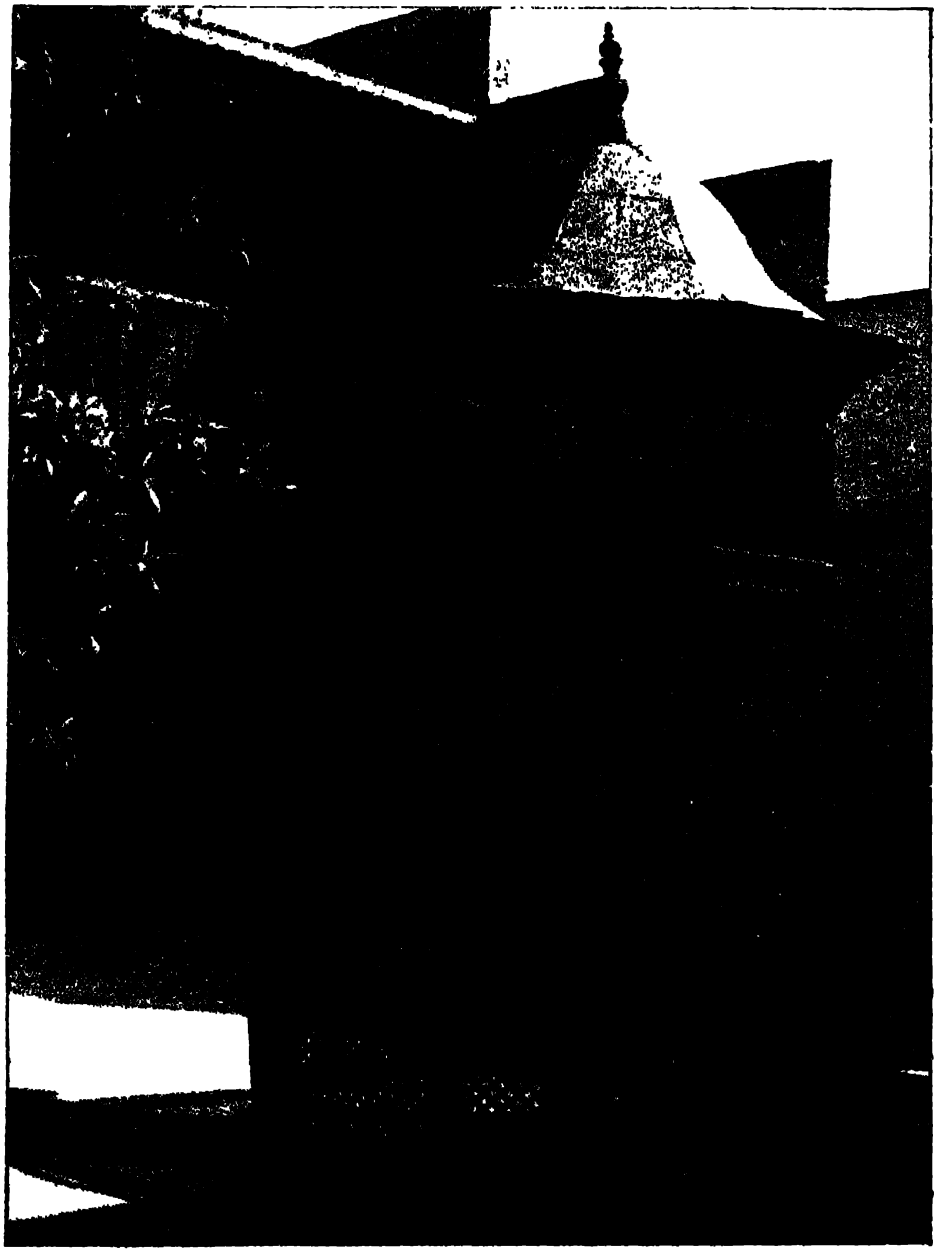
ner wasn't entirely happy though. The season is not right and sales are very slow. On a good day she manages to sell six miniature paintings priced between Rs 300-400. On others, only one painting might sell.

Buri Bai, the tribal artist, too, is one among the 50 traditional artists and craftspersons hailing from different regions of the country who take up residence at the Museum each month. "Here they get an opportunity to demonstrate their skills, to conduct creative experimentation, to market their products to an urban and international clientele and to re-establish links with their own past traditions through the Museum's collections," says Jain.



A grain storing jar

A courtyard at the Crafts Museum



But you can do more in the Crafts Museum. You can also indulge yourself with the pleasures of buying, buying and buying. There are no price tags on the handicrafts, however, and most visitors end up haggling with the craftsmen before settling on a mutually agreeable sum. But clearly, it still makes business sense to sell here. According to Jain, craftsmen vie with one another to spend that one very crucial month at the Crafts Museum. The exposure they get to urban India and the sales they tot up could well end up changing the entire course of their future careers.

To help the craftspersons keep their earnings in a safe place, the Museum provides them with lockers where their cash can be kept till they leave at the end of their month-long stint. And their earnings are not meagre either, for some take home as much as Rs 70,000-- a sum which for them is a dream come true. Certainly, they could never have earned it in the interiors from where they come.

The Crafts Museum gives the artist an easier access to his real market and also makes him accessible to foreign buyers as well. "Very often we get inquiries about specific crafts from overseas buyers. In that case we have a record of some 1,000 craftspersons all over the country whom we can put in touch with the people concerned," says Jain. Log books of the Museum reveal thumbnail sketches of artists, their skills and areas of specialisation, the history of the craft and the addresses on which they can be found. A bulk purchase from one such artist for consumption in the international markets means a huge profit which would otherwise be very hard to come by.

Getting onto the log books of the Museum could also give the opportunity of a trip abroad. "Can you imagine what it means to the simple village folk to travel overseas? Besides, I have seen some artists sell terra-cotta pots — which otherwise sells for no more than Rs 15 in India — go for as much as an equivalent of Rs 3,000-5,000 in US dollars," says Jain. Marketing without middlemen at its best!

Not many people really know that the inspiration for the Suraj Kund Mela held annually in February on the fringes of the capital came originally from the Crafts Museum. Craftspersons from all over the country converge in Harayana each year to display and sell their wares directly to the thousands who throng this very popular otherwise picnic spot. Says S K Mishra, former secretary in the ministry of

US First Lady, Hillary Clinton, on a tour of the Museum

civil aviation and tourism, "Through the crafts *mela* we wanted tourism to create an opportunity for socio-economic development of the master craftspersons. The artists were carefully selected with the help of the Crafts Museum that was in touch with them. The Museum at any rate is undoubtedly an outstanding institution and quite unique."

The Museum with a difference has much more than just craft demonstrations on offer. It also houses an enormous collection of images, stone and wood carvings, jewellery, papier mache, dolls and toys, puppets, masks and every other bric a brac that relates to our culture. There are narrative paintings of picture story-tellers, tribal bronzes from Madhya Pradesh. Amongst the most breathtaking exhibits is a *haveli* that was purchased from Gujarat, and transplanted to Delhi. A huge balcony or *jharokha* that's heavily carved and majestic leads up and prepares one for the *haveli* that has been transplanted from its original site in.

A walk across the building designed by Charles Correa takes one through open and semi-open passages covered with sloping tiled roofs and lined with carved wooden *jharokhas*; through courtyards with domed pigeon houses adorned with arches and lattice work panels, terracotta shrines for *tulsi* plants, a massive temple chariot. Jain explains the layout, "Through a walk-about in the Museum we wanted to create the aura of a journey made through the Pols of Ahmedabad, the streets of Jaisalmer, the temple courtyards of Madurai and the villages of Banni. The Crafts

The demonstration section of the Museum

Museum has a timeless quality about it — like India itself — where tradition and modernity co-exist, sometimes as a collage and sometimes as transition from the former into the latter."

The collection at the Museum truly reflects the continuing traditions of Indian craftsmanship as both old and new pieces of our heritage have been displayed to demonstrate the high level of creativity and skill that have survived through the ages. You can't help but notice that not all the artefacts have been put behind thick glass — low bamboo fencing separates the visitors from the displays. Says Jain, "We wanted to make it quite different from what one would expect at a conventional museum."

The third leg of your walk-about will take you through the Museum's Village Complex. Actually, this part of the Museum is a remnant of a temporary exhibition on the theme of rural India that was set up in 1972. Fifteen village dwellings based on the designs prevalent in different parts of India, he check by jowl with courtyards and shrines from various regions. What makes them even more special is that they have all been built with construction materials by the respective village masons, artisans, thatchers and carpenters. "Visitors are fascinated to see items of day to day life which are displayed in order to give a glimpse of the wider cultural context in which they were actually used before they became rare art objects," says Jain.

While the accolades pour in, some are not very convinced whether the Crafts Museum is fulfilling the purpose for which it was set up. Rajiv Sethi, former member of the Festivals of India Committee and one closely involved with the establishment of the Museum, feels that their vision of the institution had been much different from what it now is. He explains, "We had originally intended the Crafts Museum to be a university for crafts persons. A serving station of sorts, that would be user-friendly and reach out to those five million for whom craft skills determine their livelihood. Today, it has a very limited activity achieving just one per cent of our original aim."

Not quite touched by the larger world-view, the visitor, however, delights in what he finds here. To enhance their experience they can take their pick of original creations that find their way into the souvenir shop. Like one is wont to find in museums overseas, the Crafts Museum, too, has a shop that stocks books, picture post cards and a range of contemporary handicrafts.

One of the major disappointments for visitors to the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad is known to be a missed opportunity to pick up a little something — their personal piece of history and a bit of Indian culture — to take back home. They won't have the same problem if they visit the National Crafts Museum in Delhi. ■

FIRST PERSON

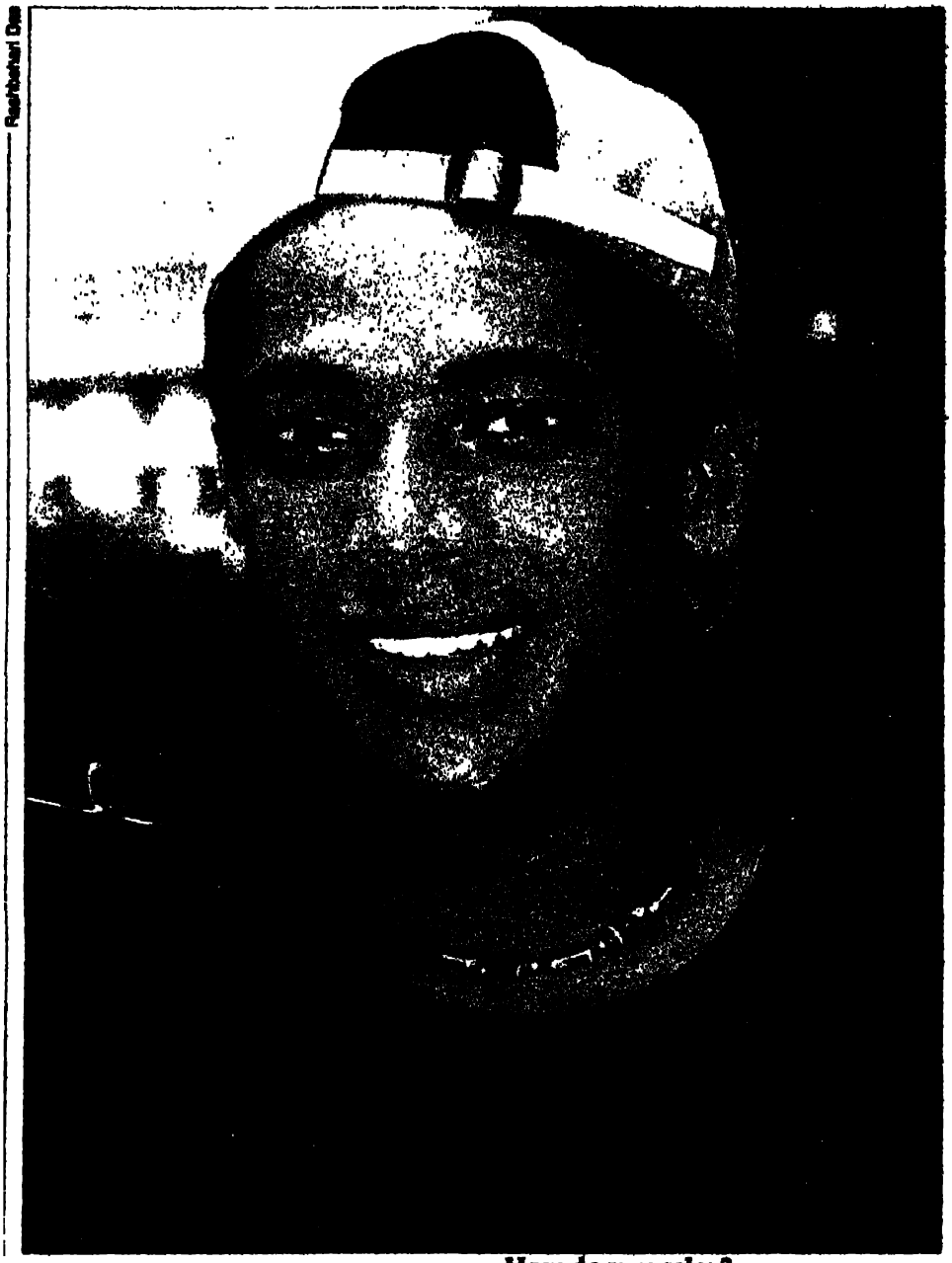
***MAHESH BHUPATHI,** a promising newcomer in the world of Indian lawn tennis, had caused a few upsets in the '96 Davis Cup which sent Holland out of the game. He also defeated the 20th and 71st best players in men's tennis. Despite his disappointing performance against the Swedish team at the Davis Cup, he is the player to watch out for in the coming years.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Being able to make others happy.
What is your greatest fear?
Having an accident and being paralysed.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My parents and my sister.
What do you dislike most in others?
Two-timing, hypocrisy.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My legs

What do you dislike most in yourself?
My inability to communicate
What is your most precious possession?
My family.
What objects do you always carry?
Pictures of my family and friends.
What makes you most depressed?
Poverty.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My legs.
What is your favourite word?
Thank you.
What is your favourite journey?
I've had a few.
What is your favourite dream?
Bringing the Davis Cup for India.
What is your nightmare?
Waking up next to an alien.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
That's a secret.
What is your source of sustenance?
Prayers from my family
On what occasions do you lie?
Only when it's fun.
What is your greatest regret?
None yet! (Touch wood)
What has been your happiest moment?
The Davis Cup tie against Holland.
What brings tears to your eyes?
People suffering.



Rashbehari Das

What is your nightmare?

Waking up next to an alien

How do you relax?
By listening to music.
What do you envy most in others?
Their ability to talk for hours together.

How would you like to be remembered?
As someone who gave his best shot.
How would you like to die?
Peacefully, without regrets.

In Karnataka the entrepreneurs can now dance their way to profits

If you have a tourism- releated project in mind, fill in and mail the coupon to :

The Director,
Department of Tourism
Government of Karnataka
I Floor, 'F' Block, Cauvery Bhavan,
K.G. Road, Bangalore - 560 009.
Tel : 2215489 Fax : 080-2272403

Karnataka tourism invites investors

The tourism industry in Karnataka is poised for a big future. Drawing 18 million visitors annually and with a turnover of Rs.1,200 crore, the state boasts of a wide variety of tourist attractions covering history, architecture, art and culture, wild life sanctuaries, beaches and metropolitan centres. All laid out in 1,91,791 square kilometres of Nature's choicest land.

Incentives and Concessions for the Tourism Industry in the State

The Karnataka Government has a package of incentives and concessions for the tourism industry.

● Investment subsidy ● Exemption from sales tax, luxury tax, stamp duty & concession in registration charges ● Power tariff relaxed ● Waiver of fee for converting agricultural land into commercial land ● Special concession for various categories ● Incentives for utilising non-conventional energy sources and also for a large tourism industry.

Single Window Agency

The Department of Tourism has setup a Single Window Agency to clear the projects speedily. It

● considers the applications of entrepreneurs and the locations of the project ● finalises the extent of land /building required for the project and enables the acquisition and sanction of same through the appropriate Government Agencies ● considers means of financing the project by way of subsidy, equity, loans through the Government agencies like KSFC, KSIIDC ● sanctions infrastructural facility by way of power and water.

A few possibilities

● Developing Hotels, Beach resorts, Eco-resorts and Convention centres ● Promoting Water sports and developing Golf courses ● Bangalore having International Standard Airport, there is scope to develop airports in Hassan, Hubli and Mysore.

Profit from leisure

Yes, I am interested. Send me more details.
Name _____
Designation _____
Address _____
Tel _____ Fax _____
Superscribe the envelope "Single Window Agency"

Karnataka. A lasting romance.

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Profit from leisure

Yes, I am interested Send me more details.
Name _____
Designation _____
Address _____
Tel _____ Fax _____
Superscribe the envelope "Single Window Agency"

Karnataka. A lasting romance.

The Telegraph

5 MAY 1996

POST MORTEM

Singing Their Way to Success

Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu: The new craze

■ After the break-up of the Lata-Kishore pair, the Kumar Sanu-Alka Yagnik duo is Bombay's finest gift to the music industry ('The Golden Couple', March 17).

With her very first song, Yagnik hit the jackpot and became a national celebrity. She is one singer whose career has not been marked by any scandals or affairs; such dedication to career and family is rare in the industry.

But Kumar Sanu had to struggle for a toehold in tinsel town. Today, he is Bombay's number one playback singer but there was a time in the initial phase of his career when people dismissed him as a Kishore clone.

Personally, his famuly life also has not been as happy as Yagnik's. His much-publicised divorce and numerous affairs have rather tainted his image and career.

Santosh Kumar Sharma,
Kharagpur

■ It is remarkable how Kumar Sanu established himself in Bollywood within a short span of time. From a Calcutta boy with ordinary middle-class background who used to play tabla in *para* functions, Sanu's meteoric rise is no mean achievement. The industry has become so competitive and commercialised that Sanu is known to record as many as 28 songs in a day. What a change from the old times when music directors spent months recording a particular song.

The lyrics these days have nothing in them by way of poetry or aesthetics and the tunes are forgotten within days. The only saving grace is perhaps some of the voices which make the songs bearable.

Manohar Mandal and Anita Roy,
Nabadwip (W.B.)

■ There is only one Indian singer who could have made it to the cover and he is Mohd Rafi. In the words of Manna Dey Rafi was the greatest singer of the past.

The new breed of singers are small-time wonders. Will anyone remember them after they are gone?

Abneesh Roy,
Calcutta

■ Kedar Bhattacharya, or Kumar Sanu, is today the undisputed king of melody. It is amazing how he manages to record so many songs in a day in addition to the sundry shows he puts up.

Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

■ In an era of instant success and techno-mix where anything succeeds if packaged well, it is little wonder that a Kishore clone rules the roast in Bombay.

Somnath Mukherjee,
Calcutta

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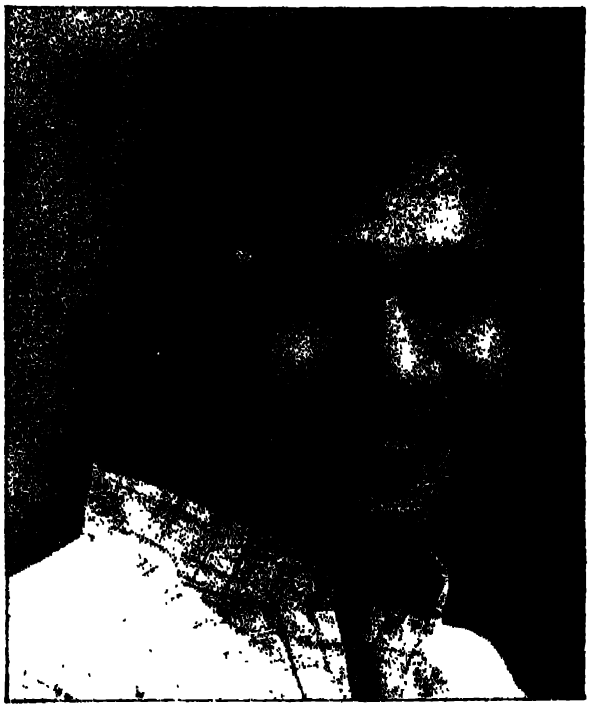
Cover: Rajesh Kumar

COVER STORY

Qizzically Yours

Siddhartha Basu, India's first celebrity quiz master, is now back on television doing what he's best at. ***Samita Bhatia*** *profiles the man with all the answers*



Siddhartha Basu: From stage to television

HIS LANKY NEAR-SIX FOOT FRAME RADIATES A STRANGE kind of nervous energy. It is the same energy that transmits itself to become almost palpable in the cool interiors of Siddhartha Basu's basement office in the hub of New Delhi. The loose-limbed (some fans are known to swoon over his unconventional good looks) quiz master finds a natural habitat in an environ that's book-lined and dotted with PCs.

With his endearing smile, incredibly quivering eyebrows, and the oh-so familiar line "the quiz master's decision is final", Basu became — almost by accident — the man who single-handedly popularised this game form in the mid-80s. Perhaps the first real professional in the otherwise lacklustre stable of Doordarshan talent, Basu went on to breathe energy into the otherwise placid DD repertoire.

The Calcutta-born Basu is now a 'pucca' Delhiite having settled in the capital in 1971. And today his wife of 13 years, Anita, and he are very much part of the city's cocktail circuit. But Calcutta still holds a special place in Basu's heart; for one thing, he says, it is still the best city in which to conduct a quiz contest.

For those who came in late Basu was a film maker and stage actor first, before stepping into the arena of quizzing quite inadvertently. For a man who once held the position of Cultural Attache of the Taj Group of Hotels, it was pure accident that brought him before the camera, to help make quizzing into an art form. Basu recalls being asked to fill in for the pilot

of a television programme when the presenter, Partha Basu, now a top executive of Mercury Travels, failed to show up. The impromptu quiz master was an instant hit and was asked to take over the subsequent series as well.

That was in 1985 and the programme, *Quiz Time*, went on to bag the highest viewership in the non-entertainment programme segment. The subsequent edition of *Quiz Time* in '86 saw Basu's greater involvement and this led to *Alpha Plus* the following year, a game show for school children. The next obvious thing to do was to produce *Quiz Time* under his own banner, Synergy, towards the end of the decade.

The English literature graduate from St Stephens' College, Basu now in his early forties, recently made a comeback to what audiences seem to naturally identify him with. It's quiz time again folks! — with Beanstalk, Basu and brains from all over the country.

The *Beanstalk Summit Quiz* produced and directed by Basu and of which 16 preliminary rounds have already been canned, gave Basu the opportunity of tying up with a sponsor — Beanstalk, part of the HCL group — whose corporate brand objective was the

Mahesh Dattani: His *Dance Like a Man* will bring Basu back to the stage

same as the programme's objective. So it's back to another round of national level quizzing after a gap of eight years.

So, where was he when the television boom set in and everybody clambered on to the bandwagon? "Around," he beams. "There have been programmes in the interim, however, we rarely get to choose the work we do or what we want to do. It's the channel and the advertising support that decides what we must eventually do."

Quizzing may be a staple for Basu — what with *Suare Spectrum* quiz and *Kissa Kursi Ka* under his belt — but it is certainly not the beginning and the end of his repertoire. Synergy has produced *Style Today*, a programme on design and interiors that was also picked up by BBC Television, and teleplays *Saiyan Bhai Kotwal* and *Kauwa Chala Hans ki Chaal*.

Basu has a grouse though. "The scenario is truly loaded against the independent producers who have to depend largely on commissioned programmes," he says. According to him it's smooth sailing for mega media horses like NDTV, Plus Channel, UTV, TV Today and TV 18, mini empires in the world of television which have pumped in huge investments running to the tune of Rs 20-50 crore. He adds, "Broadly, the three categories of programming that can bank on sponsorship and advertising support are news, like *Tonight* and *Aaj Tak*, and film-based programmes. Besides, the added advantage with television dramas or soaps which primarily adhere to a 'filmi' formula is that they can be produced at lower costs too."

It's quizz time folks!

While enthusiastic about working on this computer-driven game show, Basu is not entirely convinced that he reaches out to a very large audience -- and therein lies the inherent problem with a game show "The medium of the programme and the numbers who watch the show operate in an environment where English rakes in a relatively low viewership in comparision to Hindi programmes." He explains that while *Quiz Time* notched up the very highest among English programme viewership in the non-entertainment section toting up 14 Dart points, it actually reflected just a minor fraction of the overall viewership.

Notwithstanding Basu never tires of shooting questions at college kids whose levels of awareness and intelligence are sometimes "scary". And over the years Calcutta has won hands down as his most favoured city for a live quiz, "The quality and the size of the audience response is tremendous." Explaining the enthusiastic Calcutta response, Basu says, "The city allows people the time to be enthusiastic about other things than just making it big, which is the way of life in the other metros. It's the place and the culture of Calcutta that allows Calcuttans to get passionate about many things."

Basu has noticed the visible changes and the phenomenal growth of quizz-

THEY ALSO QUIZ

Call their programmes game shows, sports specials, or musical bonanzas, but they all come down to that old question and answer routine

Mohan Kapoor

Shekhar Suman

Narottam Puri

Rashtriya Das

MOHAN KAPOOR

He was India's original game show host, creating a sensation with his over-the-top *Saanp Seedhi* on the Zee TV channel. But now Kapoor has graduated to a more sophisticated form of entertainment; he hosts *Surf Wheel of Fortune*, the world-famous programme which has now made its appearance in India. But the format often doesn't work too well in India. For one thing, Hindi is a phonetic language, and doing a fill-in-the-blanks routine doesn't come off when you ignore the *matras*. And for another, though Kapoor tries very hard indeed, he doesn't have the requisite charisma or even the necessary control to preside over such a show. He should stick to playing the villain in Hindi movies.

SHEKHAR SUMAN

Most people still remember him best from his stint in Hindi movies and his brilliant comic portrayal in the television serial *Dekh Bhai Dekh*. But Suman has now re-cast himself as a quiz master extraordinaire in a movie-based quiz programme. Clad in a dark — and not particularly well-cut suit — Shekhar quizzes members of the participating teams on everything ranging from Amitabh Bachchan's releases to R.D. Burman's greatest hits. Suman's laid-back style is perfect for a show such as this, and given the audience's general obsession with Hindi movies, ratings are respectable at all times.

NAROTTAM PURI

He's sown up the market as far as sports quizzes go. A sports commentator of several years' standing, Puri is eminently qualified to ask questions of a sporting nature. And you have to admit, that he does it with great panache. His greying locks add gravitas to even the most trivial of queries, and Puri uses his fund of general knowledge to best advantage. The only thing that jars is the occasional mispronounciation: Narottam's penchant for calling America "Aaamerica", for instance.

DEREK O'BRIEN

He is Calcutta's own homegrown quiz master, who came of age under the tutelage of his father, Neil O'Brien, the King of all quiz masters. But after the years spent in rigorous training in the schools, colleges and clubs of Calcutta,

ing countrywide. "Quizzing is more widespread today than it was when we started out in 1985. Participants are better informed today and take greater pleasure in the game. *Quiz Time* was the only programme on quizzing at that time and proved to be a great populariser." Today, the scale of quizzing in the country is phenomenal, and says Basu, educational institutions today allow for a greater level of extra-curricular activities

Prizes and prize money too have added to the attractiveness of quizzing essentially for live shows. A quiz conducted by Basu for the Delhi Police School earned two smart students a PC 486, each worth Rs 60,000. The recent Ad Club Quiz in Calcutta gave away cellular phones worth Rs 30,000. The incentives for television shows, however, don't seem as fabulous in comparision.

So what makes quizzing so special

Lillete Dubey: producer of *Dance*...

and how is his approach very different from that of the other quiz masters on the scene?

"I don't go hammer and tongs at it as a 'quizzard' or a quizzer (a quizzard is loosly defined as one who tries to cull the strangest facts about the strangest facts)," says Basu. "I am not a compulsive collector of obscure information (and as some would have it, the more obscure the better!) My approach is of a communicator and film maker while my experience with theatre helps infuse an element of drama into the game of quizzing."

Basu's objectives as a quiz master are, thus, quite different from his counterparts, to share interesting information, and not just bookish or academic knowledge, in a crisp and abbreviated format. A whole lot of creative research goes into each programme and Synergy's team of researchers authenticate each and every fact, eliminating subjective elements and replacing them with hard facts. Basu is very alert to the dangers of going by hearsay or just taking reports and books of knowledge for gospel truth.

"You'd be surprised at the number of people who come down on you like a ton of bricks for the smallest mistakes," he says. "You are under scrutiny when beamed nation wide and there is no room for slip-ups."

So at the end of the day what makes for the best quiz? "At the core of it, interesting, top of the mind, tip of the tongue information," explains Basu. "The most essential is the information that must have a quizzing angle but which is frightfully technical, or academic or really bookish. The questions have to be matched to the participant's

[illegible] He [illegible] the [illegible] Quiz Contest (once a radio show) on television, a country-wide quiz programme which pits schools from all over the nation against [illegible] (which only makes it seem that he's talking down to the kids) and completely overhaul his wardrobe

Renuka Shahane and Annu Kapoor

Derek O'Brien

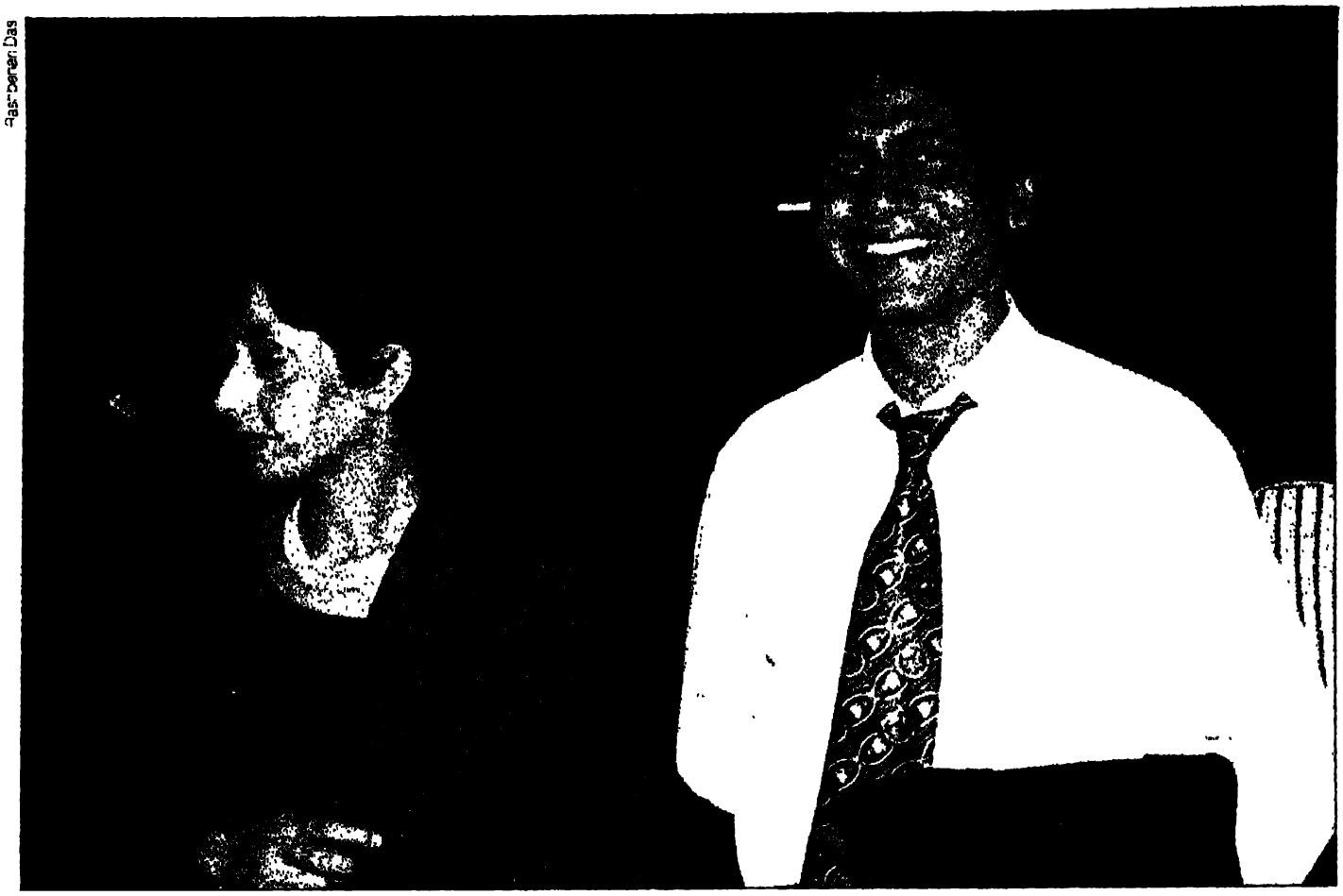
Those kurtas and embroidered waistcoats just don't cut it.

ANNU KAPOOR/RENUKA SHAHANE

Theirs is, of course, a quiz programme with a difference. What they test here is the participants' knowledge of Hindi film songs — who sang them, who composed the music, which movie they're from, and which actors lip-synced to them — rather than their general knowledge. But it's great fun for all that, as Kapoor and his co-host prance about the stage, desperately to steal the [illegible]ght from one another.

Annu quite effectively destroyed Durga Jasraj and Kavita Paudwal, he's finally met his match in the fiercely grinning Renuka Shahane.

Rashbenan Das



With wife

level of interest, and most importantly they have to be equally balanced And over and above it all, you need a live, aware audience"

Siddhartha Basu was better known in the early 80s as a stage artist And now, he has returned to his first love – the stage – after the gap of 11 long years in a Prime Time production of Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man*

Basu made his first real stage appearance way back in 1971 at a time when theatre was the lifeblood of campus life. It was some time then that he joined Barry John to form Tag (Theatre Action Group) which grew to become the most influential theatre group in the capital. His theatre career was chequered and Basu went on to play in *Hamlet* and in *Servants of Two Masters* He also played several roles in an experimental American play *Keep Tightly Closed in a Cool Dry Place*, Mozart in *Amadeus*, Alan Strang in *Equus* and Eddie in Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love*

"The last time I was on stage had been in 1984; that's before my son was born and the TV boom became a reality," recalls Basu "After that television's unpredictable schedules did not give one the time to get back to theatre A play requires your undivided attention for at least two months and finding the time was becoming impossible"

His absence from the stage didn't make his return any difficult, going by the rave reviews he got for his performance The one reason that Basu took on the challenge offered by *Dance Like A Man* was for its original story-line He laments, "There's so little original works done these days, besides which Dattani's script came as a breath of fresh air The play was primarily addressing Indian themes and to my mind was very well-crafted." That *Dance Like A Man* was being produced under old-time friend Lillete Dubey's Prime Time banner, helped

The play has since travelled extensively through the country and overseas to Dubai playing to full houses Calcutta is to be the next stop where it will play Says Basu of what the audience can expect, "What makes *Dance Like A Man* quite unique is that the play is in English and while dealing with universal concerns, in its details it's very much Indian." The play shifts between the present and the past -- way back in the Fifties - and just four players enact the part of seven characters, spanning three generations.

He says that slipping into a role that appeared well suited to him was easy. "Theatre comes naturally to me, and while it was a neat production, we also developed it as it went along," says Basu

While quizzing and theatre comes naturally to Basu there are other areas that he would love to get into Television drama or fictional drama for television. "I have a particular gut feel for satire and comedy," he says. Another kind of drama that really catches his fancy is the spine-chilling thriller which he would like to eventually produce He comments that most that is written for television serials is done so on the run and which develops as the story line progresses. Also, the success of most of these shows hinges on the presence of known faces.

Basu would also like to develop the area of magazine and lifestyle oriented programmes, infotainment, crisp and lively chat shows, which would go down very well with viewers. "The

THE QUIZ CAPITAL OF INDIA

Calcutta qualifies for that title, all right

It was British journalist Ian Jack, now the editor of Granta Books, who put things in perspective. It is only decaying societies, he said, that place such a premium on quizzes. Which is why, added Jack, the two cities where quiz contests are most popular are Belfast and, yes, Calcutta. It was absurd, said Ian, to see grown men sitting around a stage, nervous tension writ large on their faces, answering banal and inane queries with an air of triumph.

Well, he was certainly right about Calcutta and quizzes, though we should let that dig about 'decaying societies' pass. But there is little doubt that this city is obsessed with quiz contests, be they ever so humble, and absolutely fixated on trivia, expert knowledge of which will get you a place on the best teams in Calcutta's schools, colleges, and even clubs.

Quizzes are fairly all-purpose in Calcutta. They can be held on a school's annual function, they can occupy pride of place in college festivals, and even more curiously, when advertising companies decide to hold huge dinners in tony clubs, they hold a quiz to mark the occasion. No matter what the event, a quiz is the main event in Calcutta.

And presiding over quizland in Calcutta is the O'Brien family, led by father Neil. He is the one who popularised the form in Calcutta, and was a regular fixture at every quiz held in the city for several years. Neil O'Brien, readers will remember, even ran a quiz column in *The Telegraph Magazine* for many years. And now, his sons Derek and to a lesser extent, Barry, have taken over, and perform the honours at nearly every such occasion in the city.

And given the level of popularity this form enjoys in Calcutta, they are never short of people to quiz. Die-hard quizzards can be found in the most unlikely of places and in every shape, size and form. And nothing deters them from enjoying their place on the stage; not even such stupid questions as what an 'air kiss' means. Instead, they vie with each other to give the right answer and go home incredibly chuffed if they are handed a certificate of participation at the end of the evening.

Well, to each his own. As they say, one man's quiz contest is the other's painful spectacle.

problem with the chat shows that are worked on these days is that producers record as many as six shows in a day," laments Basu. "There appears to be very little research, shaping or structuring of these shows."

While these are on the future agenda, on the cards next are two shows that Basu hopes will take off soon. Currently, his team is seeking the funds to produce these shows which he is convinced will be very popular. The first is a crossword game "youth oriented, pacy and quick", not just meant to attract the crossword aficionado but also those interested in the English language and word game fans. The other is to develop on the *Manch Masala* theme — "a kind of spoof show" says Basu.

Thus, watch out for Synergy in the coming months. The quiz master says so, and remember, his decision is final. ■

EXTRACT

A Bureaucrat's TALE

K.J. Alphons has earned the reputation of being a civil servant with a difference. These extracts from his new book tell us just how different he is

I took over as collector, Kottayam, in 1988 From the moment I took over, I decided that my district was going to be my domain and nobody else's. There would be no politicians taking arbitrary decisions. Nor for that matter would there be arbitrary decision making by me either. It would be my kingdom, but with transparency.

Kottayam is the heartland of Kerala. It is the home of spices and rubber and the citadel of the Syrian Christian community, which is the most prosperous community in Kerala I am a Syrian Christian myself, tracing back my roots to the first century A.D., when St Thomas, one of the disciples of Christ, landed in Kerala and converted its elite to the fold of Christ through his magic

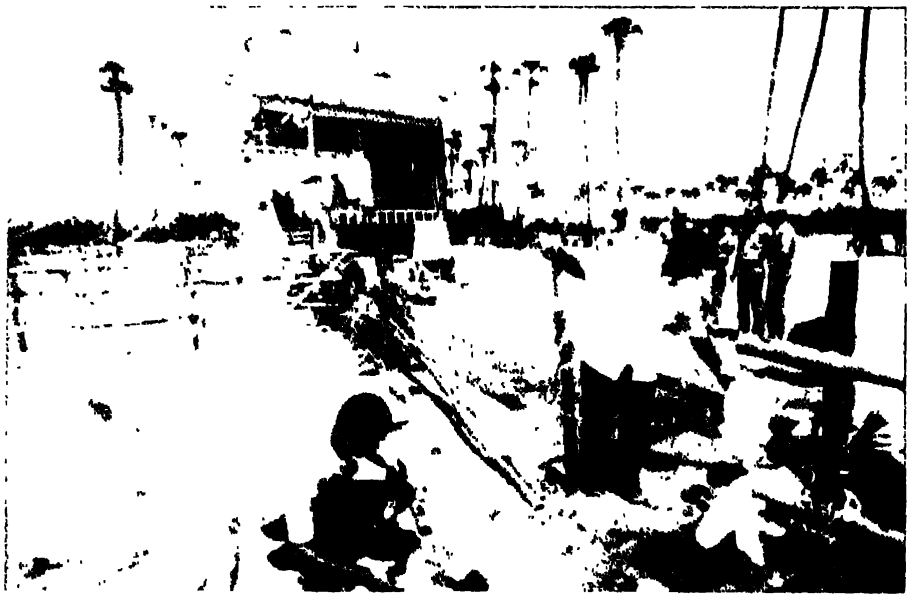
Both my wife and I are from Kottayam The day before the cabinet decision was taken to post me at Kottayam, there were rumours going the rounds in the secretariat that I was being posted there. I met the chief minister, E.K. Nayanar, who belonged to the CPM, and told him that there was an unwritten rule that IAS officers should not be posted to their home districts as district collectors. This was to ensure that they were not unduly influenced by their relatives and friends living there. Mr Nayanar was highly amused. He told me, "This is a rule made by the government of India and it is a Congress rule. I will teach them some rules in administration." I didn't know what he had in mind but I told him that whatever it was I hoped it would not get me into trouble. He said that he would certainly keep it in mind while taking a decision at the cabinet meeting. He was serious about teaching the Central government a little bit of administration: the next day it was decided in the cabinet that I would be district collector, Kottayam. He loved to do such things.

My second day as DC started with

Extracted from** Making a Difference **by K.J. Alphons; Published by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd; Price Rs 300

fireworks. My predecessor had acquired a few hundred acres of land for the Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam. After the award was announced, the university refused to release the money for compensation to the farmers on the ground that it was required for more urgent projects of the university. There was a public outcry because the land had been notified many years earlier for acquisition and the farmers had not made any effort to develop it or derived any income from it during this period. The land had lost its value. The university now did not want the land and the farmers felt cheated. I decided to side with the farmers as I felt that the university was being unfair. There were skirmishes over the next two days between the vice-chancellor and me on the front pages of newspapers. On the third day, I decided to surprise the vice-chancellor. I landed up at his office unannounced. I did not expect a very warm welcome; instead I was greeted with a hug. In two minutes, the problem was sorted out. The farmers got their money and the university the land. Little did I realise that this handsome, greying

Rajiv Gandhi in Kerala during Onam; (inset) the author, K.J. Alphons



Sriperumbudur, where Rajiv Gandhi was killed

man who had greeted me so warmly was the famous Kannada writer U.R Ananthamurthy, who went onto become the president of the Sahitya Akademy and a Jnanpith award winner. Thus began a friendship which was to produce dramatic results over the next four years. Both of us were dreamers, but pragmatic ones: we had decided that we would realise our dreams, they would not remain exercises in futility.

The farmers were ecstatic, the press was happy that it had a collector who would provide good copy. By the third day, my name was known to most people in the district, in three-and-a-half-years' time, I would know the names of many of them.

About five months later, the chief minister visited my district. He had lunch at the government guest house. His personal assistant was supposed to clear the CM's bills on his checking out from the guest house. He forgot to pay. Next day there was a call from the PA to the CM to my private secretary directing me to clear the CM's bill. I found out the amount, it was small — Rs 150. Mr Nayanar was a man of frugal habits, he smoked *beedis* and ate very little. He and his personal staff had spent only Rs 150 on the lunch. I asked my secretary to connect me to the PA. I told the PA that I did not draw my salary to feed the CM. He was shocked. "I'll tell the CM in just these words what you told me," he threatened. "Go ahead," I told him. He would, too, I knew. I could lose my job. I felt scared.

Two weeks later Mr Nayanar came to the guest house again and I was summoned. I went to meet him, not very comfortable because I knew that he was going to raise the issue. After small talk about the weather, he came straight to the call.

"Did you really tell my PA that you did not draw your salary to feed the CM?" he asked. He did not look very pleased.

I said, "Yes I said it."

"Very good," he responded. "It is the personal staff of politicians who destroy their reputation. You have taught my staff a good lesson, keep it up."

I could not believe it, I had got away with it! I continued as collector of Kottayam for the next three-and-a-half years. I was one of the favourites of Mr Nayanar and the state cabinet. I issued instructions to my officers that none of them would pay for the entertainment of ministers or politicians, even if they were ministers of their own departments. They were expected to call on minsters when they visited the districts and be courteous to them. They were not however expected to fetch water, clean toilets and clear the bills. Most ministers do not pay their bills when they tour the districts. It is the collectors who direct their subordinates to make elaborate arrangements to entertain not only the ministers and their personal staff but the hangers on and hoodlums who hover around whenever the ministers are visiting. The collectors generally pass on the responsibility of entertainment to the *tehsildars*, supply officers, executive engineers and coolies inspectors. If they have spent five thousand rupees on entertainment, they will collect fifty thousand from the local businessmen for the purpose. This is how corruption starts and is bred. The entertainment does not always start and end with ministers. The local officials very often entertain *taluk* and block level functionaries of variors political parties who have clout with their political masters. Many deals are struck by the officials at these sessions. No honest government official can check into a government guest house or *dak* bungalow after sunset because these are often the scene of shady activity, with most of the rooms occupied by

On an election tour in Tamil Nadu before being assassinated

local power brokers and the officials entertaining them.

I raided the rest house at Kottayam twice and arrested all those who were found to be drunk, including the manager and staff who were serving the liquor After these raids, the rooms used to be vacant in the evenings. The Kottayam resthouse became a very unattractive place for politicians after that

Rajiv Gandhi came to Kottayam on an election campaign ten days before his tragic end at Sriperumbudur Three days before Rajiv Gandhi came to address the public meeting, there were newspaper reports that he was going to be at Kottayam. I had received no information either from the Centre or from the state government that Rajiv Gandhi was coming, even though he was in Z+ category for security As the district magistrate I was supposed to be in charge of law and order and security I rang up my superintendent of police and enquired whether he had received any communication from anybody regarding Rajiv Gandhi's security He said no There was absolutely no information at all We decided that we would take the initiative to organise the security The day before his arrival I checked up again with my office whether there was any direction from the government regarding Rajiv Gandhi's security I checked up also with the superintendent again He also had no directions or information We went ahead and provided the best we could The helipad was just behind the collectorate compound I watched him from a window as he got down from the helicopter He was driven off in a jeep to the town I was glad that he was safe

I used to admire him Rajiv Gandhi when he had taken over as Prime Minister He had floored the world on his first trip to the United States I had thought that here was a young man who could at last bring back hope to the country. He was an innocent man who got swallowed by the big sharks

By 1991, he had done a lot of introspection He was bubbling with enthusiasm to rectify the mistakes and go ahead Once again I felt hope We needed someone young, but not necessarily innocent. In the evening when I watched him again take off in the helicopter on his return journey, I was greatly relieved Ten days later the superintendent of police woke me up in the middle of the night and gave me the stunning news that Rajiv Gandhi

C Rajneesh Kumar

E.K. Nayanar

had been killed in a bomb explosion We put all our police force on the streets We did not want to have any trouble in the district

I felt very bad for Rajiv He died because of the sheer inefficiency of the men who were supposed to protect him -- not those guarding him but those who took the decisions, who prepared the security plan for Rajiv Gandhi and supervised the security operations For all the big noise we make about VIP security, in actual fact the arrangements are so sloppy that the VIPs are most insecure, as usual we do a shoddy job

What else did I do as collector? We had a great time

At weekends we went for boat rides in the backwaters with fishing rods and nets Sometimes I went to my village, Manimala, 35 kms from the headquarters. The kids loved the river They would spend hours together in the river. Manimala river has absolutely pure water It also has a lot of fish. My kids and I would sit on the rocks and dangle the fishing lines, waiting for the big catch The big catch never came Every time I caught a small fish my kids would pull it off the hook and throw it back into the river The fun was in catching and not in hurting, they told me I learned to throw the fishing net pretty well I managed to catch a good many fish with it. In the backwaters they were good sized ones. We would have lots of cooked tapioca and fish on these outings It's a great combination. It gives you all that you need for staying healthy We also had good friends on these trips

I did a lot of interesting things around the house. I had the best residential bungalow in Kerala It had been built a hundred years ago in splendid style It was set in five sprawling acres of land It was jungle when I took over I cleared the area I cleared three acres and built a beautiful garden there, with a small swimming pool in the middle. In six months, the garden was a riot of colour I planted most of the plants myself and watered them every day In the middle of the swimming pool I had a small outhouse I had water falling from the outhouse roof into the swimming pool at night I would sit there late at night and think of things, listening to the sound of water falling into the swimming pool I cleared the balance two acres of land and converted it into a very productive vegetable garden I produced enough vegetables for the entire colony Picking the vegetables was my privilege Nobody else was allowed to do it They were the product of my hard labour We sent baskets of vegetables to all the neighbours We had beans, bitter gourds, lady's fingers My flowers and vegetables were my big happiness I would work every day in the garden at least for half an hour in the morning, before the visitors came My wife and kids spent most of the time there Both my sons were full-fledged greens My younger son, Adarsh, who was just four when we came to Kottayam, banned smoking in my house One day when my wife and I were out, my younger brother came down from Munnar where he worked in the tea gardens He took out a cigarette and lit it Adarsh told him, "Don't destroy my [illegible]" My brother was quite startled He [illegible] smoke for the rest of the evening On weekends we were out with our kids most of the time My elder son, Akash, always ordered the car to stop any time he saw trees being cut They expected me to arrest anybody who cut a tree Sometimes I [illegible] because they were cutting trees legitimately Even in Delhi my kids [illegible] me to arrest anybody who [illegible] a tree I tell them that I have no more powers to arrest anyone They are unhappy with the answer ■

ADVERTISING

DIS-ADVANTAGE, BENGAL

***Anasuya Basu** focuses on the abysmal quality of advertising in this state*

If you've been to see a movie in a Calcutta theatre, you'll know what we are talking about. As the house lights go down, and you settle back in your seat with pop corn and crisps, expecting to see the trailer of the next Hollywood release you recieve your first shock.

Instead of seeing the glorious visage of Demi Moore or even Sharon Stone, a visual of a south Calcutta beauty parlour is flashed on the screen. The interior is tacky and very down-market indeed, and the customers on view no better. It seems extremely unlikely that any number of visits to a beauty parlour will do them any good. But undeterred, they submit themselves to the attentions of a succession of ugies, and then have the nerve to recommend the same treatment to you.

Torture time extends to television as well. First, a vest-clad man appears on the small screen, his eyes hidden behind a red band. A girl then comes into the frame and hugs him from behind. Fortified by this show of affection, the man raises his gun and takes aim. And despite being blind folded, he hits bulls-eye. The voice-over says, "*Chokh bandho kore bhorosha korte paren*."

Then, it is time for some health advice from one of the top-rated actresses of Tollywood. Holding a bottle of a liver tonic in one hand, and tapping it repeatedly with the other, she breaks into song to recount the virtues of the product. The camera then cuts quickly to a 'doctor', who repeats her exhortations in more senorious tones.

Advertisements that worked: Keo Karpin and Bata had catchy slogans

Nobody can seriously dispute that the quality of most advertisements produced in Bengal is abysmal. The production values are shoddy, the concepts are second or even third-rate, the models are incredibly unattractive and the ads almost laughable in their immaturity.

Nevertheless, some well-known companies of the city including such multinationals as ITC and Bata as well as Bengali institutions like GD Pharmaceuticals and Dey's Medical, have tried to leave their mark in the dynamic world of advertisement. These companies - few though they are in number --have gifted the city meaningful campaigns that have left an impression in the consumer mind while promoting brand awareness and popularity. But such worthwhile work is limited to a few who have the wherewithal coupled with the good intentions to create commendable campaigns. For the rest, the same old rubbish goes.

"The small companies are yet to realise the potential of good promotionals," says Swapan Seth, executive director, Equus. Though Seth is very defensive about the city's creative think-tank he feels, "The work done here is not very contemporary. It falls back by at least a couple of years." And for this he blames those concerns "who have little foresight and knowledge about the consumer market." Says Seth, "Besides, they cannot choose the right agency for themselves as they shop cheaper. Their ads suffer from myopic creativity as their short-term perspectives come in the way of inspiration."

The small companies in contrast continue to depend on their existing market with little ambition for forging into newer, unexplored terrain. As a representative of Allens Laboratories, a company selling hair fertiliser and liver tonics, says, "We already have an entrenched market. We are not seeking to create new ones." Pray, what then is the reason for a premium slot in Doordarshan prime time for its product ad. It just has reminder value, he retorts.

Not only are they unwilling to venture into newer markets, these companies spend a pittance on promotion and publicity. Firmly ensconced in the market they have little reason to add to their overhead costs, they say. While realising the need and importance of getting their

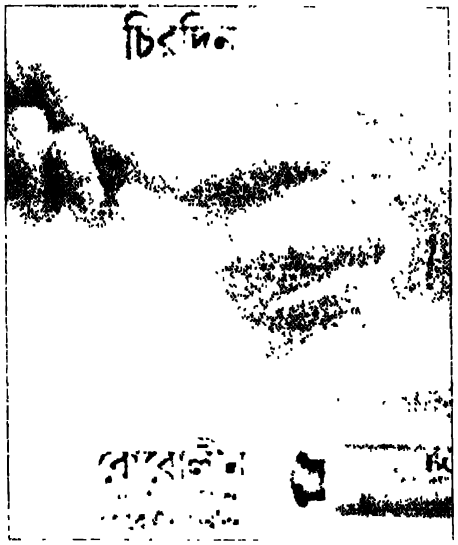
products known and seen, these firms are not yet ready to allocate an adequate share to advertisements.

Thus they seem to be in a strange dilemma. While they can hardly ignore the potential of ads in this age of cut-throat competition, their shoestring budgets often force them to compromise on quality. Poor audio-visuals mar the effects of advertisements where the sole endeavour is to capture the attention of prospective buyers amidst the "great din" created by competitive brands. A complete lack of originality in the scripts together with poor photography and even worse aesthetics make the ads look cheap and dull compared to other high-profile competitors

Ram Ray, director, Clarion and Response, attributes the deficiency of quality work in this part of the country to the "absence of industries." Says Ray, "Isn't it obvious that Bombay, Bangalore, Madras would get the fair share of work because of the new industries growing there." He himself has chosen to stay on in this city "to disprove the common belief that good campaigns cannot be generated from here. We at Response have done it time and again and have won awards also."

Ray, known for his innovative work in language advertisement says, "Bengali language advertising has not developed much. What is done is merely a translation of Hindi or English ads. There is no transcreation. As a result nuances are lost, expressions become wooden, punch lines fall flat," he says. This is corroborated by Seth who finds simple Bengali dialect the most effective way of communication. His

Ram Ray, director, Clarion and Response: Innovative approach



Focussing on Bengal: Both Boroline and Keo Karpin tried this appraoch

Bata slogan, *'Haanta mane* Bata' evoked a tremendous response.

Seth says there is no excuse for the unimaginative slogans of Bengali ads. If there could be such fantastic and stylish Hindi adlines such as Ogilvy and Mather's *'Kya swad hai zindegi ka'* (Cadbury) and *'Merawala* pink' (Asian Paints) why can't there be equally famous ad slogans or punch lines in Bengali?

Making a difference to the general trend are a handful of Bengal-based companies which have the will and the means to experiment and evolve new campaigns that will serve the primary purpose of advertisement as well as be aethetically pleasing

G.D. Pharmaceuticals of Boroline fame have through the years come up with meaningful campaigns done by Response that identified the company with Bengali culture and ethos.

'Banga jiboner ango the ad slogan for the corporate campaign sought to identify the company with Bengali life and times, cashing in on the strength of its traditional brand, Boroline, says the new-wave filmman, Rituporno Ghosh, who was associated with the campaign for a decade. "It was a deliberate attempt to make the company synonymous with Bengali culture. We released new campaigns (particularly in the print media) to commemmorate each of the highpoints in Bengali calendar, *Naba Barsha*, Puja," he says

The product campaigns of Boroline have evolved with time. From the lyrical commercial of the Sixties that blared through radio sets, the campaign strikes a contemporary note with *'Jiboner otha pada sahaje na lage'* and *Chirodin* Boroline

Another company which has to a certain extent contributed to the development of Bengali advertisements is Dey's Medical Stores Private Limited. Cashing in on the opportunities thrown open by the proliferation of the electronic media, the company shed its "staid image" with a watershed campaign which repositioned its main product Keo Karpin hair oil. "For the first time we made a value-addition to our established identity, that of hair nourishment. Now we also talked about how oiled hair could help one to try out different styles," says Kishore Chakrabarty, account director of McCann Erickson, the agency which handles the Dey's account

The Keo Karpin promotionals have also tried to consolidate the message of oneness between Bengal and the company which has its maximum market share in the state. Its sign-off line 'Care you can trust' emphasises the time tested trust endowed on the product by its customers through generations. The Bengali slogan *'Amar pratidin* Keo Karpin' has been aptly translated for its Hindi campaign *'Mera hai din* Keo Karpin'.

Its new product, Keo Karpin Body Oil, tries to give the essentially traditional company an up-market and elegant look which is enhanced by its model Malavika Tiwari's lissom body and glowing skin

It is this kind of upgrading that Bengali advertisements need desperately if they are to make a mark in an increasingly competitive market. And until that happens, we will have to put up with the kind of junk that we are subjected to during every visit to a movie hall ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	0647	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
			M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 40[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PF 30[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
			IC [illegible]	1300	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1140	daily
			9W 612	[illegible]	daily
			M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MUMBAI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIBRUGARH					
				0930	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
				1430	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
9W 611	1020	daily	9W 612	[illegible]	daily
PF 301	0830	[illegible]	PF-402	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC 230	[illegible]	daily
IC-229	1000	daily	4S 811	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 816/811	1205	[illegible]	4S 81[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 327	1220	[illegible]	M9-327	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 325	1220	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC 777	1615	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 769	1615	[illegible]	IC-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VF-106	1710	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
IC-255	0915	[illegible]	IC 256	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-213	1140	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
5[illegible] 026/027	0[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JODHPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
[illegible]	0645	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	0700	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
NAGPUR					
IC 769	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 249	144	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D5 [illegible]	0700	1	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
			IC 731	0855	[illegible]
			IC 731	1105	[illegible]
			IC-859	1105	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			AI-[illegible]	1910	[illegible]
AMSTERDAM					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
			KE [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			KE [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BUCHAREST					
			RO 675	2130	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC-225	0700	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG 092	630	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-092	1150	[illegible]	BG 091	1110	[illegible]
IC 225	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 093	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 094	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	1830	4
BG 096	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DOHA					
QT 061	[illegible]	3	QT [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
BG 107	[illegible]	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	[illegible]	7
KATHMANDU					
RA [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	RA [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 143	1610	3 7
MOSCOW					
SU [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	SU [illegible]	1555	4
PARO					
KB-[illegible]	[illegible]		KB 105	0810	2 6
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
SQ 41[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ 41[illegible]	2230	2 5
BI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BI-[illegible]	2000	6
SOFIA					
[illegible]-014	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1650	4
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7	IC [illegible]	1465	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

Departure Up	Departure Time	EASTERN RAILWAY Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Up	**Time**	**Sealdah**	**Time**	**Dn**
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Saral Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Saga (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departure Up	Departure Time	SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	6004
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	8001
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	2859
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	[illegible]	2022
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	8033
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulakhuma (Secunderabad) Express	[illegible]	7094
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	8008
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	2824
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible]	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	-
[illegible]	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	—
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays) In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations) Train service enquiry at Sealdah 3503535-37

SKETCHES

WAR GAMES

And the names who play them

This Week: Sushmita Sen Vs Aishwarya Rai

Aishwarya Rai: Current favourite with the bookies

First battleground. The Femina Miss India pageant. Sushmita was Miss Delhi and Aishwarya had been selected Miss Bombay. But Aishwarya was the hot favourite that year, being widely tipped to win the crown.

Rai's advantages: She had been a model, both on the ramp and in front of the camera, for several years. Not only was this excellent training for conducting herself on stage, but it also added enormously to her self-confidence.

Moreover, the *Femina* crowd was said to favour her, and it was believed that the contest was only a formality; as far as the organisers were concerned, Ash had already been crowned.

Sen's advantages: They weren't apparent at first sight. Sushmita was a young Delhi girl, who hadn't really made an impact in the world of Indian modelling. But what she lacked in experience, she more than made up in chutzpah, a ready wit and presence of mind.

The Great Upset: Against all odds, Sushmita beat Aishwarya in the final round and was crowned Miss India I, some said because of her ready replies in the question and answer segment of the competition. Rai had to be content with the Miss India II crown. This meant that while Sushmita would participate in the Miss Universe pageant, Aishwarya would have to vie for the Miss World title.

The Greater Upset. Sushmita went on to win the Miss Universe crown, once again pipping the favourites at the post. Not only was she showered with money, gifts and attention, she flew back home a national heroine. Clad in a white gown, she was taken in procession around her native Delhi in a horse-drawn carriage, as crowds cheered from either side of the road.

Where did that leave Aishwarya?: Quite out of the reckoning, apparently. Now that India had bagged the Miss Universe title, the conventional wisdom went, it was extremely unlikely —no, make that impossible—that Rai would be chosen Miss World. There was no way that both these titles would be given to Indian contenders. So, for no fault of her own, Ash had been effectively eliminated.

Had she?: Not bloody likely! Turning a deaf ear to the groans of dismay, Rai went on to compete in

Bobby Deol: Ash's first screen hero

the Miss World pageant, determined to prove the prophets of doom wrong. And that she did; being crowned Miss World in a surprise win.

So, finally Sen and Rai were quits?: To the contrary. In fact, this is when the carping and bitching started in right earnest; until then, both girls had been on their best behaviour, not wanting to create waves before their respective pageants

But now, Sushmita gave interviews telling the world how Bombay models had given her a bad time in her pre-Miss Universe days, though she was clever enough to add that she was now friends with Rai. But despite such disclaimers, the message got through all right

How did Aishwarya react?: She didn't, though she was quizzed about her relationship with Sushmita in every interview she gave. Rai, however, kept her own counsel, insisting that while she wasn't great friends with Sen, they weren't enemies either.

The rivalry continues: The second act is currently being played out in the studios and sound stages of Bollywood. Both Rai and Sen have decided to try their luck in Hindi movies, though Sushmita also has a Mani Ratnam film in the bag

Ash's dream debut: Will be against Bobby Deol, the dashing son of Dharmendra, in a Deol home production. And she has also been signed up by Yash Chopra

Sushmita's first film: Will be directed by Mahesh Bhatt, who has had an amazing run of bad luck recently. Bhatt will, no doubt, be hoping that Sen will change all that with her Miss Universe celebrity.

Will she?. It's hard to say Sen was her usual confident self at the *muhurat* of Bhatt's film, and performed exceedingly well despite having a long-winded dialogue to deliver (Rai, on the other hand, botched up a dance number at her *muhurat*) But whether she will be able to sustain this performance remains to be seen

Sen's disadvantages: Her looks, strangely enough. For one thing, Sushmita is far too tall to fit in with the image of a Hindi film heroine Also, since most of the present-day heroes are quite short—Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, etc —producers may balk at signing her up opposite them.

Then most people see Sushmita as being too Westernised in both appearance and manner to work in the context of Hindi movies But then, they said the same things about Zeenat Aman and Parveen Babi; and see how far they got

On the other hand: Aishwarya is said to be just what the distributor ordered With her classical good looks and medium (by modelling standards, she's about five feet seven inches) height, she is the archetypal Hindi film heroine Cast in the Waheeda Rehman rather than Simi Garewal mould, Rai looks better equipped to deal with the demands of Bollywood movie makers

And the winner is...: Your guess is as good as ours. But we have to admit that Aishwarya is the current favourite with the bookies But then, Sushmita has performed quite well against the odds on an earlier occasion So, what's to prevent her from doing it again? ■

Harnom Polwal

Mahesh Bhatt: May strike gold with Sushmita Sen

Jitu Basu

Sushmita Sen: Bagged a Mani Ratnam film

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 April 20

Ganesha says joint finance insurance and premiums loans and funds capital raising, public issues of shares should hold centrestage. A burden is off your shoulders may be fiance running into romance. You will experience joy affluence and the power which money and influence confers.

Taurus
April 21 - May 20

Marriage alliances and romance of a passionate nature are on the cards for Taurians. Also a marriage of convenience is on the cards. Journey and ceremony give immense satisfaction and do much to add to your bank balance. Do bring into full play your humour, your satire and imaginative brilliance.

Gemini
May 21 June 20

Work and expenses and a possible trip make a plausible trio for you. What had been held back will be released or at least made clear to you. But learn to separate fact from fantasy. Unexpected or sudden partnerships or legacy and joint finances could make you richer. You could be moving now. So get set to go.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Yes, you can have a fling take a wild chance go the whole hog. Power, organisation money, arts, science and research should fulfill an inner need of yours difficult to describe or pinpoint. Children hobbies, travel, a bit of leisure and pleasure and a certain way with money give satisfaction.

Leo
July 21 -- August 21

You will be walking that extra mile now and carrying away the booty and the prize. Attend to details, read between the lines clear debris and be ready to continue full speed ahead. That means plenty of work and effort. Around May 9 a little bit of gallivanting should raise your spirits and bring belief.

Virgo
August 22 September 22

May 6 9 should be action packed, and you will have all the fun you want to. Focus on co-operative efforts, reliability credibility and public relations. Pay particular heed to news, views, ads, poster letters and notices. It is also time for higher learning research and journey. Take health precautions.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Money time for Librans. Add to this, passion and dynamism. But you must safeguard your health. Pending work must be completed so that you can launch new ones. Matters which begin as a routine could end up as exciting projects. Anything to do with land and development is positive.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Sun Jupiter fine juxtaposition makes for behind-the-scene moves and hectic manoeuvres. Money power, romance are definitely the name of the game. Marriage, ties and partnerships at all levels are very probable. Arrows point to a good social life, partying and having fun. That's the way to succeed.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

The Mercury-Neptune placing could rake in money, be it through job, profession, business or sale of property or foreign exchange deal. You could wake up with the answers. Areas of interest do widen. Very surprisingly, you could play the modest man or woman not afraid to ask or learn.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Short are the days of wine and roses, but they are here now, and it is surely up to you to make the most of it. Ganesha says, beauty duty, utility will be the way you live and adjust. Friends, well wishers, sweethearts, supporters, elders and the children will form the collage of your life.

Aquarius
January 20 -- February 18

Both the frontiers, work and home will be fully charged therefore you will come alive. Your efforts will be rewarded and you will feel a lot better. It is more than possible that secret and den help will save the day for you. Plans for the future will be not only drawn out but implemented.

Pisces
February 19 March 20

Not only will you recover lost ground but take enormous strides forward. Success and fame. Journey news, views, contacts contracts deeds and documents building bridges of understanding are the things you will be doing naturally. Throw in romance and fun too for good measure.

BIRTHDAYS

May 5: Moon Mars conjunction shows a bit of stress and strain, says Ganesha. But that can be overcome with prayers, straight thinking and right action.

May 6: Moon sun combination refers to problems of prestige and status, leadership and management. By September, the situation clears considerably.

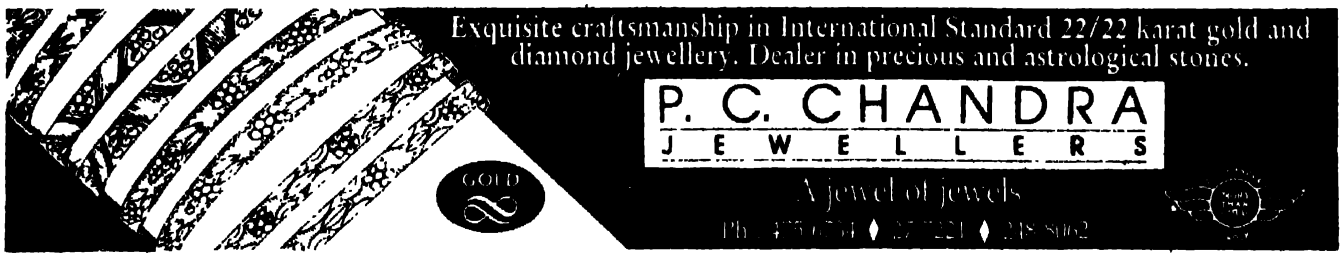
May 7: Sun trine Jupiter leads to fame, riches, enterprise, success and joy should you play your cards right. Journey, ceremony and collaborations are on the cards for you.

May 8: Mercury trine Neptune means all depends upon your skills and charm, dexterity and adaptability as signified by Mercury. Neptune gives you the inspiration to try almost anything with success.

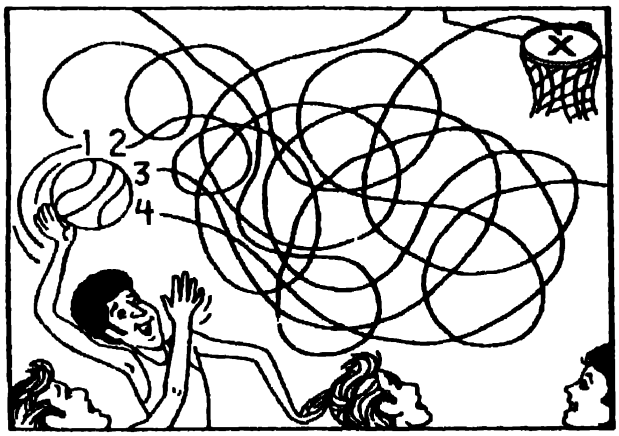
May 9: Moon conjunction Uranus will give a rocket thrust to your activities and the chances are you will make the grade. You are on a good wicket.

May 10: Moon's last quarter makes you work very hard and play hard. Your ingenuity and inventiveness will have free play and that is how you will be a winner.

May 11: Moon trine Mars square Pluto shows a period of uncertainty coming to an end giving you more freedom. Long term projects demand a solution.



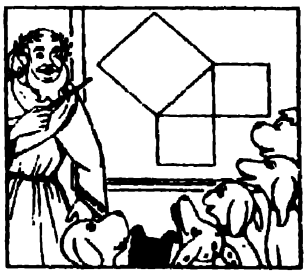
JUNIOR WHIRL © HAL KAUFMAN



HOOP-DE-DO! One of four shots reaches the hoop in the basketball setting above. Which one is for you to say.

DUMB STUFF!
Perhaps it is a dumb thought, but it seems amazing how anyone is able to pronounce the word DUMB. With D as in fudge, U as in four, U as in four, M as in mnemonics and B as in debt, every letter is silent.

GREEK-SPEAK!
Some 2,500 years ago, a Greek mathematician worked out proof that if he grew a square upon each of the three sides of a triangle, the larger square was equal in area to that of the other two squares combined

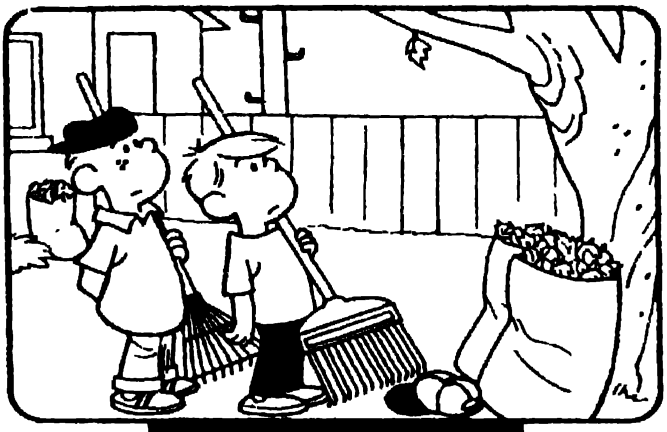


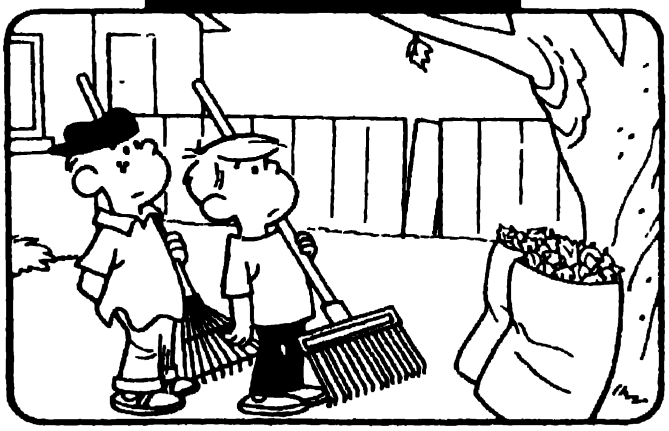
In elation, legend has it, he gave away all his earthly goods in offerings to the gods. But contemporaries scoffed, made him show his proof to the dogs

His name, anagrammed. **GRAY PATHOS.** Can you identify him?

He was Pythagoras formulator of the Pythagorean theorem

HOCUS-FOCUS





HOCUS-FOCUS

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Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences 1. Bag is missing 2. Shirt is different. 3. Telephone pole is missing 4 Rake is different 5 Fence board is moved 6 Cap is missing.

1	V	O	T	E	S
2	O				
3	T				
4	E				
5	S				

FAIR & SQUARE VOTES TO CAST

TWO VOTES carry the day in this word square challenge. VOTES appear both across and down. You are asked to find four additional words that will also read alike in these two directions Definitions are as follows:

1. What it takes to win an election (VOTES, already in place).
2. Mother Nature's sky-high sun blocker.
3. Viennese dessert cake.
4. Enroll in a contest or race.
5. Persons who claim to peer into the future.

Remember, word square words read the same both down and across.

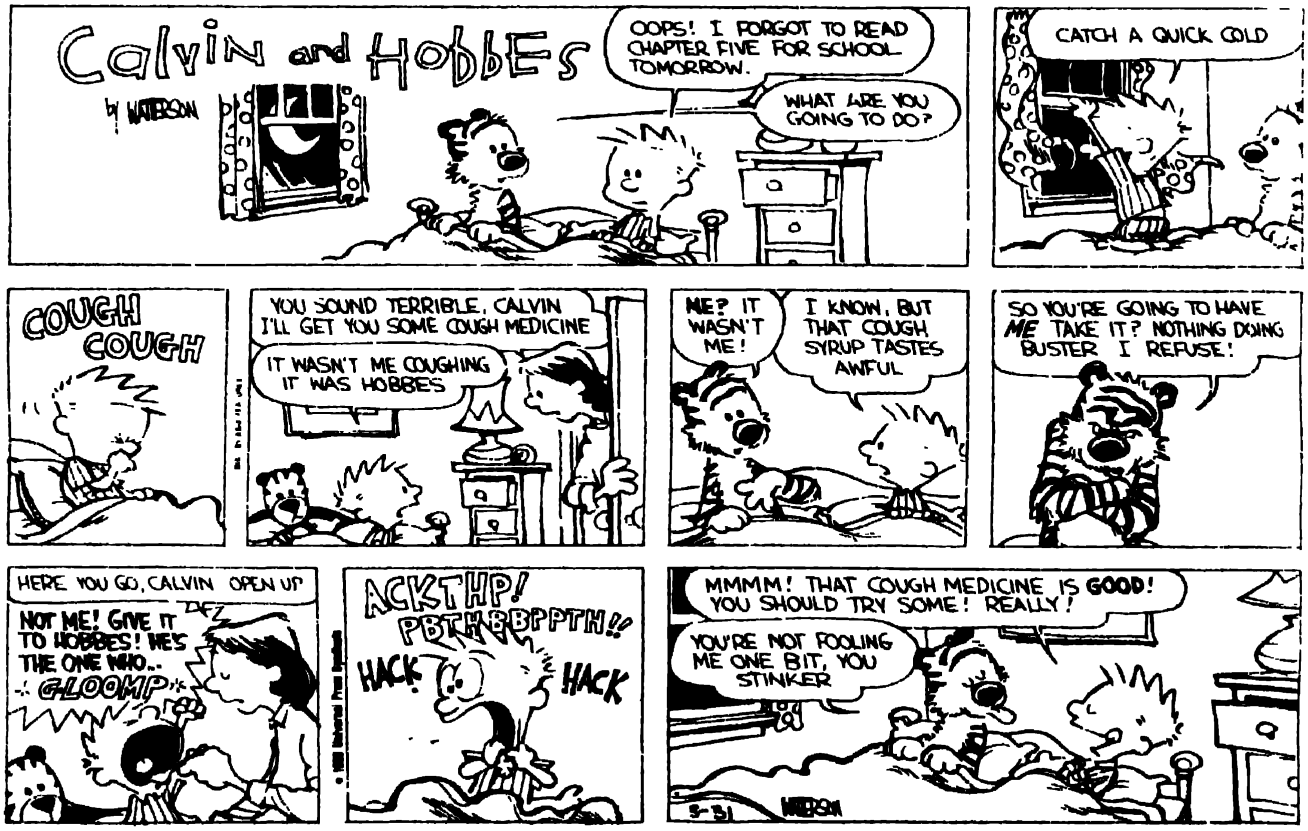
Time limit: Two minutes

1 Votes 2 Ozone 3 Tort 4 Enter 5 Seers

COMICS

ARCHIE

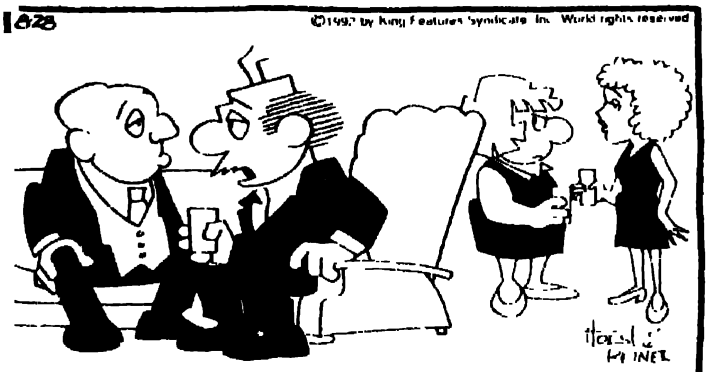
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS

"YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED US TO HAVE AN HONEST RELATIONSHIP."

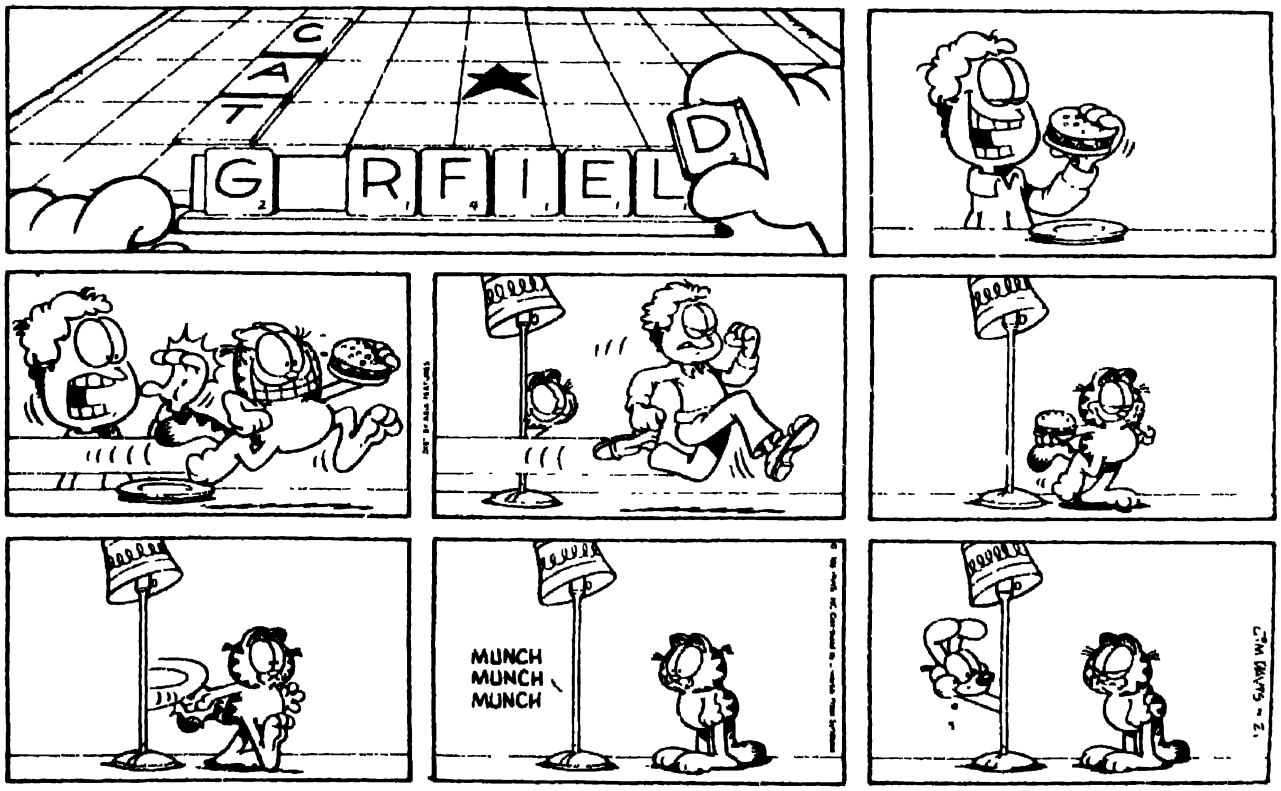
"THERE'S A DOWN SIDE TO MARRIAGE... HERE IT COMES NOW."



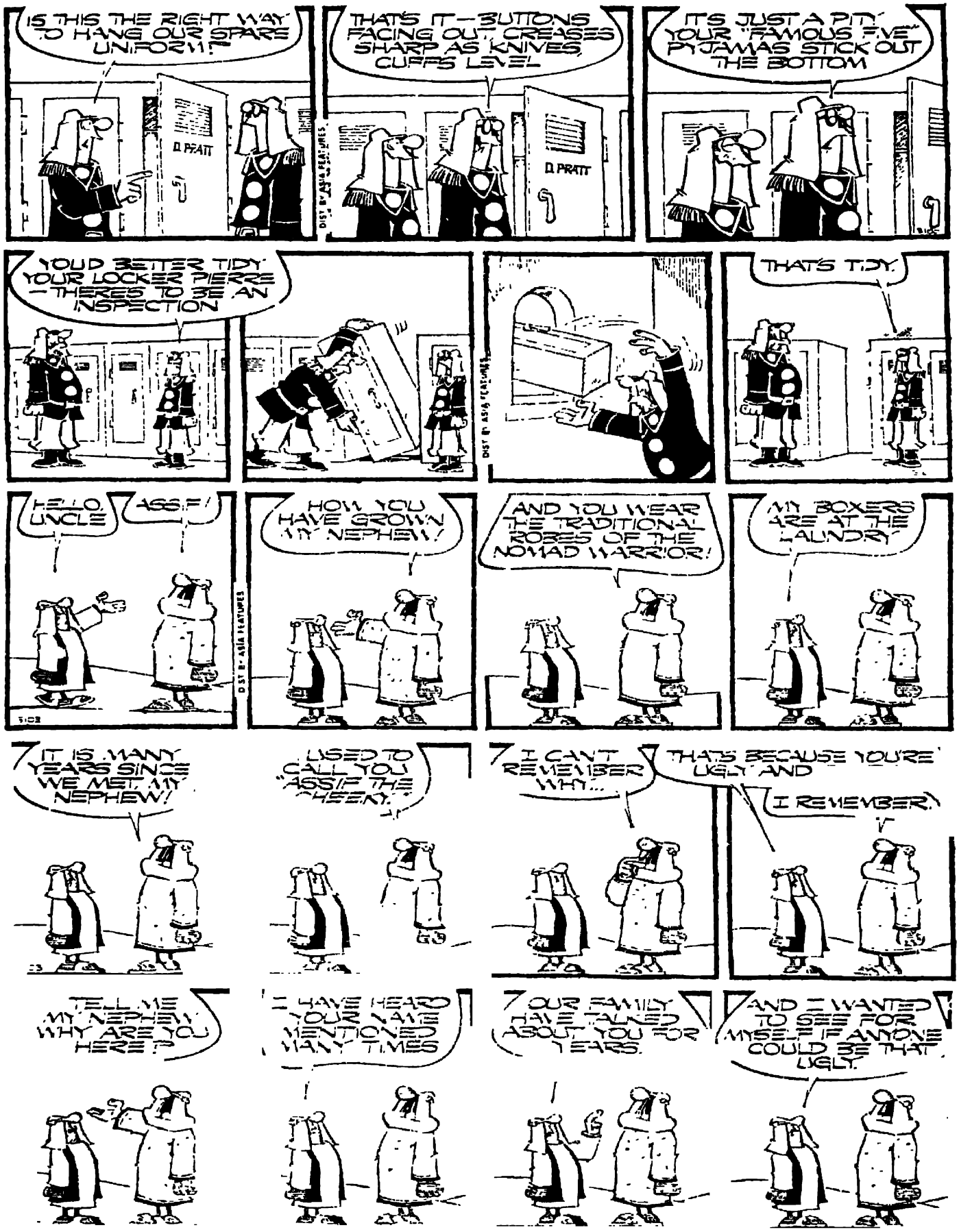
"I STILL REMEMBER THE DAY I MARRIED LORETTA...WHO WOULDN'T?"

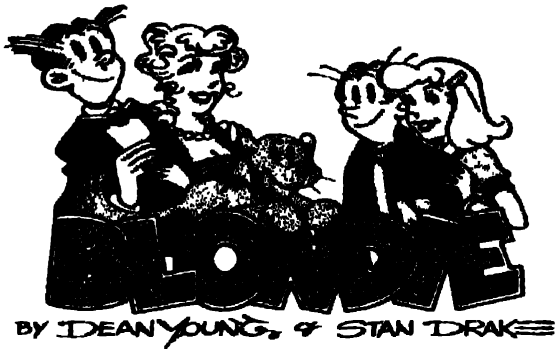
"I LOVE THIS. EVERY TIME HE TRIES TO FIX SOMETHING, I END UP WITH A NEW APPLIANCE."

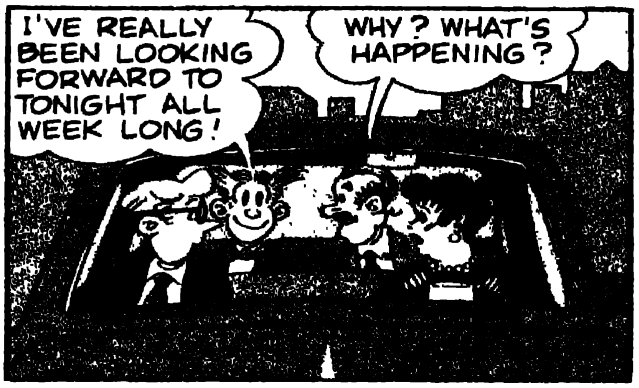
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

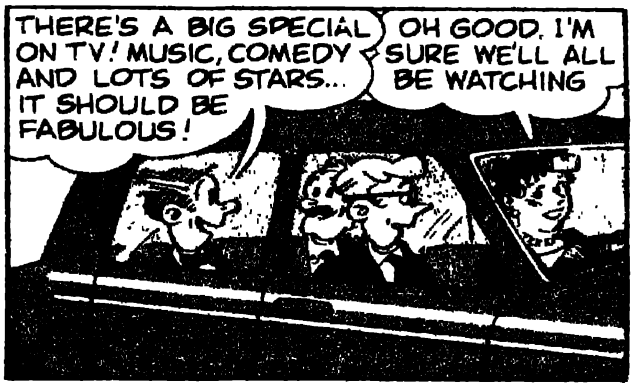


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Cosmetic surgery is the new buzzword in trendy circles these days, reports ***Manisha Gulati***

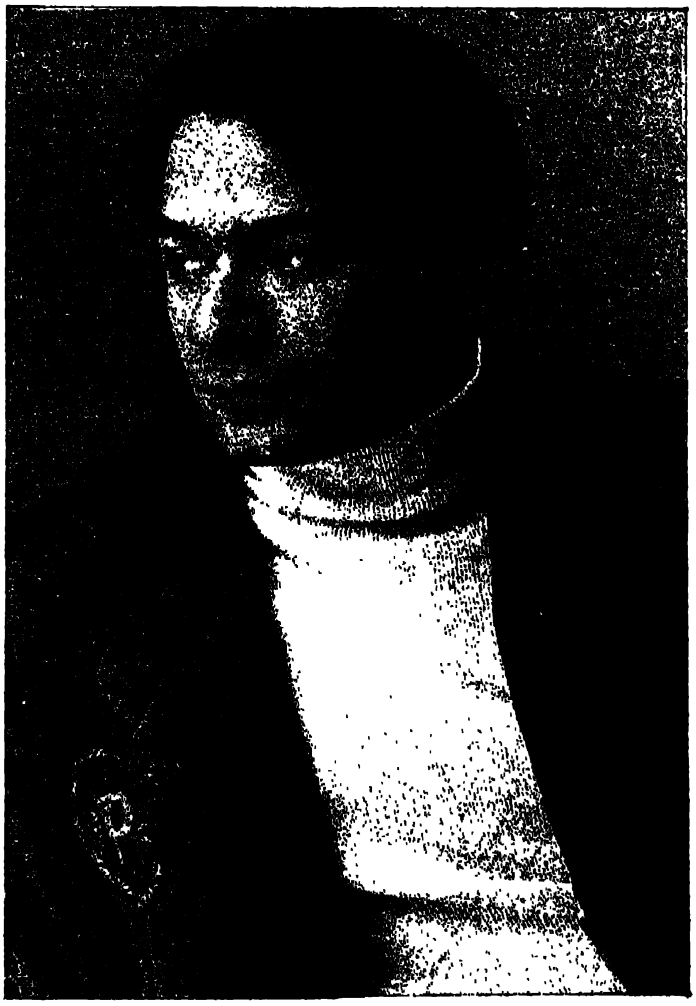
Since the cosmetic surgery revolution in the 80s when image was everything, we have been bombarded with stories about stars who've had their faces lifted and celebrities with newly tucked-in stomachs and improved breasts. Some of them go into the tiniest detail about every little nip and tuck, even as the stars swear that their good looks are simply down to good genes.

Madhuri Dixit, Sridevi, Urmila Matondkar, Meenakshi Seshadri have all been accused of attempting to cosmetically alter their appearances and have denied the charges. Dev Anand finally relented when the scarf on his neck became too narrow to hide it. The former Miss Universe, Sushmita Sen, has been accused of having breast implants to give herself the curves she lacked. And some people insist that Amitabh Bachchan has had a face lift (well, in the unlikely event that he has, he should ask for his money back).

But does this mean that, apart from the elephant man, only Bollywood stalwarts, who are obsessed with their looks, go under the surgeon's knife? Not really, there are some ordinary upper middle-class folk who also go in for the occasional corrective measure. But of the 150 medical colleges in the country only 15 have a plastic surgery division And out of those only a measly 10 per cent have provisions for

Jatin Kochar: After the surgery on his nose

And before



cosmetic or aesthetic surgery, as it is also known. The rest are geared towards correction of deformities (congenital or otherwise), burns and scars.

Anyone with the title 'surgeon' after their name is not qualified to perform plastic surgery, only surgeons who are trained in this particular line are. Unfortunately the private sector isn't very well controlled in India, and horror stories abound about unqualified 'surgeons' leaving their clients with horrible scars, lumps, hollows.

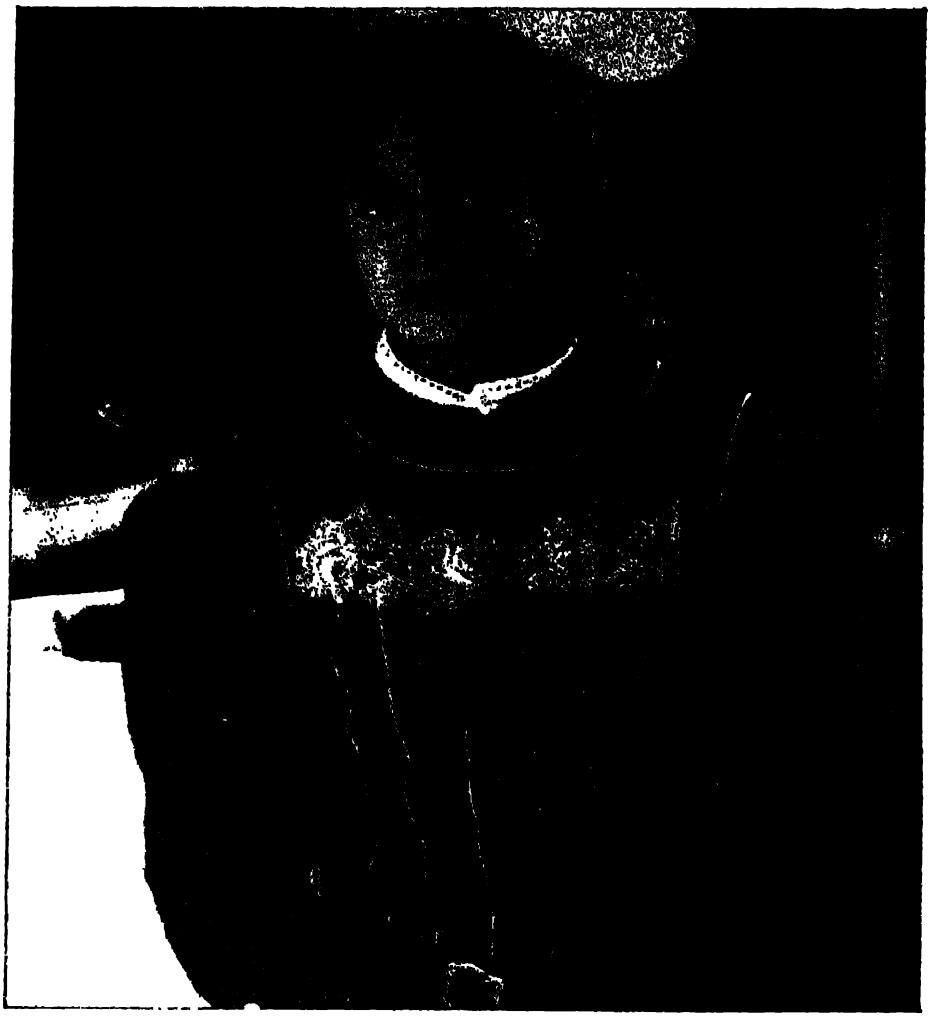
What occasionally gets lost in all the dramatics about Sridevi's nose job is that if you are unsatisfied with your physical appearance, it can cause you genuine mental and physical pain. A physical problem can make your social life very difficult and absolutely crush your spirit. Says consultant plastic surgeon and owner of Delhi Plastic Surgery Clinic Dr Suresh Gupta, "Some find it difficult to face the trauma that comes with middle age and a wrinkling face. On another front, self-confidence falls along with sagging breasts. For a third, a nose job can probably get someone the modelling assignment she was previously rejected for."

Dev Anand: Concealing his age with a face lift

Amitabh Bachchan : Known to have undergone a face lift

At the same time a realistic idea of what's possible is also important. That includes what's possible for your body and for your personality. It's very easy to lose sight of our real problems and become obsessed with a figure flaw instead. We think "if only I was slimmer or had a bigger chest my life would work out". As 21-year-old Ishita Madan says, "A year ago I was really down in the dumps. I thought if only I looked different I'd have a better sex life, more friends, a gorgeous boyfriend and a better job with more money. Thankfully my mother talked me out of getting a nose job. With the same nose today I have everything except a better job. I don't think a different nose could give me that."

Very often, general dissatisfaction can result in someone finding herself or himself on the surgeon's table. People don't always have a specific reason for wanting surgery. They just know something is bothering them about a particular feature but they haven't really thought about what it really is, or why they feel like that. When we think of cosmetic surgery we think of perfection. Model perfect bodies and slogans like 'The perfect body can be yours' are sadly just not the case.



Michael Jackson : Great believer in plastic surgery

ugly or unattractive feature."

Alka is an attractive 28-year-old banker with a good figure and an even better social life. A year ago she underwent surgery to get her bat ears corrected. She explains, "I could never put my hair up or sport a short style. Whenever the wind blew I'd worry like mad that my ears would pop out and people would laugh. And I was sick of using hairspray."

Fashion designer Jatin Kochhar, too, had corrective surgery done on his nose, not once but twice. His story is one of woe. He hates the way his nose has turned out and now prefers what mother nature had blessed him with — the lesser of two evils. He moans, "Butcher! Disaster! The first is my doctor, the second is my nose. After the operation it was absolutely tilted towards the left. Then he operated on me again. Nothing prepares you for the pain after the surgery. It was a sheer waste of Rs 25,000. Even now it's got a left bias. If someone tells me follow your nose I'm in for trouble."

His surgeon, Dr S S. Sethi, president of the Plastic Surgery Association of India, drawls "That boy needs to see a psychologist. I also had three sittings with him before the operation but I don't see what his problem is. You've seen his nose, what's wrong with it? And now he calls me butcher. I refuse to comment on it."

All cosmetic surgery can do is improve what's already there. It can't turn you into Cindy Crawford overnight. Neither can good looks guarantee your happiness. Princess Diana and Marilyn Monroe are proof enough of that. At the same time medical experts are now more aware of the link between emotional and physical health.

As Dr Suresh Gupta says, "What are the motives of a person who anticipating pain, discomfort and knowing the risk of complications, willingly enters the hospital, lies down on the operating table to submit to an operation? It must be a chain of psychological reactions, unpleasant experiences, lingering remarks, frustrations, disturbing self-consciousness which eventually brings the patient to submit to a cosmetic operation. Plastic surgeons who deal with these patients know that it is not empty vanity that drives them to the decision. They want to be inconspicuous, they want to rid themselves of the feeling of being conspicuous by an

Sushmita Sen : Accused of undergoing breast implants

Baby Doll singer Alisha Chinai also boasts of a face lift, and some say, breast implants, but she, unlike Jatin, is mighty pleased with the results and what it's done for her looks. Pop singer Michael Jackson is, of course, in an entirely different category. He's got himself a complete body overhaul: eyes, nose, mouth, ears, and even colour.

Why just celebrities. Today aesthetic surgery is the buzzword in almost every high-income household. Considered a magic cure for life's problems the doctor sometimes has to play God to help the patient realise whether a surgical procedure is actually going to make that positive difference or is just another traumatic step in a crisis situation.

For women who've been sexually abused, it's common to have a distorted image of their body. They may take to cosmetic surgery as a way of changing the looks that have caused them so much pain. They want to leave their old life behind and as a result their old looks. American actress Roseanne Arnold says in her autobiography about her sexual abuse by her father, "Everytime I looked in the mirror I'd see my dad. It's hard to look at your abuser in the mirror everyday. To me plastic surgery felt like a way of reversing all the shit that had happened. It was part of my physical recovery."

Sridevi : Well done nose job

Liposuction is a much harder one to argue about on the health scale. It can only improve your silhouette by getting rid of love handles or smoothing out the bulging lumps on the sides of saddlebag thighs. It is a body contouring excercise not a body slimming one. It can't make your legs or hips slim all over.

Liposuction cannot get rid of cellulite. The fat that causes it is too close to the skin to be removed in this way. Surgeons can only remove a few pounds of flesh at a time otherwise you'd go into clinical shock as happened with a young woman in Bombay at a reputed hospital some months ago. She died on the operating table. Dr Suresh Gupta explains, "You can only remove two litres of fat at a time because along with that fat comes blood, which needs to be replaced. Some quacks, impersonating as surgeons don't realise this and blood pressure falls leading to disaster."

On the other hand if you were very fat and managed to lose a lot of weight, you could very easily be offered an operation to trim the baggy flesh that often remains after massive weight loss — on your stomach, upper arms and thighs. But even in this case younger, fitter skin snaps back more easily after surgery. If the skin is old or has been stretched by repeated weight gain and loss, it can scar and sag more.

Facts such as these must be mulled over before you submit yourself to the surgeon's scalpel. Because cosmetic surgery is like any other surgery — it's painful and frightening and you have to feel it's worth it to go through with it. Only you can decide why you want it. And whether a nicer, smaller nose will really make that important a difference to your life. ■

Madhuri Dixit : Cosmetic beauty?

JAVED AKHTAR, *script-writer and lyricist, has scripted some of the greatest blockbusters in Bollywood history. After he split with Salim, he embarked on a solo career which catapulted him to the heights of fame. In his new avatar as poet, Javed penned his first audio-book,* **Tarkash,** *highly acclaimed by critics and connoisseurs of Urdu poetry.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Something well done, worthwhile and well appreciated.
What is your greatest fear?
That the fascist powers may destroy the secular and democratic structure of our society.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
The Leftist movement, European fiction, Urdu poetry and Hindi cinema.
What do you dislike most in others?
Pettiness.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Laziness.
What is your most precious possession?
Books, autographed by their writers like Kishan Chander and Faiz.
What objects do you always carry?
My reading glasses.
What makes you most depressed?
Communal flare-ups in the country.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?

What makes you most depressed?

Communal flare-ups in the country

It is too late to say that!
What is your favourite word?
Decency.
What is your favourite journey?
Life.
What is your favourite dream?
A prosperous India where people are healthy, educated, broadminded, creative, artistic and live in pretty houses in extremely clean localities.
What is your nightmare?
The socio-economic condition of most of India.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
A trio—my mother, Safiya, my wife, Shabana, and my daughter, Zoya. To choose one, I'll have to toss a three-sided coin.
What is your source of sustenance?
My love for life
On what occasions do you lie?
That is rare.
What is your greatest regret?
I could have learnt much more than I have.
What has been your happiest moment?
When I bought my first house.
What brings tears to your eyes?
The helplessness of the underprivileged.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

The Leftist movement, European fiction, Urdu poetry and Hindi cinema

How do you relax?
With friends, books and movies.
What do you envy most in others?
Their capacity for hard work
How would you like to be remembered?
With warmth and respect.
How would you like to die?
Not in a hurry.

THERE'S NOTHING ARTIFICIAL ABOUT THIS SMILE: IT'S MADE OF 20 NATURAL HERBS

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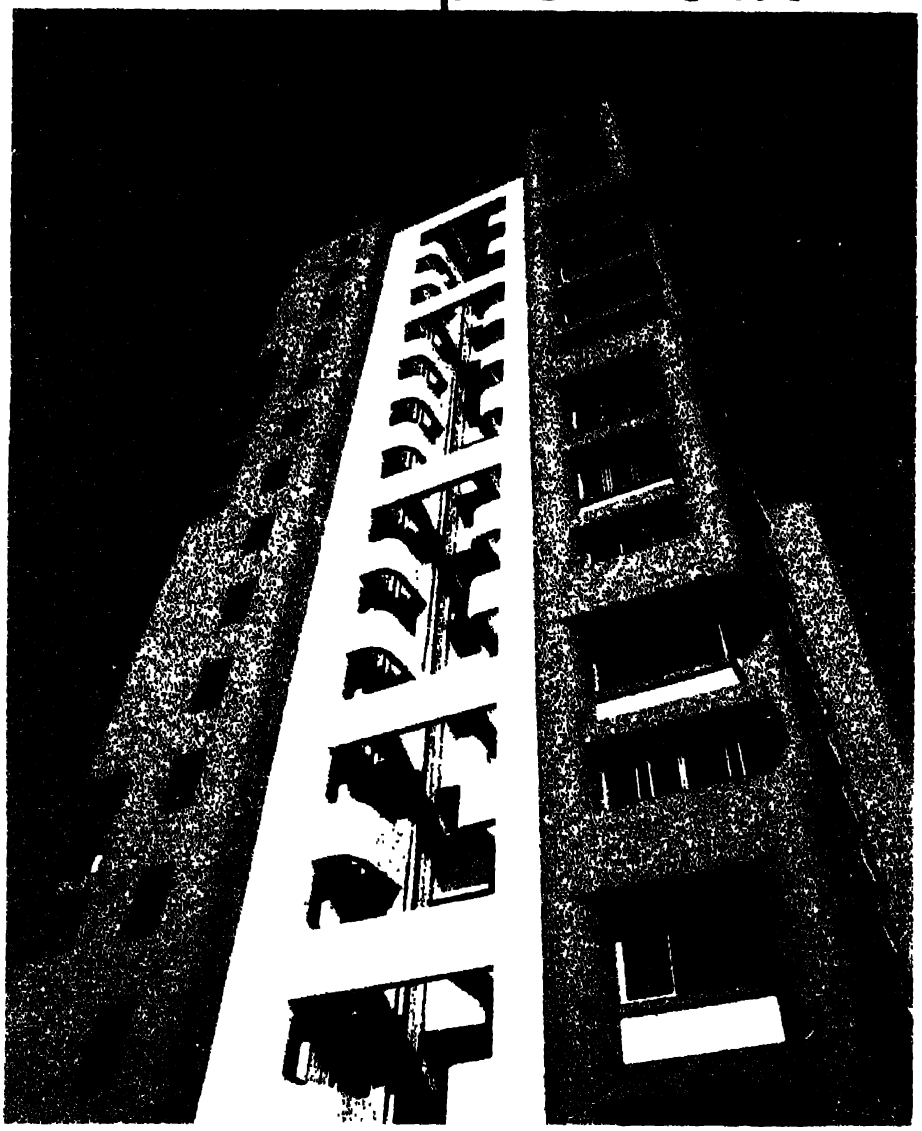

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The Telegraph

12 MAY 1996

POST

Not Just for Fridays

■ With the entry of foreign labels into the country, Indians can now choose from a large variety of outfits ('Friday Dressing', March 24).

Of course, this applies to the well-off corporate executives and businessmen who can afford to shop in exclusive international designer stores like Mexx, Benetton and KB+T.

When a casual wear shirt is available for Rs 700 or a plain leather belt for around Rs 500, it shows that the people who buy them have that kind of disposable income. Obviously, our standard of living has improved.

Avijit Dutta,
Calcutta

Mangar Kumar

The new range in men's wear

■ It is a nice feeling that we can now also wear an original Gianfranco Ferre in India but how many of us can afford a Ferre suit or trousers?

Rajiv Das,
Calcutta

Troubled by Television

■ Television has deviated from its earlier role of educating viewers; its pernicious effect is now disrupting social and family life ('Television and the Family', March 17).

Besides, what is there to watch on television other than a few maudlin serials and news magazines which are littered with commercials?

Every programme has a sponsor, from cricket to cinema which distracts viewer attention.

Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

Poetry, Please

■ Why have you suddenly stopped publishing poems? The poetry page added a lot of colour to the Magazine and allowed aspiring poets to get their works printed.

Pinaki Roy,
Batanagar (24-Parganas)

Tiny Ten

■ The book extract on cricketer Sachin Tendulkar was timely ('A Child Cricketer', April 7). For any person to be successful in life he needs a very supportive family and in Sachin's case he owes much to his elder brother Ajit who went out of his way to make sure the child Sachin had the right training. The result: Sachin is one of the finest batsmen in the world today.

Panchanana Baskey,
Baripada (Orissa)

■ Ajit Tendulkar has intelligently exploited brother Sachin's name in minting money from the book. The price of the book explains it.

Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

■ Cricketers these days seem to understand business very well. There was a time when they were poorly paid and there are instances of criceters leading lives of extreme deprevation.

But now cricket means money. In addition to this they earn large sums from their books and modelling assignments.

Suptarshi Sinha,
Patna

INSIDE

Pabitra Das

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A CONTINGENT of retired Indian Army officers and their wives went to Pakistan recently on invitation. Their view of our western neighbour.

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ZURICH BORN chef, Fredi Kuster, comes to Calcutta with mouth-watering Swiss delicacies!

Swiss treat at La Rotisserie, The Oberoi Grand

16 TIME TABLE
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30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Ashok K Mehta

COVER STORY

FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD

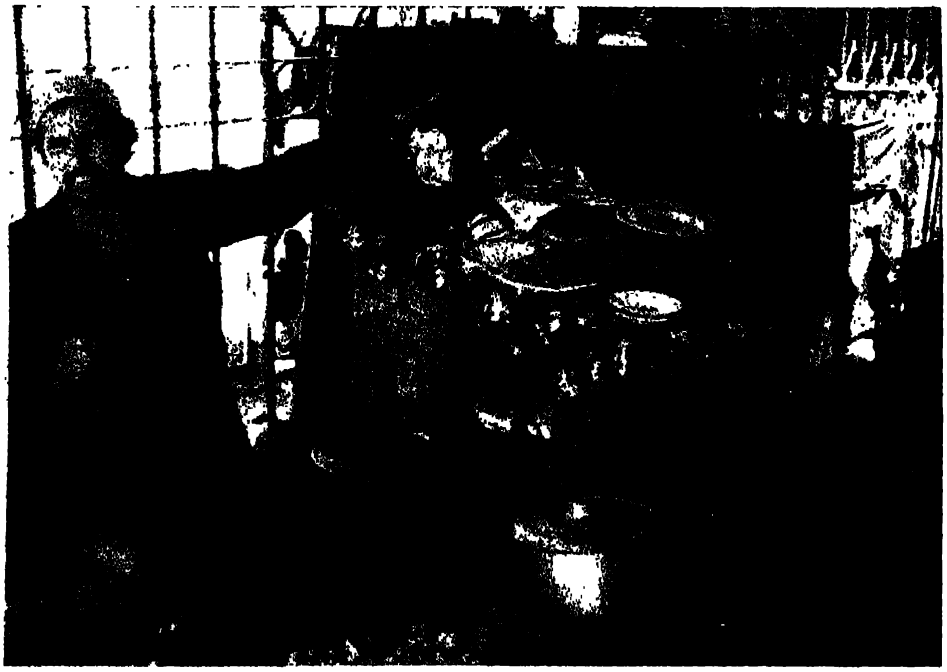
Photographs by Ashok K. Mehta

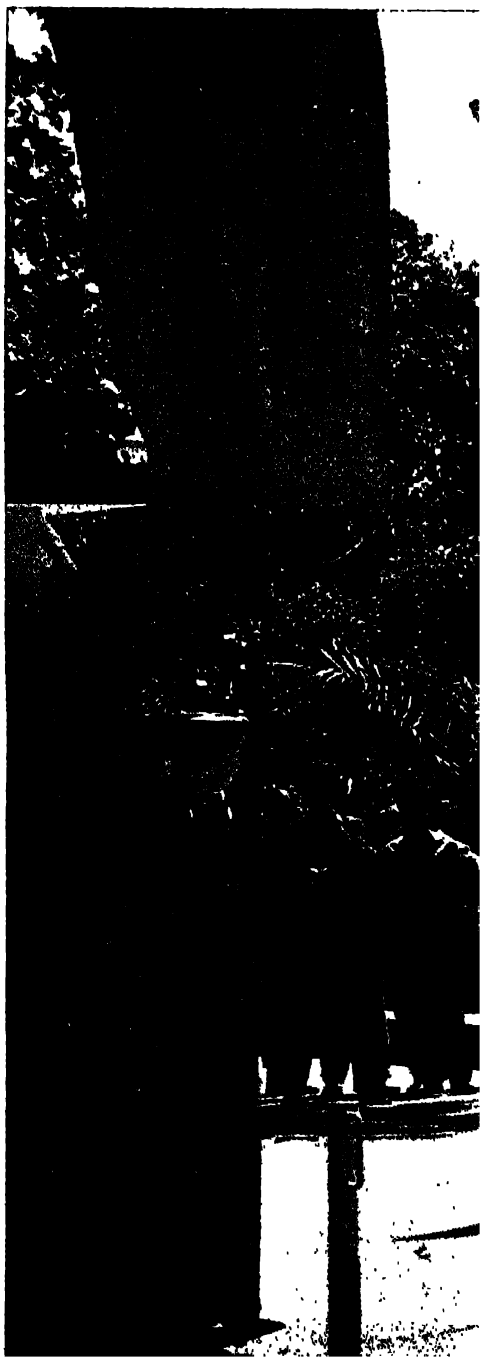
***Aditi Phadnis** reports on her visit to Pakistan: the warm welcome, the cold kulfi, and the love-hate relationship between our two countries*

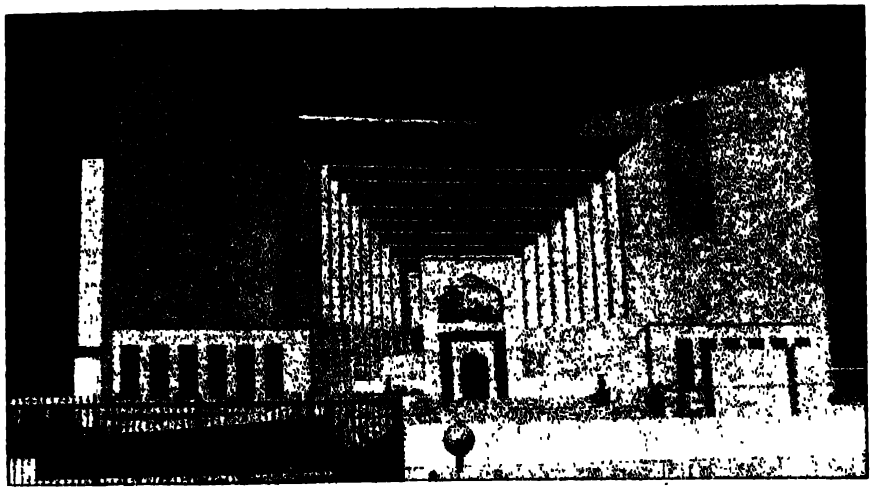
THE VAN TRUNDLED ALONG, CARRYING SOME OF THE SENIOr most generals, albeit retired, of the Indian Army. There were moments of frenetic chatter and long spells of silence. All the passengers appeared to be thinking about what they were leaving behind; and what they would see on the other side.

"My father was the one who built Lahore's Model Town," murmured the tiny, but exquisitely turned-out General Dewan Premchand, 81 this year, who has commanded more United Nations Peacekeeping Forces th-

The famous *kebabs* and *rotis* of Peshawar







an anyone else in the world. "I wonder what it looks like today," he said pensively, looking out of the window.

"You see the colour of the wheat?" remarked Colonel Jasbeer Khurana. "Now it is a muddy grey. By the time we return, it will be glorious ly golden."

The conversation was abruptly terminated at this point as the occupants of the bus gaped at the sight of a huge barbed-wire fence that seemed to stretch out unendingly through the wheat fields.

"That's the border fence," someone offered helpfully, "11,000

The Indo-Pak border at Wagah: A six-inch broad marker separates the two and (above) the Supreme Court of Pakistan

volts of pure unadulterated electricity, guaranteed to turn you to a crisp the minute you touch it."

We had arrived at the border of India and Pakistan

Rimcollians— students of the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun—stand out because they are very odd people. Take the Pakistan trip, for instance.

Indian Rimcollians and their wives were invited by their Pakistani counterparts for a reunion. They could, like others who have visited Pakistan earlier, have taken the line of least resistance and flown from Delhi to Lahore. But they chose to go to Amritsar by train, cross the Indo-Pakistan border on foot and go to Lahore by road, causing endless hours of paperwork in India and Pakistan, and many anxious moments for officials.

Rimcollians like to live dangerously, in fact, that's what they live for.

General Manoharan, definitely the shortest major general in the Indian Army, revels in danger. The RIMC wives announce that they are going to the land of *tulaqs*, so if they meet some handsome Pathans, they will leave their husbands, and say '*kabool*' three times happily to the Pathans.

Manoharan thinks for a while and then asks plaintively, "But what if a Pathan comes upto me and tells me 'kabool' three times? What will I do?"

The van stops at the immigration and customs counter. There are many forms to fill and several cups of tea to be had here. We get five-star treatment—normally this channel of travel is open only to foreigners. But there's no one there at 10.00 am, except some officials (Manoharan promptly loses his heart to a lady officer who has beautiful eyes) and a Golden Labrador sniffer dog, who has no work and sprawls on the floor with his nose between his paws looking sorry for himself.

One of the temples at Lahore damaged in the Ayodhya aftermath

It takes more than an hour to finish the paperwork. Everyone is getting impatient. their Pakistani hosts will have come to the border at 9.00 am, and will be waiting. The leader of the delegation, General Virendra Singh, booms out to the officials. *"Aur kitni der lugegi?"*

There is a panicky moment when Dr N.M. Ghatate, another diminutive Rimcollian, a lawyer of some repute and a member of the BJP's national executive, forgets

Gurdwara Panja Sahib which houses an imprint of (inset) Guru Nanak's hand

what he did with his passport. But that's sorted out eventually, and we begin walking towards Pakistan.

We approach the ten feet of earth that is no man's land. Exactly five feet ahead of us is a thick white line that divides the two countries. "If it hadn't been for the British, we would have been one," someone says. If only things were that simple.

A burly Border Security Force jawan in full regalia stands to attention on the Indian side. He looks a little uneasy, there are too many people to be controlled. What if they lose their heads and make a dash for it? The Pakistani Ranger on the other side looks as menacing. I cower and am dreadfully embarrassed when – as we get our luggage together to cross over, there are roars from a loudspeaker on the Indian side. "Pakistan murdabad"

We can see Rimcollians waving to us from the other side. They're beckoning us to cross over. General Virendra Singh takes the first symbolic step into Pakistan. This is not the jackboot of the soldier. We're going home, or what used to be home.

The author, Aditi Phadnis, with Inayatullah Hasan, one of the surviving members of the INA, in Pakistan

Our hosts in Lahore are Brigadier and Mrs Nayeem. It is here that we learn our first lesson. You don't talk of the 1971 war.

Brigadier Nayeem has a bad leg. "I was shot," he says briefly, when he's asked how he hurt it. He says he was a Prisoner of War (PoW) in India after 1971. General Ashok Mehta, a Rimcollian who was at Bogra during the 1971 war and is married to me, tells me later he might have done the damage. I'm struck with remorse. Not so Ashok, who, on reaching the Nayeems's, tucks into *alu ka puranthus*, *dahi* and roast chicken.

And that's the second lesson. We're invited out to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Alcohol is banned, a bottle of local whiskey is available only in the black market and costs Rs 5,000. So Pakistanis, who don't drink, stuff you with food as a substitute.

It is the ultimate high: you go to dinner and the tables are creaking with food. There are two kinds of chicken, two kinds of mutton (we are not served beef to spare our feelings, though more than one member of the group is partial to an underdone steak).

When our hosts discover I am a vegetarian, *lauki* and *tinda* are produced for me with profuse apologies; they're leftovers from lunch. I resolve to suppress the fact that I don't eat meat.

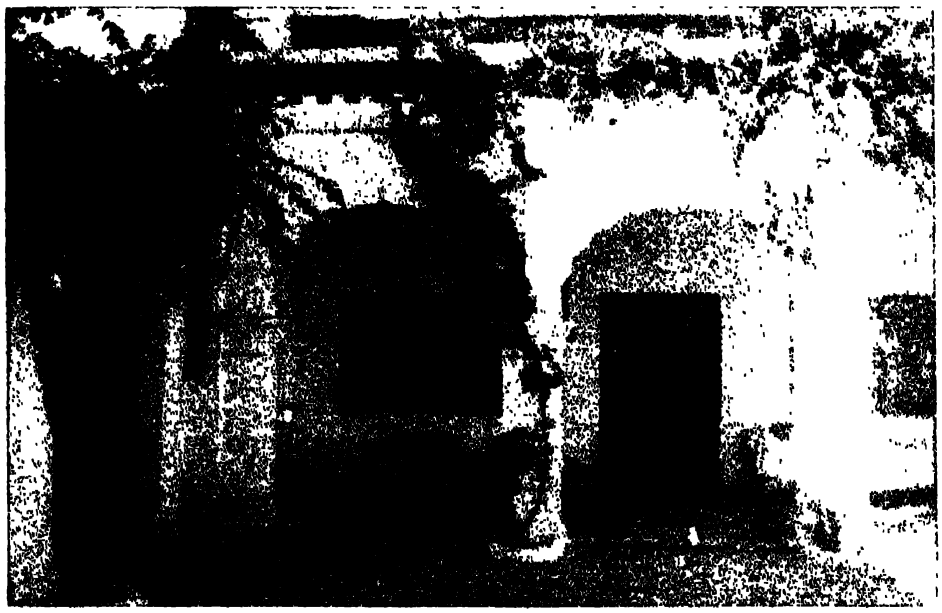
Pakistanis like to eat. But Punjabis, more than others. So Lahore is full of eating places which are open all night. At 3.00 am, shops start serving *nahari* and *paya*, soup made from trotters which is simmered with pulses and spices. In the winter months you get *harisa*, a greasy looking unattractive pulp of greens, meat and 12 different kinds of pulses and lentils.

Harisa originated in Kashmir, travelled to Amritsar with the armies which lived on their stomachs, and has settled down in Lahore. The signs on the shops in old Lahore still say: "Original Amritsari *harisa*". It is enormously rich, smooth and tasty. On being told it has aphrodisiac qualities, Ashok digs into it.

At 11.00 am, you get *puri bhaji* and *halwa puri*. At lunch time, large Pakistanis come out burping from eating houses, after *kebabs*, *rotis* and *firni* or *dahi*.

After all this, you cannot expect to stay awake. But if you choose not to have a siesta you can have a glass of sugarcane juice instead, which is served on street-corners in *paan*shop like kiosks, or a mini meal of *golgappas* or *dahibhallas*. The 'water' in the *golgappas* is much more sour than it is in India but is less spicy

Taj Mohammadi's house at Dera Shadi Khan, Peshawar



A view of a *kabari* shop in Lahore

The *dahibhallas* are different as well. In India, a good *dahibhalla* would be soft on the inside but crisp on the outside. There they are more substantial, (as it is not *urad* but *maash* which is used to make them) and are served with a topping of boiled potatoes and slivers of *kheera*

If you are of delicate sensibilities, you can have fruit with your tea strawberries are red and plump, if a little tart, and in spring you can get cherries and peaches

And there's no dearth of food for dinner Apart from the numerous Chinese restaurants in Lahore, you can get *biryani* that is ladled out from huge *degs*, *qorma* or marinaded chickens that are strung out on lines outside shops, waiting to be put in the tandoor

Then you must have ice-cream Near Lakshmi Buildings in old Lahore (so named because it once belonged to the Lakshmi General Insurance Company) you have strawberry and pista-flavoured home-made *kulfi*. If there are many of you, you can have a *kulfa* a block of ice cream But the *kulfi* is the best, creamy swirls bursting with fruit and nuts, none of your sorbet nonsense thank you, and sinfully rich.

But there's more to Lahore than food. Lahoris like music, drama and the arts. The Alhamra is an impressive red brick institution for painters and students of art. Pakistani tele-plays, so popular in India, are a by-product of the vigorous theatre movement in Lahore.

And as for music and dance, who says it is unislamic? For a few stolen hours, we were taken to the Shakir Ali Memorial, the home of one of Pakistan's most famous artists which was turned into a memorial after his death

As I wandered through the house, I stopped entranced near the basement. I thought I heard *raga* Megh through the door And sure enough, a girl and four men were practising the same *bandish* in Megh *-koyaliya kahe kuhu kuhu*—that I, as a student, had learnt many years ago.

Why are we enemies with Pakistan?

Though discussion on politics was avoided, it was clear why. The name of General A.K. Niazi, the man who signed the instrument of surrender after 1971, continues to be a dirty word in Lahore. After the war, when Lahoris got to know he was going to settle down in their city, they announced they were going to blacken his face and parade him on a donkey.

In the intervening years, he tried hard to restore his name: he held press conferences when General Zia-ul-Haq came to power. Dressed in black with a red *patka* he tried to clarify that it was politicians who had made Pakistan lose the war. But even the press paid little attention to him. Today he lives quietly, speaking to no one, not answering his telephone.

Bangladesh is a sore point with Pakistanis And so is Kashmir Feelings run high, specially in the average Punjabi heart, at the atrocities the Indian Army is committing in 'India Held Kashmir'

'You are the Big Brother. You should take the first step," says Brigadier Mukhtar Kareem, who wants to see a 'land for peace' solution to Kashmir Radio and television carry on relentless propaganda about oppression in Kashmir Looking at PTV, one would think India was Kashmir and vice versa But then isn't that true about Doordarshan and Karachi as well?

As a result, I am oblivious to the

A *kulfi-faluda* shop in Lahore with glittering mirrored facades

political upheavals in India which have occurred while we are wining and dining — mostly dining — in Lahore.

But in the bohemian circles where we did 'wine' one day — a set of outspoken artists who seemed to be very serious about their work — we found that no one favours whiskey in Pakistan. The national — or rather, anti-national — drink seems to be vodka.

But a discussion on a slide show of pictures shot during Muharram ceremonies yielded the following political point: that the immersion of the *tazia* into the sea at Karachi was the effect of Hindu colonisation and was of recent origin.

Pakistanis view the Hindu with suspicion and uncertainty. The older generation of Pakistanis cannot understand how the Hindu, who looks so meek and will not hit you back even if you slap him around, can get so tough in his own home.

Brigadier Kareem said he recalled the way he would beat up Hindu boys in school, but once inside their houses, the Hindu boys would not touch the Muslims, would not allow them into their houses, and would call them '*mlechh*' (unclean)

"This really used to puzzle us," volunteered someone. "How can you be physically so inferior and yet try to take the moral high ground?"

What with all this dining, there isn't much time to see anything. I'm anxious not to leave Lahore without saying hello to Imran and Jemima. But they're not at home

So, we go to Pace, Imran's store instead It is expensive, so I just buy a packet of Pakistani *vari* which is excellent. But my appetite is whetted so I visit more stores. They're packed with imported goods: if you're Pakistani, don't drink and are rich, there's lots to buy.

Pace: Imran Khan's swanky store in Lahore

We decide we don't qualify on any count. So we pack our bags to move on to Islamabad, taking the Grand Trunk Road which Sher Shah Suri built many hundred years ago. It is an eerie feeling.

Ashok is enormously excited: his family migrated from Rawalpindi after the Partition. He is certain he can locate his old home.

As a result, on reaching Islamabad we leave for Rawalpindi — which is about 20 minutes by road — immediately. I marvel at Islamabad. The roads are broad, the lawns are beautifully manicured and it is very much a city in the making As we are guests of Pakistan's interior minister, Nasirullah Khan Babar, we are put up in Islamabad's only five-star hotel, The Pearl Continental. But the officialdom of a capital city is evident. In Lahore, we were free to go where we liked. Here, a handful of uniformed immigration officers *tell* us we're free to go where we want

The Rawalpindi trip is a waste. Ashok reaches *Talwaron ka Bazar*, where his grandparents lived, but can't locate his home — too many buildings have come up changing the face of Pindi. But on the way, we do stop at a college his grandfather built: the Government College, which was earlier called the Sanatan Dharma College. Obscured by paint, a marble plaque announces that this wall was paid for by Ramditta Mal in the memory of his parents.

We meet the vice-principal of the college. I gush on about how sad one feels that our two people have been divided by forces of '*siyasat*'. He is firm. The countries have been divided, he says, and are now two sovereign nations, with different founding principles. The sooner both come to terms with this, the better.

In the course of the trip, I realise how true this is. My woolly liberal little mind is unable to grapple with this reality. That night, I catch Zee TV in our hotel room, ignoring Ashok's irate shouts from the bathroom that we're going to be late for dinner. They're showing clips of Karachi violence which has resurfaced earlier in the day

Whatever the neurosis of India's ruling elite, Pakistan's appears to be an obsession with achieving nationhood. The whole world recognises Pakistan as a sovereign nation. But Pakistan's ruling classes still see themselves as a nation in the making. Hence the *jehad* in Kashmir and the compulsion to have a stake in running Afghanistan.

Lahore: Sugar cane is a great favourite here

The Government Post Graduate College in Rawalpindi: Formerly known as the Sanatan Dharma College

After all, it was all one empire not so long ago

I'm torn between trying this theory out on those I meet during lunches and dinners, and listening to the story of their life The latter, of course, is much more interesting.

I'm standing next to a tall man at lunch one day. He asks me who I am and then introduces himself. He's Brigadier Inyatullah Hasan, a soldier in Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, now a journalist who writes a column called 'The Cutting Edge'. He has been married to an Indian Tamil, an Australian and is currently wedded to a devout Pakistani Muslim several decades younger than him He is an atheist, a Rimcollian, and has been a millionaire and a minus millionaire. He is the most interesting man I have ever met in my life.

He tells me a story.

When the INA was at a cross-roads, someone told him that there were many similarities between the Indonesian revolution for independence and India's own freedom struggle Hasan was a young man with no ties. He packed his bags and left for Thailand, to somehow smuggle himself into Indonesia and join the resistance

One evening he was knocking about on the beachfront, hoping to meet someone who could help him, when he noticed a young Indian lolling about in his chair, having had a great deal to drink After a few more rounds, he told Hasan that he was a pilot, and that he flew between India and Indonesia. Hasan asked if his plane was with him; could he give Hasan a lift? "Hop on," he told Hasan nonchalantly, and fell asleep, snoring loudly.

Hasan wondered what to do He couldn't leave, the pilot might take off without him In the morning, after many cups of coffee, Hasan and the pilot took off for Indonesia Hasan timidly asked him his name "I'm Biju — Biju Patnaik," he told Hasan

That friendship has lasted all these years Hasan's face lights up at the mention of Captain Laxmi Sehgal I tell him she's in fine fettle and that her daughter, Subhashini, a Marxist, is a carbon copy of her. We're so engrossed in each other, we don't realise our host has come and gone; the stocky Nasirullah Khan Babar. I resolve to correct this lapse in my manners when we go to Peshawar.

We leave for Peshawar and go to Babar's home, which is filled with antiques as he's an avid collector of beautiful things We notice the change of ambience. Peshawar is more like the stereotype of Pakistan we are told about. There's no time to visit either the resettlement camps where refugees from the Afghan war are living, or the contingent of Bosnian refugees who are trying to live in Pakistan to disprove Western notions that Muslims of the West are quite different from Muslims of the East.

Babar is a local boy. Though he's a minister, there is no security, none of the *lal batti* and gunmen we associate with our ministers. People wave to him as he drives through the streets. There are no Kalashnikovs but rosy-cheeked Afghan boys say they can procure them for us if we want. "*Badam? Kishmish? Pista?*," they ask, then in a lower, more helpful tone, "Kalashnikov?"

Peshawar is famous for *chappal kebabs*: beef thickly ground, then made up with fiery spices into a flat *kebab* that looks like the sole of a *chappal* And of course, the dry fruit. I go mad slowly Ashok tells me firmly we can't take all the dry fruit of Peshawar back to India and stops my buying spree We drive through the city, in search of carpets, Peshawari *chappals* and look at the sights

The Yadgar Chowk was built for the martyrs of the 1971 war. But the road and the area around it has been taken over by moneychangers. In Peshawar you can change any currency of the world You get special rates if the currency notes are torn For instance, you can change a torn half of a dollar note if you pay a small commission How the moneychangers keep in touch with the fluctuating money market of the world is a mystery But it is a flourishing business

The other business is drugs But I decide it is not prudent to try and make contact with drug dealers while we are guests of the interior minister

We return to Islamabad and are told we still have Murree to visit. Murree is a typical hill station

A picturesque view of Murree: On a clear day

like Dehradun or Mussoorie, the difference being that you can see Srinagar in the distance on a clear day.

At dinner, we are told we are going to Dera Shadi Khan, the village of the oldest living Rimcollian, Taj Mohammed Khanzada, who is a Muslim League member of the National Assembly. Many jokes are cracked; Taj Mohammed and Nasirullah Babar are on opposite sides of the political fence.

The village is a revelation. This is a typical Pathan settlement, with beautifully-kept houses all arranged back to back according to the hierarchy in the family. I walk around the village with one of the ladies in the family There's something familiar about her. I ask her hesitantly if she's from Pakistan. She smiles She comes from Badulla, central Sri Lanka, and has married into the family.

Farida Khanzada is highly educated, but has chosen to live in an obscure Pathan settlement for love, she met and married her husband while he was running a distillery in Sri Lanka. Being accepted by a Pathan family of the lineage of the Khanzadas was difficult. But she has managed to integrate with the household She says there isn't much to do, no one reads much, or listens to the radio It is either the television, gardening or eating.

Drugs are a serious problem, on account of easy availability And because the Pathans are so close-knit, marriages within the family can create serious problems. Pathan mothers are obsessive about sons. They choose wives. This causes a neurosis of epic proportions.

Jhelum: The moneychangers here exchange all kinds of currency

you can see Srinagar at a distance

She tells us a funny story. She was listening to opera one day in her room, quite lost in the beauty of the music. She came to only when she found other women peering through her window and banging on her door

What was the problem, she asked them.

Was she in any pain, they enquired. They'd got worried when they heard those shrieks coming from her room.

No, she explained patiently. She wasn't experiencing any pain; it was only Puccini.

I'm enchanted by this wonderful quicksilver woman. But it is time to move on. We are to visit two *gurdwaras*: Panja Sahib and Dera Baba Nanak. Panja Sahib bears marble plaques to commemorate the visits of Karnail Singh Sandhu in 1984 and Jewan Singh. It is easier for NRI Sikhs to visit Pakistan than it is for Indian Sikhs.

Panja Sahib is so named because when Guru Nanak was travelling through this region, his two disciples stopped to drink water. Guru Nanak noticed a boulder roll down from a nearby hill. He put out his hand and stopped it. The imprint of his hand, the *panja*, can be seen even today. A spring of water welled up at that spot. Today, plump trout frolic in the *kund*.

Dera Sahib is full of pilgrims. *Seva* goes on in both *gurdwaras* with *langar* and *kara prasad* and *kirtan*.

The trip is coming to an end, and I'm beginning to feel tearful. It is as if the holidays are over and you have to return to boarding school. We return to Lahore and make our way back to the border. It looks exactly as we left it — except that we are on the other side this time.

I can read a sign which says "*Mera Bharat Mahan*" and welcomes you to the world's largest democracy I don't want to go back I don't want to leave Nasir Fatehuddin and his charming daughter, and Brigadier Nayeem and his wife who have forgotten all their commitments to look after us. We bid goodbye to Major Istiaqur Rehman who is one of the moving spirits behind the trip. Brigadier Mukhtar Kareem reminds me to write about his 'land for peace' proposal on Kashmir Fat tears are about to roll down my cheeks. But we cross over, promising to meet again at Dehradun for the platinum jubilee of the RIMC

Once again, there's silence as we return to Amritsar from Wagah General Samir Sinha recalls how, during Partition when he was overseeing the movement of refugees, an old woman came up to him and asked him, "*Puttar*, are we in India? Can I shout 'Pakistan *murdabad*' now?"

One of the greatest gifts God has given human beings is the power to forget. But when it comes to Pakistan, can we ever forget? ■

Aditi Phadnis is the Chief of Bureau of *Sunday* magazine

FOCUS

JUST SAY NO

But what happens to those who succumb to the temptation of drugs? ***Manisha Gulati*** *finds out*

Children require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction.
— Anne Sullivan, American educator

Most people regard drug addiction as a problem; what they don't realise is that it is a disease. And that, like any other disease, it affects all kinds of people, no matter what their age, profession or socio-economic background The individual is completely helpless once in the throes of addiction, and it is extremely unlikely — in fact, near impossible — that he will ever manage to come out of it without outside help.

But, unlike other ailments, drug abuse is a self-inflicted, self-chosen disease that a person willingly subjects himself to. But what makes an individual choose this path of self-destruction? What really goes into the making of a drug addict?

Research over the last couple of decades points to several factors. family background, curiosity, peer pressure, loneliness, depression, frustration and even broken

Drug addiction: Once you are hooked, it is very difficult to become clean again

The killer addiction : You have to be highly

relationships, with the family playing a pivotal role as a contributing factor. Previously an affliction of the late 20s and early 30s age group, drug addiction has now permeated even the school and college level. The reason for this is a growing awareness of drugs, easy availability, newer forms of drug like pills and smack, and parental neglect.

Within the first five years of a child's life the interaction between him and his parents determines his personality. A child can only grow normally when his parents have his best interests at heart, specially when the child is totally helpless and dependent on them But many times parents try to satisfy their personal, individual, family and social needs through the child. So much so that it is claimed that even before a child is born his position is defined in the family.

A drug addict: Choosing to destroy himself by shooting up

motivated to emerge from its throes

You might wonder then, why one child grows up to be a normal happy kid and the other turns out to be depressive or rebellious?

Says Dr O.P Kashyap of the Vidyasagar Kaushalya Devi Memorial Detoxification Centre, "First of all let us make it clear that there is no such thing as the same family environment for everybody because there is such a thing as domestic politics And pressure comes to bear on one individual more than others. In every family you will find at least one individual who is 'bad' or 'mad' or 'sad'. If you tend to be 'bad' or 'mad' people will tend to throw bricks at you. So you should be 'sad' One becomes a scapegoat. And in a colluded rejection process everybody sees their own badness in one individual and he gets assigned the bad role He has to fulfil it He is constantly criticised, blamed, shamed, humiliated."

In their zest to control people, some families have it in them not to understand how the members of their family can be different from one another. This is a direct or indirect result of our society which is largely organised around controls If we get an opportunity to stigmatise people we do

Says Dr Kashyap, "Society finds so many things undesirable that we have to pretend to be none of those. What we do not realise is that life is nothing but growth and development. One has to subscribe to the concept of development Things don't happen to

us merely because we choose for them to be that way. When we suppress people we suppress their development Many responses never grow in people because of that. They function with half a deck Some cards are missing. So they're not cor plete individuals And drugs bec me an escape route"

Ajay Mehta, a product of a joint family, was always considered the black sheep of the household Not interested in the family business, he was more concerned with getting into films. Rebuked and emotionally blackmailed, he succumbed to family pressure and joined the business in the end But at the same time, he took refuge in drugs to cope with his frustration and failed ambition

Started as a weekly fix, he smoked mainly smack, which gradually paved the way for cocaine, until he was caught, rebuked more, and shunted into a de-addiction centre Clean now, he speaks of his experience "When we judge somebody as good or bad we naturally evaluate them," he says "If we really understood them we wouldn't say if they were good or bad Because they are only naturally unfolding themselves in a certain way When that balance is tampered with, the mental balance also goes for a six But today I'm much more stable and at terms with my life."

The Vidyasagar Centre has a majority of smack addicts. Between 100 to 500 addicts register here every year. The doctors help to bring their body back to normal functioning after detoxifying them At this stage they undergo what is known as the 'turkey period'. They suffer withdrawal symptoms like body pain, vomiting, insomnia, loose motions, a running nose, high blood pressure, and secretions of the respiratory system Medication is given to ease their suffering This is coupled with individual counselling, family counselling, group discussions, yoga and a healthy diet

Since this programme lasts for only 15 days it is not enough for a hardened drug user to do an about-turn and revamp his life Though he is encouraged to come back for counselling sessions, the motivation to do so is sadly lacking in most drug addicts There are always people around to tempt him to fall back into his old ways, and the reason that made him take to drugs in the first place still faces him as he leaves the centre.

What's worse, drug peddlers even try to get themselves admitted to the hospital on the pretext of being addicts and supply drugs to patients, not wanting to lose their customers! Says Dr Kashyap, "The same home environment that created the problem acts on them subsequently. Families lose faith. Even when families bring in patients for treatment, they sometimes supply them with drugs from outside when they see them suffering. And some only pretend that they want to be cured, so that their families are satisfied."

Suresh, a smack addict at the Vidyasagar Centre, has come back for the second time after being clean for two years. He blames this on his friends who introduced him to the drug in the first place. He admits getting tempted even as he lies on the hospital bed, specially as he sees some patients smoking secretly in the toilets.

The success rate at the hospital is pretty dismal. Of the patients that check in, 30 per cent give in in the first three months while 60 per cent lapse in the first three years. Only 5-10 per cent remain clean.

Rehabilitation — rather than de-addiction — centres, on the other hand, meet with slightly better results as patients stay in the centre for about six months after detoxification. In this period they follow a relatively

College students: They are most at risk with temptations surrounding them all the time

strict time-table and are disciplined into leading a healthier way of life.

Kripa Counselling Centre and Sahara are two such organisations. As Jagmohan Bagai, former drug abuser and now counsellor at Kripa reveals, "Out of 199 cases registered in the last three years, 61 were admitted for the rehabilitation programme in Bombay. And about 33 of these have stayed clean." (This is roughly the same as the international rate of success)

Kripa spends an average of Rs 4,500 a month on each patient, only charging him for food. About 45 per cent of their patients are treated absolutely free of cost

Jagmohan himself is a success story A drug and alcohol addict for 21 years, he speaks about his introduction to drugs, the struggle to give them up, and finally the solution. Introduced to *charas* in 1968 by his friends, he gradually took to drinking which became an addiction After being unsuccessfully detoxified ten times, losing his job and being deserted by his wife, he finally came into contact with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Off alcohol for five years now, he says, "Alcoholics Anonymous is a self-help group which teaches you to be more aware of your feelings, emotions, thinking and practise a different way of life. It teaches you that what you have is a limitation, a disease like any other. It is a behavioural difficulty Your reaction to the outside world. Drinks are only a symptom." Every member of Alcoholics Anonymous, says Jagmohan, is a source of strength and inspiration to the other. And most drug de-addiction centres would do good to follow this example.

But, in most cases, the desire to give up drugs arises only out of real dire circumstances. Either because the drug is not so easily available or because money runs out Seventeen-year-old Deepak, who studies in a prestigious Delhi school, smokes grass and sometimes takes intravenous drugs. Eager to kill the habit eventually, he is not yet prepared to tell his parents or clean up his act.

He says, "It's the easiest thing to find a drug peddl r They even hang around colonies at night. I go to one in Jangpura. Sometimes money is a problem but my parents give me enough. When I'm short of cash I just take from their cupboard Both my parents work so they don't really know what I do Actually they don't have the time "

Clearly, the role of the family is crucial in such cases Dr Kashyap agrees. "What a person really needs at this point is the support of family, friends and society. Understanding helps, misunderstanding hurts "

Preeti Khanna, family counsellor at Sahara Rehabilitation Centre claims, "When a person takes to drugs, his habits and lifstyle change in such a way that there is no sense of boundaries or discipline in his life He may take drugs out of anger or to spite someone, or because he is not strong enough and succumbs to his unhealthy environment "

But even de-addiction is, often, not the final solution Sometimes even if the patient gets cured family dynamics result in forcing him back into his original role after the honeymoon phase of compassion and kindness. Parents sometimes offer compassion instead of understanding because understanding involves change.

What people — specially those who deal with drug addicts — need to realise is that though one person may succumb to the addiction, the roots of that disease are found in practically every person. Because in the end, drugs are not really the disease of an individual, they are the disease of the system. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	0845	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	1010	4 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
MY 327	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 327	1610	[illegible]
MY 323	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 323	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
MY 164 [illegible]	daily	[illegible]	MY 113 306	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 6
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0964	[illegible]	PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PF 302	1635	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1030	[illegible]	IC 722	1300	1 3 5
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	4 7	[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
DC 181	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 [illegible]	DC 181	1600	1 2 3 4 5 7
DC 181	[illegible]	[illegible]	DC 181	1490	6
BANGALORE					
IC 721	0930	daily	IC 722	[illegible]	daily
9W [illegible]	1100	[illegible]	9W 312	2150	daily
MY 305 4/5	0630	[illegible]	MY 4 306	2245	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D 401	1630	4
IC 544	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 541	[illegible]	4
IC 769	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 770	[illegible]	[illegible]
VF 30	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 30	1700	[illegible]
MUMBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0820	daily
9W 20	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 301	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 6
D [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 301	0850	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 301	1130	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 21	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 5 6
MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1425	daily
DELHI					
IC 251	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 301	0825	[illegible]
MY 304	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 401	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 401	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 90	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 905	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 905	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 7
MY 307	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 301	[illegible]	daily
IC 854	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 854	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
IC 616	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 612	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
IC-257	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PF 301/302	[illegible]	4 [illegible]	PF 302/303	[illegible]	2 4
GOA					
MY 304 121	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
GUWAHATI					
D5-401	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
PF [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	1310	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1625	2 4 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HYDERABAD					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
IC 245	0915	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
IC-213	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JORHAT					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LILABARI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MADRAS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NAGPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 4
MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D [illegible] 40	0700	1	D5 401	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ 181	[illegible]	4	RJ 184	0700	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 875	0420	7	KL 875	0235	7
BANGKOK					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 106	1020	1
			KB 106	1210	5
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TG 214	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1505	2 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2130	[illegible]	RO 075	[illegible]	5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC 225	0700	1	IC-226	0920	1
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG 092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6, 7
IC-723	1300	1 3, 5 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG 095	1825	1,2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG 095	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7 061	1000	3	Q7 060	1230	3
[illegible]					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	[illegible]
[illegible]					
RA 214	2155	3, [illegible]	RA 213	2055	3 7
IC-747	1035	1 [illegible] 4 6	IC 748	1350	1, 2, 4 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
BA 142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	2 7
[illegible]					
SU-538	1755	4	SU 537	1555	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1105	[illegible]	KB 105	0810	[illegible]
KB-106	[illegible]	[illegible]			
[illegible]					
SQ 115	2345	[illegible]	SQ 416	2230	[illegible]
BI 108	0830		BI 107	2000	[illegible]
[illegible]					
LZ 504	1750	4	[illegible]	1650	4
[illegible]					
AI 306	0910	5	AI 305	1820	[illegible]
[illegible]					
IC 227	1530	[illegible]	IC 228	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
2311	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
3007	20-00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13 00	3004
2381	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya-Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Fri & Sat	16 15	2304
2301	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Dep Mon Tues Wed Thurs & Sat Arr Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sun	16-45	2302
[illegible]	13 1	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sat Arr Wed & Sat	17 50	2306
2307	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4-40	2306
2019	6 30	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** in Wdy Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11-35	3074
3047	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Sunday	12 25	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
5047	13 [illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sat Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	[illegible]	3010
3007	[illegible]	**Udyan Abha Tootan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	[illegible]	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	[illegible]	**Kalinjodum Express**	11 55	3020
3021	[illegible]	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 10	3022
5659	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	5 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	[illegible]	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3032
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	[illegible]
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 5[illegible]	1160
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14 10	**Sheldipuri (Chopan) Express**	4 50	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7-[illegible]	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 25	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20 15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5603	20-00	**Kaliher Express**	4-15	5604
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 40	3134
3103	18-20	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues, Thurs, & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
6003	20 30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 5	8001
2860	12 20	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	[illegible]	2859
2021	6-50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	[illegible]	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	2033
8030	11-20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 30	8029
2841	14-05	**Coromandal (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 [illegible]	2842
7003	8 10	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Wed Thurs & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
6011	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** Dep Tuesday Arr Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
8011	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	[illegible]	8012
6111	6 00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	[illegible]	6112
8005	20 5[illegible]	**Tillagarh Express**	[illegible]	8006
8015	21-40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 10	8016
8007	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	8008
5409	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 40	[illegible]
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	2822
8045	10 30	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	[illegible]	8046
8017	16-45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	1 [illegible]	8018
1035	15-50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	[illegible]	-
--	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
6512	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	
	14 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	14 [illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep Tues & Fri Arr Thur & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535-37

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: Campaign styles

In the beginning...: There was the ubiquitous Ambassador, that strong sturdy car that trundled through various rural and urban constituencies as leaders of the calibre of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel made their pitch to voters.

Technological upgradation: Became popular only in Indira Gandhi's time. As the principal vote-catcher for her party, Mrs G was flown around the length and breadth of the country to round up Congress voters and send them packing to the polling booths.

And no, in those days there was no T N Seshan to compute the cost of this exercise and countermand the elections if the expenditure was above the stipulated limit

So, was Indira Gandhi the original high-flier?: Yes, though her younger son, Sanjay, harboured ambitions of out-doing her on that front — an untimely death in a plane crash, however, put paid to all his plans

Not that Mrs G's campaign style was restricted to helicopters and private planes. Fully understanding the effect of the dramatic gesture on the electorate, Indira was often given to riding elephants and the like on the campaign trail

And what about Rajiv?: True to the family tradition, he harboured a love of flying as well; after all, he had been an Indian Airlines pilot in his time.

But when it came to his own constituency, Rajiv — accompanied by his wife, Sonia — preferred to drive his way around Amethi in a jeep, stopping at every village on the way to check on how his constituents were doing

While Rajiv conferred with the men folk, Sonia and daughter Priyanka lent the human touch by walking into houses, asking women what was available for lunch, and then sitting down in their kitchens to eat with them.

Indira Gandhi during an election campaign; the helicopter is in the background

The BJP's contribution: Was the so-called 'rath'; even if it was just a jumped-up Toyota. L.K Advani began the trend when he embarked on his Rath Yatra, campaigning for the cause of Hindutva, and the Ayodhya temple, through the Hindi heartland

Of course, there was no election in the immediate offing, but then Advani — canny customer, that he is — was thinking in the long term. In the short term, of course, all he achieved was the outbreak of communal violence in certain sensitive areas.

Dr Joshi's answer: To Advani, his principal rival in the party, was to clamber on to his own chariot and drive through India on what he called an Ekta Yatra. Needless to add, not much was achieved by way of *ekta* (togetherness), but yes, communal tension did follow in Joshi's wake.

The other charioteer: Was none other than N T Rama Rao, the late leader of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) His chariot was rather grandly named the Chaitanya Ratham, and was equipped with every comfort known to man

What's more, with his ratham, NTR had no need for a political platform; he just had to climb on to the hood of his chariot to address his acolytes from a lofty height

Also from the south of India: Was Jayalalitha, the extremely large chief minister of Tamil Nadu, whose speciality appears to be addressing crowds from behind a bullet-proof screen The reason, apparently, is that

Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia greet people from

the lady is on the LTTE's hit list, but one would have thought that the Iron Butterfly's bullet-proof cloak (which matches her sari exactly) would have been enough.

But let's give poor — well, enormously rich, actually — Jaya a break. Maybe she thinks that with all those large cut-outs of her's dotting the horizon, people don't need to see the real thing.

An insomniac's delight: On the campaign trail was none other than Narasimha Rao. Not only did Rao lecture rural folk on how our balance of payments position has improved after liberalisation, but he also, on occasion, dwelt at length on the troubles in Eastern Europe to people who don't know where their next meal is coming from.

A communication gap?: You bet! But then, Narasimha Rao is used to speaking to people who don't have a clue as to what he's going on about Remember the time he had to address an election meeting in a Tamil Nadu village in English because there was no interpreter around?

The organisers had mistakenly assumed that Rao — who speaks nine languages — was proficient in Tamil. But the PM had to confess that though he had read the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez in the original, he couldn't go futher than "*Vannakam*" in good old Tamil

Campaigning by proxy: Appeared to have taken the place of campaigning by chopper in this last general election, what with Mr Seshan sitting in the sidelines, his calculator at the ready.

L.K. Advani on his Rath Yatra

NTR atop his Chaitanya Ratham

pen jeep during an election campaign

And excelling at this was none other than the former environment minister, who masqueraded as Alka Kamal Nath in his constituency of Chhindwara, asking the people to vote for him, even though his wife (the aforementioned Alka) was the real Congress candidate

The common touch: Was, strangely enough, provided by the former Maharaja of Gwalior, Madhavrao Scindia. The former Union minister who was used to travelling around Madhya Pradesh in a helicopter, which he often piloted himself, hit the ground running in his Tata Sierra

Accompanied only by two other cars, he travelled through the rural areas of Gwalior, addressing impromptu meetings along the way And when the track got too bad for his car, the intrepid Scindia climbed on to the horse provided by locals and rode into the limelight ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says money and family are the twins who ride you hard and spur you to glorious achievements. Buying, selling, leasing, borrowing and lending hold the key to a happy you. While romance is possible, it will be sporadic and sudden. You might be hosting parties and functions.

Taurus
April 21 -- May 20

The sun and Neptune in superb positioning gives you the fillip, the imaginative brilliance, the intuitive hold on things necessary to speed ahead and be a winner. Be it music, science, research, construction work, housing and management, you should forge ahead.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

In a carry-over from last week, there is a chance to launch a venture, open a restaurant, start a business, have a legacy, get loans and funds sanctioned. Visits, interviews, appointments, a touch of romance and passion are fated. A lot of intrigue and foreign collaborations seem to be brewing for you.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Romantic linking, collaborations, travel, trade and wedding bells are predicted for Cancerians because the Saturn-Uranus sextile helps to activate things. Many Cancerians are in for a change of direction, both in their personal and professional life. It will be for the better.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

The pointers are for hard work and sweet rewards and that is fine in any situation. Do take chances, be at your best, get work done and also find time to relax and enjoy. Your system needs it. Use your imagination and will to get what you desire and expect. Actors, editors, teachers and managers get mileage.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Many of you will be taking decisive action and fortunately for you it will be the right one. The moon Jupiter conjunction will sprout new ideas and gambits, boost travel, make you innovative and ingenious, daring and deadly. Time to start or expand a business and prepare to make money.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Plenty of behind-the-scene activity, cross currents of friendship and animosity will be strong, so best take it in your stride. Finances get top priority. Journey, ceremony, buying, selling, lending, funding, foreign connections and secret deals are the warp and woof of your very existence.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Thoughts of love will keep you occupied. This is an excellent week to marry, co-ordinate, collaborate, build a house, renovate, move and reach out to others. Cultivate a hobby, rear up kids, take a study course, contact and communicate vigorously and effectively. The need to find new avenues foretold.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Ganesha says, a week of gains and financial transactions, trips and ties, too. Loans, funds, investments, capital formation, buying, selling, are the highlights for you. A promotion, job switch, loving pets, hiring or firing staff, finding lost articles and goods and improving health foretold.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The focus will be on family values, finance and most certainly, on strictly personal relationships. Children, hobbies and creative pursuits snatch your heart away. This week and the next week you will experience the truth of it, as this period started right from April 24. It is time to step out in style.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

An excellent week to travel, publicise your wares, burnish your image and that of the company you represent. It is a goodtime to sally forth and be with the world. Matters related to the house, home, family, vehicles, property, jewellery, office, warehouse and agriculture receive a boost.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

Many of you will find your bearings be aware of your potential and power be able to move fast and get what you desire. You can now start something new, different and exciting, as the timing is right. Those in communication, publicity, sales, teaching, films, painting, research and chemicals do wonders.

BIRTHDAYS

May 12: Moon-sun sextile, means wishes will be fulfilled. Friendship, money, love, children and hobbies all come together for you. A happy birthyear.

May 13: Moon-Saturn union and trine Pluto signifies that you will be misunderstood and reviled, but you will make excellent headway.

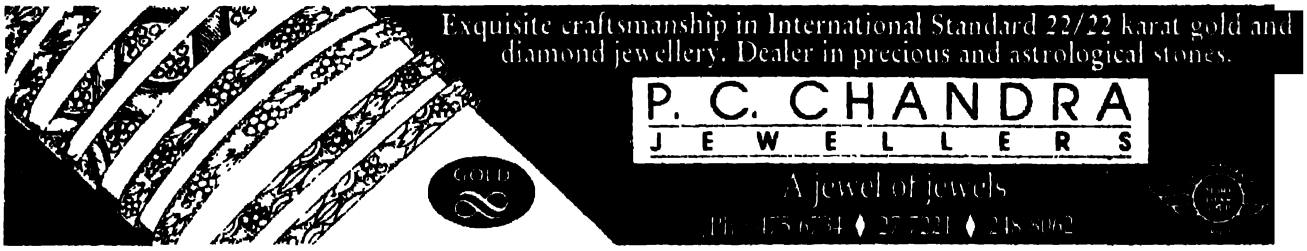
May 14: Moon square Jupiter formation leads to expenses and a danger of being cheated or at least misled. It would be best not to take the easy way out but to get at the truth.

May 15: Sun-Mercury conjunction favours particularly for lawyers, musicians, architects, pharmacists, film stars, producers, copywriters agriculturists and scientists. The luck of the draw will be yours.

May 16: Moon-Mars conjunction is excellent for money, journey, ceremony, publicity, marriage, long-distance connections and collaborations.

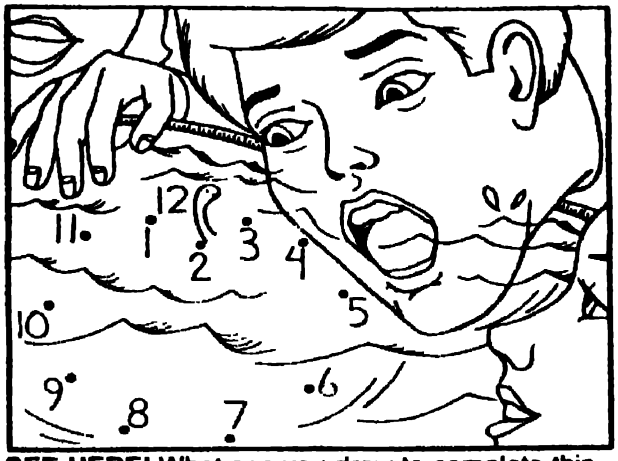
May 17: The new moon helps you to grow, evolve, be tenacious, and have the drive to succeed. Many of you will be marking new beginnings, following the policy of 'run till done'.

May 18: Saturn sextile Uranus helps you to be imaginative, take chances, and do well financially. Romance is in the air. So make the most of it.



JUNIOR WHIRL

HAI KAUFMAN



SEE HERE! What can you draw to complete this party game saga? To find out, add lines from 1 to 2 to 3 and so on.

TUNED IN! Fill blanks of these record titles with missing colours. 1. Rudolph, the ___-nosed Reindeer (Gene Autry). 2. I'm Dreaming of a _____Christmas (Bing Crosby). 3. ____Christmas (Elvis Presley). Limit: One minute.

1. Red 2. White 3. Blue

A-Z SUM UP! See if you can find a 20-number route from A to Z at right with a total of exactly 100. Make your way one square at a time in any direction — horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Do not use the same number square more than once in your tally.

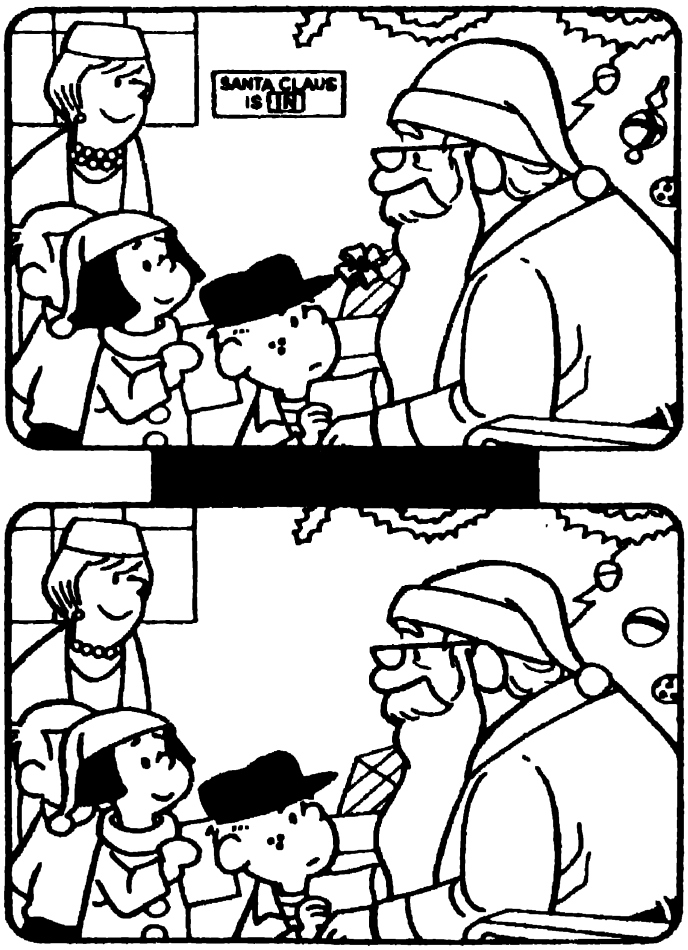
A	Z	5	7	7	1
7	3	3	3	1	5
1	5	7	1	5	9
7	5	3	3	7	3
3	1	7	5	5	9
9	7	3	1	7	3
9	3	5	7	5	5

One answer is given below, But others may be possible.

Indeed, there is a way to total 100 in just 16 A-Z numbers, that you may wish to puzzle out.

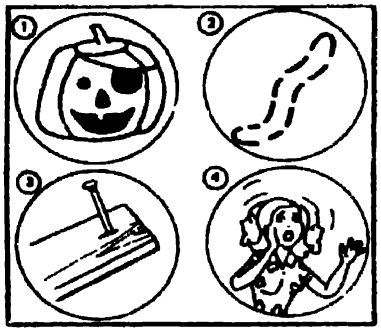
(One way in 20 numbers: A-7555731291517775 Z. One way in 16 numbers: A 7555731291517775-Z

HOCUS-FOCUS



FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Bead strand is missing. 2. Hair is shorter. 3. Sign is missing. 4. Bow is missing. 5. Cap is different. 6. Ornament is different.



MINI-THEATRES TO PONDER

Theatres in the round (see left)? Yes, in a manner of speaking. Four mini-stagings are presented, and a title for each is suggested below (not necessarily in order). Let's see how quickly you can match these titles with the four presentations:

A. A Drive in the Wood.
B. A Pumpkin Patch.
C. A Quick Turnaround.
D. A Ten-Piece Band.

Remember, idea is to match titles and presentations.

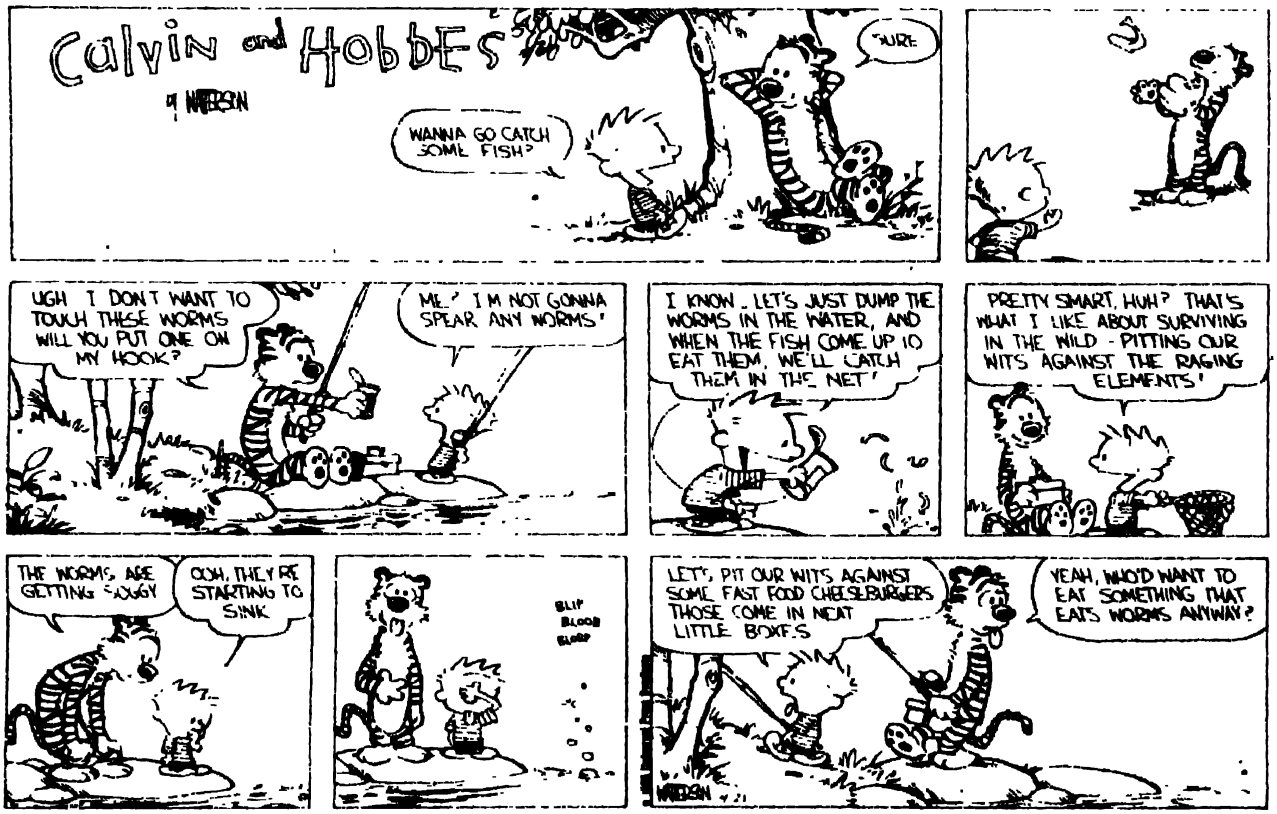
P.S. It's all in fun, folks, and shoudn't take much time at all.

Perhaps you can come up with some suggestions for similar stagings. Give it a try.

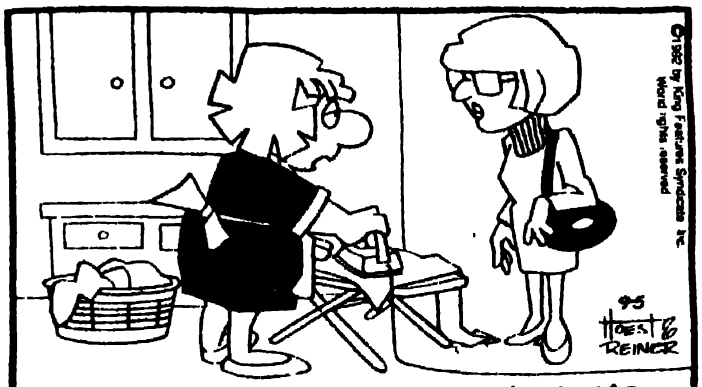
Answers A 1, B 1, C 4, D 2

ARCHIE

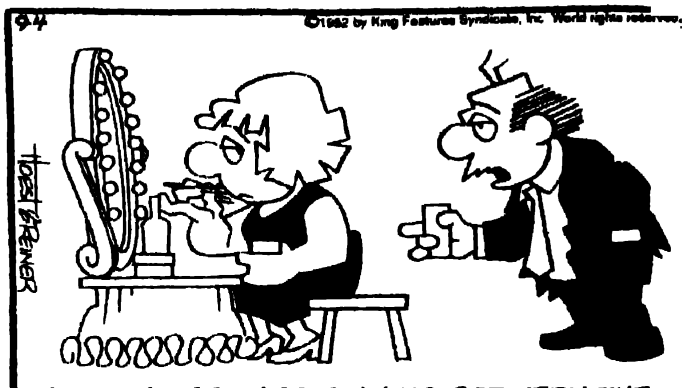
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



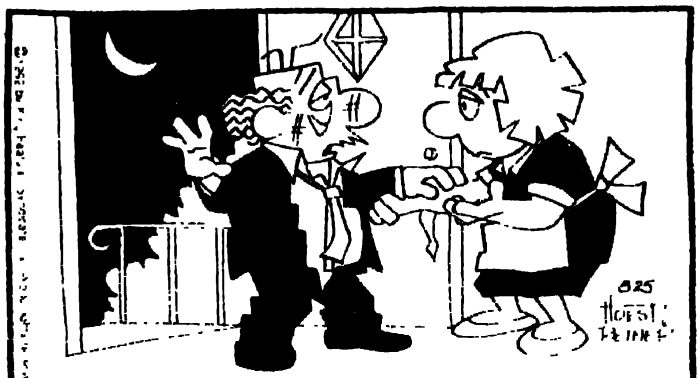
THE LOCKHORNS



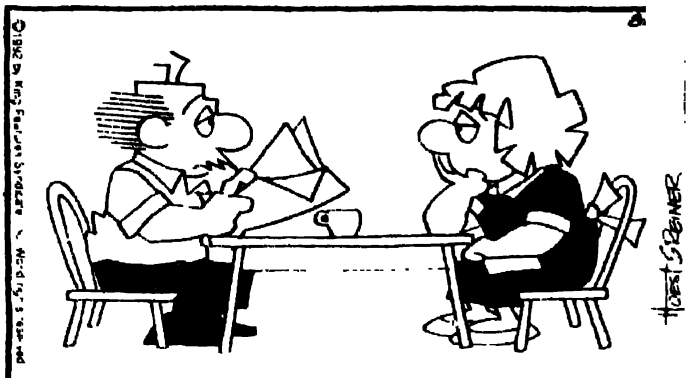
"WHEN I NEED HELP AROUND THE HOUSE, LEROY IS HARDER TO FIND THAN WALDO."



"IT MUST BE HARD STAYING BETWEEN THE LINES LIKE THAT."

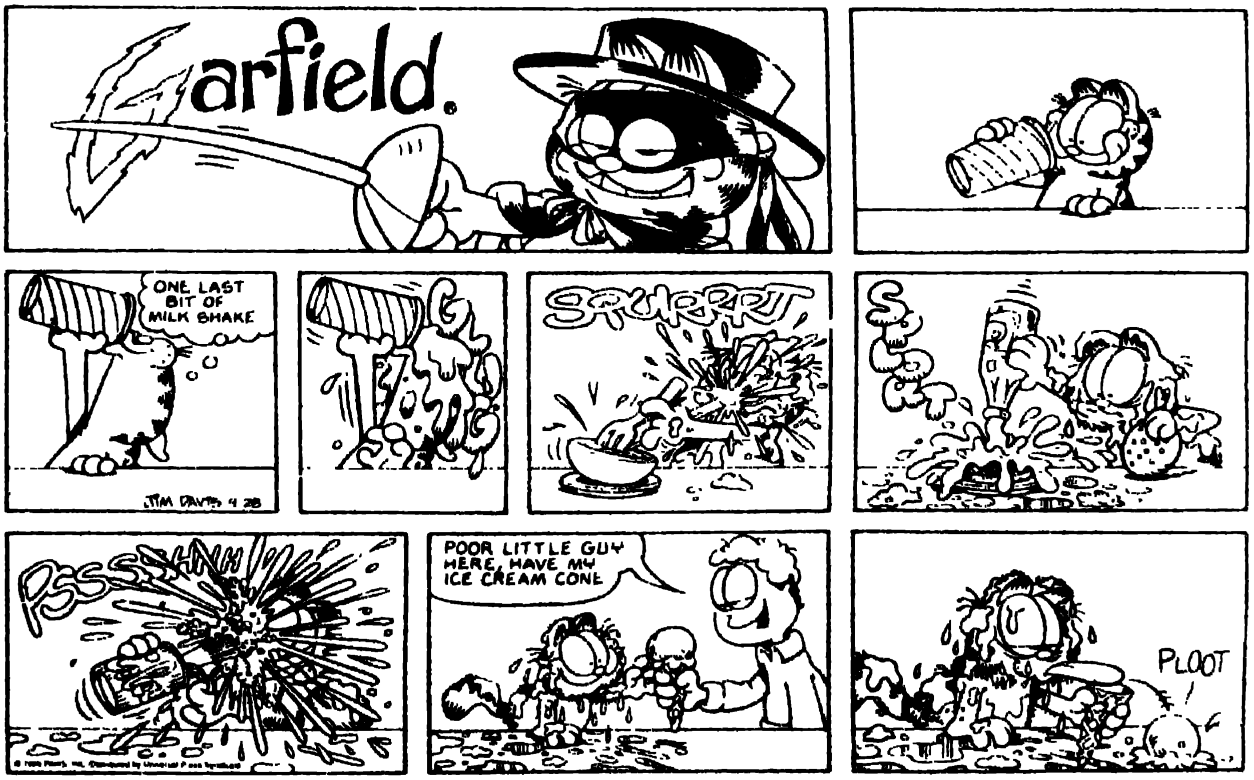


"I GOT IN THE LAST WORD... HE GOT IN THE LAST PUNCH."

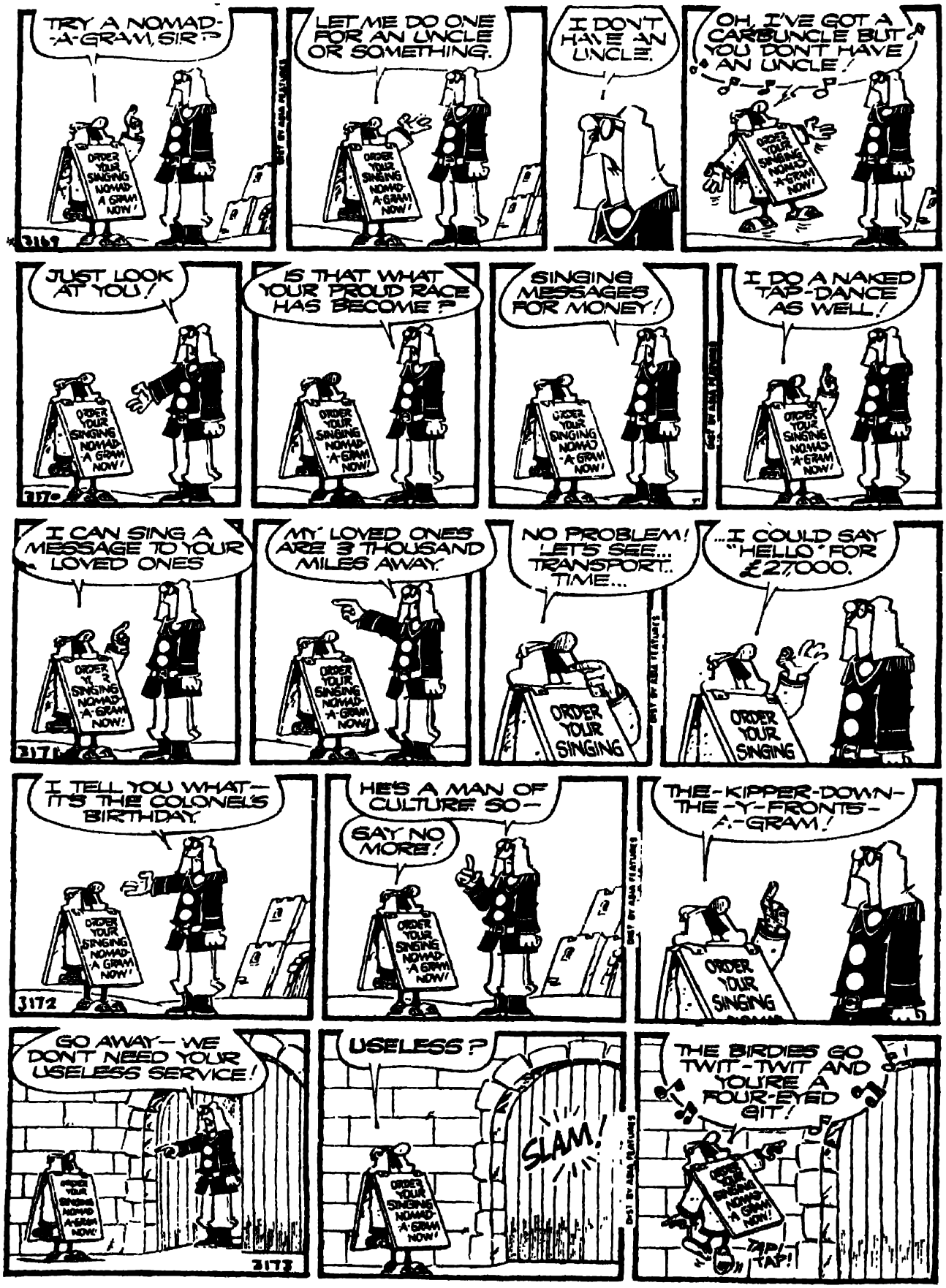


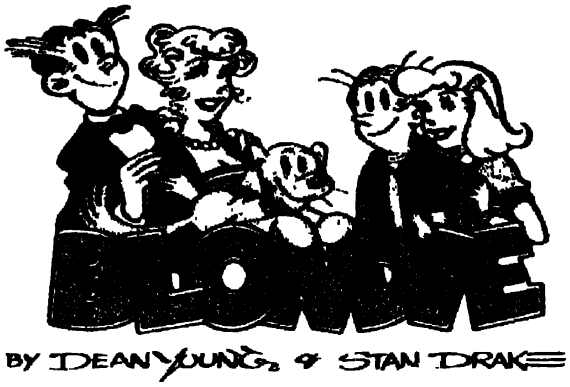
"IT'S NICE WE TALK, BUT DO YOU HAVE TO READ ME THE BALL SCORES?"

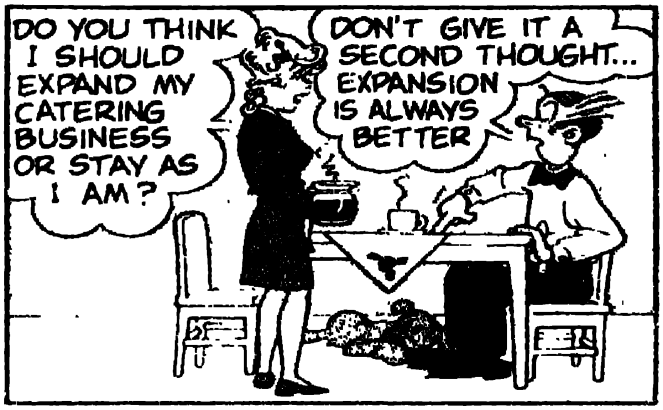
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

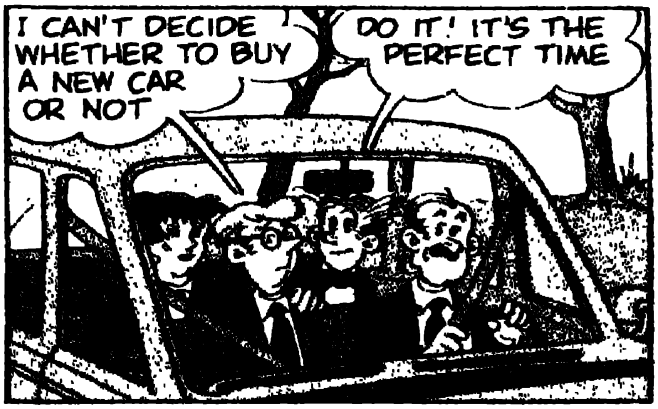


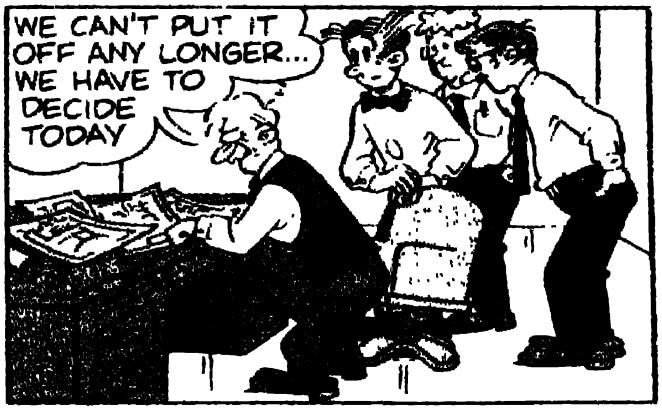
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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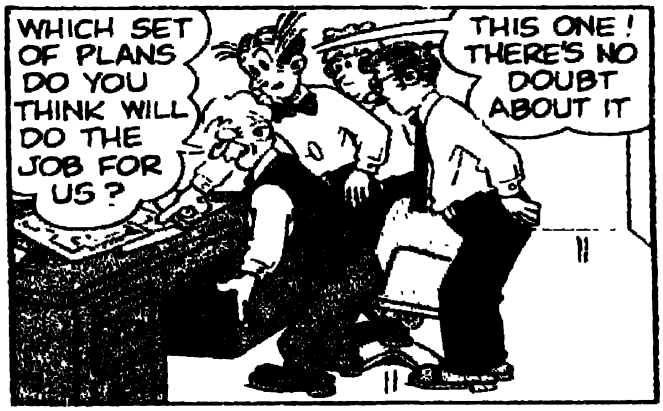
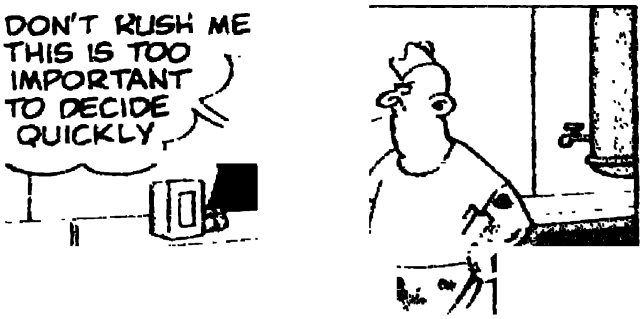




DRAKE
11-13

PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC

After theme parties the latest trend is to have a deejay in attendance when you throw a bash. ***Manisha Gulati*** *reports*

Fun and revelry at a bash

It all dates back to the year 1988 when Discotheque On Wheels, Delhi's first entertainment mobile service, was launched Disc jockeys, music, bands, fire-eaters, jugglers, crooners, caterers, you name it, they arranged it For parties, weddings, banquets, going aways and coming backs, any excuse was welcome Until owner Sunny Sarid decided to call it a day and concentrate on becoming Delhi's most sought after disc jockey at the Maurya Sheraton Hotel

Then, in 1994 the fever struck again when Sound Of Music was launched Bigger, better and here to stay Today it is the city's premier mobile service, organising up to ten parties a month.

You want 'Fire And Ice'? No problem within no time at all your farmhouse resembles an iceberg, with cotton on the grass and trees, white canvas sheets covering the house over ultra violet lights and a fire-breather on the dias to complete the breathtaking effect. For those with a 'Bandits and Concubines' fetish, suitable armour is arranged Your man for the evening . yeah ...move it. .that's the way...is your DJ JC.

Akin to request programmes on radio and television, these parties provide ample opportunities to have your favourite song played. And yes, you can dedicate it to 'the greatest lover', 'the prettiest host', 'the best remake' (*Chura Liya* by Bally Sagoo) The 2000 watt Fischer music system comes equipped with powerful Bass speakers and 3000 compact discs, catering to English, Hindi and Punjabi tastes. For die-hard South Indians, A.R. Rahman's *No Problem* is the *piece de resistance*

Says Sunny, managing director of

DJ Sunny Sarid as Santa Claus at a Christmas party

the company, "We gauge the mood of the people and play the music accordingly. A little slow to start with, then as the booze flows and the bodies warm up, we increase the beat. With recorded music you can never get the same effect. It'll probably be techno from beginning to end."

So much so that Indians regard it almost as a status symbol (after cellulars and Cielos) to have a private disc jockey for their not so private parties (you know, the bring-your-friends-and-their-friends kind of invitations). Of course you have closer knit affairs of the same scale in the posh farmhouses of Mandi Village or Chhattarpur. children surprise parents with a bash on their silver jubilee, parents do the same for teenagers on their 18th birthday, husband surprises wife with a fancy dress do, etc., etc.

Says Rajat Banerjee (30), hollering above the din at his DLF party "Organising a party can be a neurosis-inducing activity. You need someone supportive and funny who can also set the tone for the party and if things go wrong, sod it "

Quite a responsibility for one

Sunny recording at Sound of Music digital studio

person to handle. But, with as much as Rs 50,000 being paid for organising such events, nobody seems to mind the hard work so much.

Budgets can, of course, be regulated according to your pocket. They start at Rs 10,000 for just music, and for two lakhs the world is your oyster. You can have the snazziest theme, the choicest musicians (Louis Banks, Suneeta Rao the *Pan Hoon Main* girl), and the best of French cuisine.

A *bhangra* party in progress

Scene: A 'wear what you are' theme party. Jostling their way through the 18 to 30 crowd are a Toga dancer, Phoolan Devi, Akshay Kumar in *Mohra*, and Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*. Party animal Bobby Batliwalla (un)dressed as Tarzan in his designer loin cloth feels, "It s a logical compliment to fashion." Bubbly Anita Chawla in a sheet and little else agrees, "We can only be tame for so long. Buckle up! We're in for a bumpy ride." It seems as if the current trend of subtlety in fashion and beauty is being replaced by a movement towards new cartoon-like extremes.

Co-host Sumeeta Banerjee quips, "Leading an active lifestyle means you don't always have the time to do things you want to. Our party invites people to indulge in their fantasies and for one evening be someone they always wished they could be."

DJ Harry adds, "It's virtual reality. You put on your best cologne, wear your cape and suddenly you're interacting with Sharon Stone or Mona Lisa, with Michael Jackson playing for you in the background " Loud voices, hip hop dances, vibrant faces, the revelry seemed never to end. Amidst cheers and bottoms up (a group pointed their rear ends towards the sky) at 4 am the party was declared an absolute success.

Riding on this *nouveau* success wave are other DJ's too, who have started their own mobile services for such parties. Sunny Singh, former DJ of Annabelles at the Hilton, Delhi, left the job for a more lucrative career of owning and running a music shop and catering to private parties. Rumi of Oasis discotheque at the Hyatt provides music and his particular brand of skill for these grand affairs as well.

To cope with the increasing demand for theme parties, and in-house deejays, Sunny of Sound Of Music now plans to open a school to train aspiring disc jockeys.

Says wannabe DJ Ash (he refused to divulge his real name), "There's nothing more adrenalin-pumping than seeing 500 babes bouncing to your tune." Well, if your reasons are right you can never go wrong. ■

A TOUCH OF FERAUD

Taking a look at his spring/summer collection

This year, as the summer heat gains in intensity, you don't have to restrict yourself to Rohit Bal's mulmul salwar kameezes or to Shahab Durazi's linen collection. Now, you can go resolutely Western with Louis Feraud, whose spring/summer collection has something for everyone—well, at least, everyone with reasonably deep pockets

Women can choose from the 'Sets' and 'Main' collections. The first comprises separates that can be mixed and matched according to your tastes, and the second consists of co-ordinated outfits, which include dresses, trouser suits and skirt suits

The 'Sets' collection is divided into two colour schemes Pavilion Pales is, as the name suggests, dominated by such neutral colours as cream, lilac, and honeysuckle, occasionally leavened by the use of crisp white stripes In Riviera Blues, however, electric pink mixes happily with marine blue in checks, stripes, and textured windowpane weaves, making for a casual, sportive look

In the 'Main' category, Trendsetters combines the principles of classic couture with modern styling So, you have suits in poodle-tooth checks, light ribbon tweeds come with piped button holes and high contrast details. For the light, summery look, you can go in for the printed silk suits and georgette ensembles, and for the more adventurous, there are plenty of polka-dotted outfits to look daring in

The Bright Strokes, the second 'Main' theme, relies on the use of colour for its distinctive appeal The fitted single-button and single-breasted jackets use the colours of strawberries, blackberries and even mint And the crisp linen blends impart a cool efficiency to the garments.

The ready-to-wear collection for men offers the latest French styles Swiss fabric is used in the formal shirts, which have some new variations like the addition of the French cuff and the half-sleeve Also included for the first time are linen and linen blended shirts.

Along with the jackets and shirts are available colour-coordinated trousers in natural and blended fabrics. If you want to set off your outfit with a dash of colour, you can splurge on Louis Feraud ties, which come in daring prints and shades

And for those who prefer the casual look, there are T-shirts and Bermudas on offer, which would look just right when you finally manage to take time off for that beach holiday ■

EVENT

SAY CHEESE!

The Swiss hold a food festival in Calcutta, hoping to attract more tourist traffic from India, reports ***Susmita Banerjee***

Scenic *chalets* and emerald meadows; yummy chocolates and cheese fondue; that's Switzerland, tempting vacationers from all corners of the globe to sample its magnificent Alpine charms. And if food is the finest way to worm your way into a stranger's heart, then the Tourist Board of Switzerland couldn't have chosen a better way to entice Indians: hosting a Swiss food festival that doubled up as a tourism promotion exercise.

Fredi Kuster, a Zurich-born hotelier-cum-chef from the picturesque town of Luzern, flew down to India recently to give gourmets here an authentic taste of Swiss cuisine: tangy soups, fresh salads and mouth watering desserts.

Luzern, nestling amidst the chiseled, snow-crowned Alps and the shimmering Luzern Lake, is a tourists' paradise. Dating back to 1178, this ancient town still retains its 14th century defensive wall and nine slender towers among which the octagonal Water Tower on the Reuss river is the most famous. "It's like your Taj Mahal," exults the Tourist Board Managing Director, Kurt H. Illi, who hopes to welcome a good number of Indian tourists back home once the food festival is over.

In Calcutta, the Swiss food festival was held at the La Rotisserie at The Oberoi Grand. The restaurant wore a rustic Swiss look with potted geraniums and handcarts of bread at the entrance of a curtained chalet inviting diners to step into the Alpine ambience of folk music as chef Kuster, aided by his Indian assistants, dished up an aromatic Swiss spread of bread, air-dried meat, salmon and venison.

The flour used for Swiss bread is very special and had to be flown in from Switzerland to make the wholewheat, buckwheat and rye bread. Swiss meat is air dried and Kuster had them imported as well for the salads and other delicacies. "But your meat tastes better than our's. We tend to stuff them with vitamins which dilutes the flavour," says Illi.

At Rs 350 (plus the ubiquitous taxes) diners could take their fill from an elaborate buffet comprising soups, starters and afters: Buendner taeller, air dried beef, raw ham, smoked bacon and salsiz, onions and pickles; Wurscht-chaes salat, Swiss sausages and cheese salad to be relished with pickled onions and sauces. The Basler chrueter suppe of fresh herbs and cream delighted those with a taste for greens.

Non-vegetarians had a varied choice of main courses: Bekti mit mandle (pan-fried bekti with almond flakes); Aemmitaler schatsvo reaise (lamb stew in creamy sauce); Poulet brueschtle nach waeggiser art (grilled breast of chicken in orange sauce served with steamed rice) and Filet steak mit rootwy soose (beef steak in a delicate red wine sauce served with William potatoes).

"Indian potatoes and fruits are excellent. The fruits are delicious and much better than our's," says masterchef Kuster who runs an inn-style hotel near Luzern called Gasthof zum Mohrem. But the chocolates? The world's best manufacturers of chocolate, the Swiss visitors were rather reluctant to try out Indian ones for their desserts. "We have brought in our own chocolates," said Illi.

No Swiss meal is complete without a raclette, a half wheel of cheese placed in a special oven heating the cheese from above. It melts layer by layer and as it becomes crusty is scrapped off and served with jacket potatoes and pearl onions. La Rotisserie plans to introduce some of these items on its menu very soon.

The desserts were a real treat: crisp apple fritters dipped in warm vanilla sauce, meringue with whipped cream, chestnut puree with cream and walnut tart engadin style. And of course the irresistible chocolates in fun sizes and shapes.

Luzerne, featuring among the top 10 destinations of the world, has the maximum number of tourists coming from Asia (28 per cent followed by the United States). Cuisine festivals have been hosted in Japan, the Far East and West Asia. The first food festival in India in 1994 had an encouraging response and Illi is confident this year's effort will get even more Indians interested in Switzerland.

So, if your taste buds crave for cheese and chocolates, how about a Swiss holiday? ■

The buffet spread

FIRST PERSON

MEHAR BHASIN, 23, the 19[illegible] winner of Femina Miss Perfect 10 and Beautiful Hair, has a lot to be proud of. She is under contract to model for Revlon in India, following in the footsteps of supermodels Claudia Schiffer and Cindy Crawford. Standing tall at a willowy 5' 10", Bhasin was the first Delhi girl to have sashayed across the catwalk and make people sit up and notice, much before Sushmita Sen hit centrestage. Modelling assignments have kept Bhasin busy and soon Revlon's cosmetics, skin care, perfume and shampoo ads will be on air featuring this ravishing model.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A perfect world, a perfect husband, a perfect business and a perfect family.
What is your greatest fear?

Sharad Bhandari

What is your favourite journey?

To Europe

Snakes.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My mother.
What do you dislike most in others?
Selfishness and their probing into other people's lifestyle.
[illegible] do you dislike most in yourself?
Nothing
What is your most precious possession?
My books, my shoes, my clothes and my perfume—Revlon's 'Fire & Ice'.
What objects do you always carry?
My handbag and my car keys.
What makes you most depressed?
Not being able to see my friends and family while travelling on work.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Nothing. I pretty much like everything about myself.
What is your favourite word?
Mostly, 'please', at other times 'just chill out'.
What is your favourite journey?
To Europe.
What is your favourite dream?
On a cruise with my loved one and him proposing to me then.
What is your nightmare?

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Music.
What is your source of sustenance?
God's blessings.
On what occasions do you lie?

What is your greatest fear?

Snakes

Such situations have never

[illegible] is your greatest regret?
None.
What has been your happiest moment?

campaign
What bri[illegible] tears to your eyes?
Romantic movies with sad endings.
How do you relax?
Watching movies, reading books, listening to music, travelling and [illegible]
What do you envy most in others?
Nothing really.
How would you like to be remembered?
As myself.
Mehar.
How would you like to die?
I don't want to.

A winner of CAPEXIL'S Highest Export Award for eight consecutive years, Modi Continental has established its supremacy in India as well as made impressive forays into major international markets. Achieving all this through sheer grit and determination

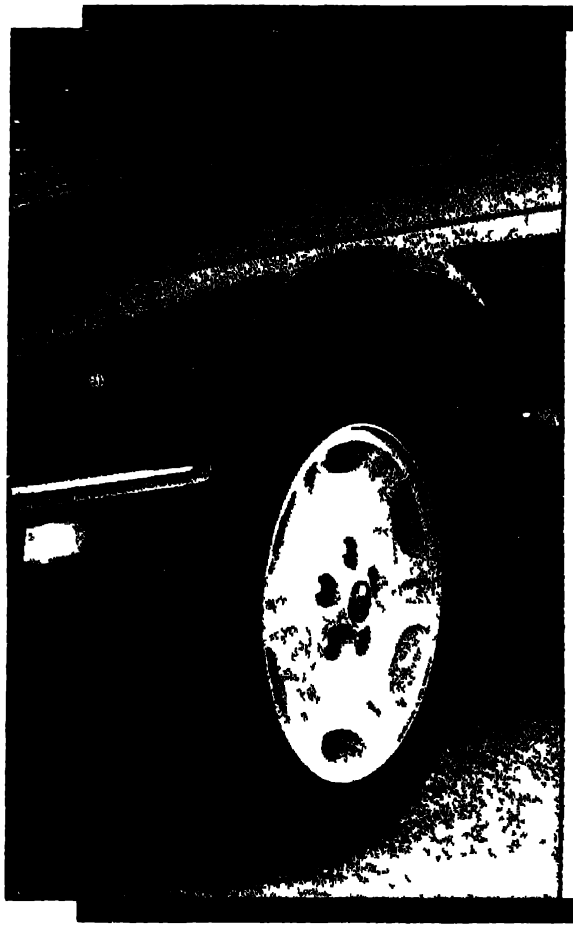
A commitment to quality, strenuous R&D activities, well-honed human resource, superior technology and the will to win has helped Modi Continental and India to move to the forefront of progress

we have given India what it had always deserved—recognition.

Modi Continental

MM/MRL/3083

In nearly 30 nations across the world,



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Modi Continental

MR_3093

The Telegraph

19 MAY 1996

POST MORTEM

Follow the Star

■ Raised in a conservative Muslim family Mohammed Azharuddin was clean bowled by the Bombay beauty, Sangeeta Bijlani ('The Player and the Showgirl', March 31). Maybe because of his rigid family upbringing he never had a frank and close association with any woman save his wife. As a result the first glamour girl that came his way swept him off his feet.

His infatuation with the beautiful model has ruined his family life; his dismal performance during the Wills World Cup can also be traced to his disturbed state of mind.

His sudden announcement to the Press (and that too, during the World Cup) that he had divorced his wife, revealed the vulnerable position of women in Muslim society.

The Muslim personal law as it is in India needs to be reviewed to safeguard the interests of women.

M.S. Quraishy,
Calcutta

■ The 'special attraction' between film stars and cricketers is not going to harm Indian films because Bollywood actresses have very little scope to act on screen. Such affairs are going to destroy Indian cricket. The case of Azharuddin is a pointer. With a broken marriage and a much-publicised affair with a flop actress, he could not concentrate on his game and hence India's defeat in the Wills World Cup.

Abhishake Kumar Saha,
Ichapur (W.B.)

■ What Azharuddin lacks in looks he makes up in talent. He is undoubtedly one of India's finest cricketers. He may have been bowled over by the breezy Bijlani but the latter was definitely looking for publicity. With a non-existent career and age exactly not on her side, the actress could not have found a better match.

Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

■ What's wrong in two people falling in love? They could be film stars and cricketers or celebrities from any other field. The media has been unnecessarily harsh on Azharuddin's girlfriend and even blamed her for India's debacle in the Cup.

Rajib Chatterjee,
Asansol

Sangeeta Bijlani: Sweeping Azharuddin off his feet

■ The logical culmination of love may be matrimony but it is doubted whether Azharuddin and Sangeeta will finally tie the knot. After all Azharuddin comes from an orthodox Muslim family and has two sons from his first wife. And Sangeeta could just be a passing fancy for the skipper.

Indu Bhushan Bose,
Jamshedpur

■ Cricketers and film stars both enjoy similar backgrounds: a lot of glamour, media hype, money and a jet-setting lifestyle. Naturally, they pair well.

Mahesh Kapasi,
New Delhi

INSIDE

Sally Vata Ghosh

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SHAAN AND Saganika Mukherjee, the brother-sister duo, are the new stars in Indian pop music.

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THE MAKING of the new Feluda by Sandip Ray.

The new Feluda

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COVER STORY

THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

The brother sister duo of Shaan and Sagarika are all set to take the world of Indian pop music by storm. ***Vaishali Honawar*** *reports*

THEY MAY HAVE AIRED THEIR DIFFERENCES TO THE WORLD IN THEIR FIRST VIDEO, *AISA HOTA Hai* but in real life Shaan and Sagarika Mukherjee appear anything but incompatible. As they tease each other and laugh at each other's jokes, this young twosome are very much a normal brother-and-sister pair with only one difference: they are the fastest-rising stars on the Indian pop music firmament.

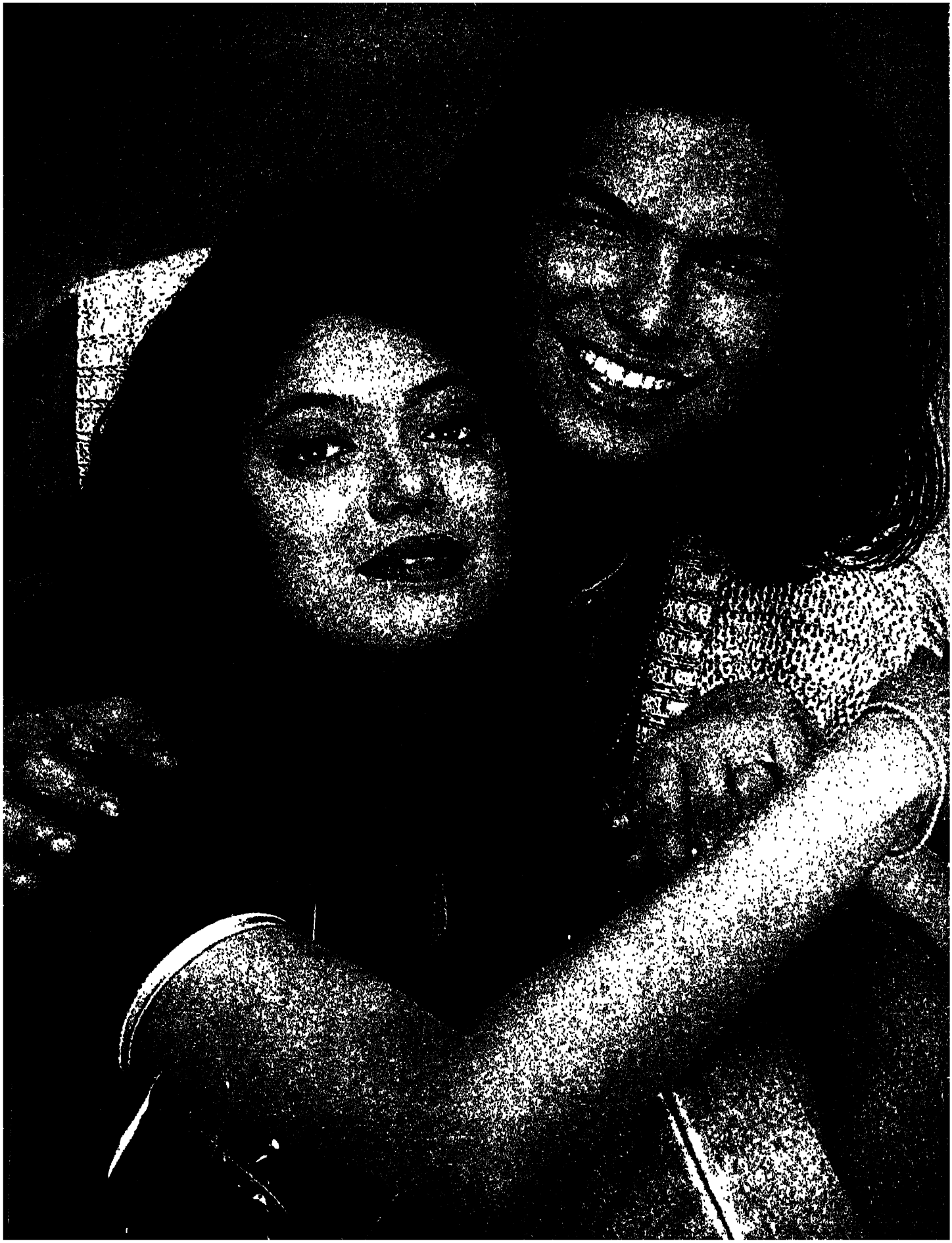
Consider this. Shaan and Sagarika have a three-year Magnasound contract in the bag. They have sung for Shweta Shetty, Stylebhai and Oorja. And what's more, they've cut their own album, *Naugawan*, with music maestro Biddu, setting off speculation that they may be the Nazia and Zoheb Hasan of the Nineties.

Biddu: Re-creating the Hasan magic?

And with such hits as the re-mixed version of *Disco Deewane* and *Roop Juka Mastaana* behind them, it's not surprising that most people predict that the Mukherjee siblings have a very bright future in front of them.

Meeting them is as refreshing an experience as listening to their songs. The pretty, wide-eyed Sagarika is the older of the two at 23 and very much the perfect hostess, while the hip Shantanu with his rock star-length hair and gold earring is 21 and soft-spoken. Both, however seem sensible beyond their years.

Music flows in their blood, they tell you, and that's certainly true enough. Their father, Manas Mukherjee, was a music director in films and they were barely out of their nappies before they had recorded a cassette of nursery rhymes in Bengali for HMV. Through the years they continued to sing ad jingles and Sagarika even sang for some films.



TOP OF THE POPS

All these singers would feature in an Indian equivalent

Alisha Chinai

She is without doubt the most popular pop artiste today, with a fan following that extends well beyond the shores of India and takes in all of Asia. Beginning as a Madonna wannabe, it wasn't long before Chinai shrugged off her Baby Doll image to announce that she was *Made in India*.

Her talent extends to Hindi films as well, where her numbers *Sexy Sexy Sexy* (since re-titled *Baby Baby Baby*) and *Ruk Ruk Ruk* have proved to be runaway hits.

Alisha Chinai: The Baby Doll grows up and goes international

Anaida

Her best-known albums are *Oowa Oowa* and *Hoo Halla Hoo*. Of Persian-Greek parentage, Anaida doesn't speak Hindi, and her only link with India is that she studied here for a while. Nevertheless, she is one of the better-known pop artistes in India today, with her striking good looks which have been used to best advantage in the video of *Hoo Halla Hoo*. In this, India's first animated music video, Anaida is shown as a beautiful woman who has all the men in the world falling in love with her.

Anaida: Greek-Persian beauty

Suchitra Krishnamurthy

Her first album, *Zamaana Deewana*, came immediately after her hit film, *Kabhi Haan Kabhi Na*. But success wasn't catching, and the album turned out to be the proverbial damp squib, having been several years in the making. As Suchitra's acting career collapsed even as her singing career failed to take off, it looked as if she was destined to fade into oblivion.

But just when everyone had written her off, Suchitra hit back with *Dole Dole*, that climbed inexorably up the popularity charts. And now with her latest hit, *Dum Tara*, she has proved that she is here to stay.

Jasmine Barucha

Her first album, recorded by Magnasound, was called *Alien Desire*, but Jasmine first hit the headlines with her sexy video, which featured her cavorting on a

Jasmine Barucha: Sexy singer

Shweta Shetty: Powerful voice

four-poster in a sexy negligee. Since then, Jasmine has remained in the news, particularly with her stage shows, which she excells at, having been blessed with a charismatic presence. But Barucha will play to the gallery only to an extent; for instance, she refused to give in to popular demand and sing in Hindi.

Her latest album, *Prem*, become the stuff of controversy because Jasmine claims that her animated video was released before Anaida's. But it remains to be seen which one does better business in the music stores.

Suneeta Rao

She's another livewire performer who can bring any show alive with her mellifluous voice and graceful dancing. Suneeta's releases so far include *Paree*, whose video was a rage some time back, before which she released two cassettes, *Senorita* and *Dhuaan*. She has also often sung playback for Hindi films and her next album is to be released soon.

Shweta Shetty

She's got two cassette releases to her credit: *Begeraar* and *The New Album*. Gifted with striking, if unconventional, looks, Shetty has made a breakthrough in Hindi films as well, singing for such films as *Rojo*. More recently, she won a a [illegible] n for Best [illegible]

Rangeela.

Piyush Soni

Remember the boy with the flat voice and fabulous videos? He has been lying low for a while and one wonders if it's because he has a new ace up his sleeve. His colourful *Chhokra*, which showed everyone from a child to an old man in Nepal dancing to his tune, had the entire nation swinging to his tune for some time. Since then, however, all has been quiet on the Soni front.

Jojo

Whatever happened to this mischievous and shy-looking boy who made some very good music in *Hum Tumse*, his one and only release so far? *Sorry I am late*, despite a poor video, was one of the more refreshing tracks to be heard among Hindi pop singers and so was the title track of his album *Hum Tumse*. So, one can't help hoping that Jojo doesn't prove to be a one-album wonder.

He's the *Bolo Tararara* guy who

Suneeta Rao: The *Paree* girl can bring any show alive

proves that pop stars need not have dashing good looks and guitars in hand to succeed. An unlikely [illegible] p star with his turban, waistcoats, and generous waistline, his first album has proved to be quite a big hit, and youngsters can [illegible] found boogeying to his beat at [illegible] cos all over the country.

But music as a career was not something that they considered seriously. Confesses Shaan, "I wasn't too keen initially on singing as a profession." His sister Sagarika nods in agreement and adds, "There was a period when all our friends were doing something and we too felt that we should try our hand at something different. Somehow, nobody seemed to take us seriously when we said that we were singers."

So, when Sagarika was 17 and studying for a degree in economics, she decided to try her luck with something different, and began working as a model coordinator. The experience, according to her, "was a disaster.

Shaan, also an economics graduate, did his bit as well, experimenting with desk top publishing. This project, says Shaan, went off "fairly well", even as his sister contradicts him laughingly.

In the end, however, the brother-sister duo fell back on their first love music. Says Shaan, "Somehow, this seemed to be just too much effort for too little, while music was far more rewarding." Sagarika even trained in classical music for a bit; an attempt that is teasingly dismissed by Shaan as "not very successful." And the two continued to sing at school and college functions, and for their friends, even if "they didn't want to listen".

It wasn't long before the siblings, tired of their amateur status and tried to enter the big league. Their first breakthrough came when Sagarika recorded a cassette of Hindi versions of various Whitney Houston numbers for Rajesh (better known as Alisha Chinai's husband) Jhaveri's music company.

But when that effort came to

naught, the duo tried to find work in Hindi films, but with little success. Recalls Shaan, "No one seemed interested in giving younsters a break. It was as if one had to struggle for several years before one could become a singer."

But just when the Mukherjee kids were getting disheartened, they found the answer to all their problems: pop music.

Shaan and Sagarika's luck changed when Magnasound signed them up for a three-year contract in 1994. Since then, the duo have sung on several albums recorded by the music company, including Shweta Shetty's *The New Album*, Style Bhai's eponymously named effort, and Oorja, whose *Q-Funk* video, which stars both brother and sister, has been quite a hit.

As part of the drive to make the duo household names -- and faces— Magnasound got them to perform at a number of stage shows. Shaan and Sagarika sang at the Onida Pinnacle Awards last year and at the Channel V roadshows in Calcutta and Pune in 1996.

Says Shaan, "The crowds at Calcutta really surprised us with their enthusiasm, something we honestly weren't expecting in a city where people are more inclined towards the classical arts."

But their biggest break came when they recorded their first independent album, with none other than the golden boy of Indian pop music, Biddu, as the composer. *Naujawan*, which hit the music stores in early April, heralded the "beginning of the good times" says Shaan.

Biddu, who has already written such hits tunes in recent times as Alisha Chinai's *Made in India* and

THE HASAN SAGA

After a brilliant start, Nazia and Zoheb ended not with a bang, but a whimper

Nazia Hasan: The *baat ban jaye* girl

Shaan and Sagarika are probably right to take great umbrage to being called latter-day Hasans. After all, the Nazia and Zoheb Hasan story didn't have a particularly happy ending; well, not as far as music goes, anyway.

The Hasan saga began when Nazia, then a young schoolgirl, was head-hunted by Hindi film producer-director Feroz Khan to sing for his film *Qurbani*. The music director was Biddu, the song was *Aap Jaisa Koi*, and the rest, as they say, was history.

Nazia's husky tones soon captured the hearts of the Indian public, and before you could say '*baat ban jaaye*' the young Hasan girl had become a star.

But instead of staying on in India and cashing in on her fame, Nazia flew back to London where her family was based, turning her back on Hindi movies. Her association with Biddu endured, however, and the duo, along with Nazia's brother, Zoheb, came out with another album, *Disco Deewane*. This, too, set the cash registers ringing, and the Hasans were here to stay.

But just when everything appeared to be going so well, things began unravelling for the brother-sister pair. They continued to make music, but the general consensus was that their tunes were repetitive and boring. And it was also felt that while Nazia had genuine singing talent, she had to work too hard to carry her brother ——who was mediocre at best—along.

Perhaps the siblings would have recovered lost ground and regained the popularity they once enjoyed, but fate had other ideas in mind. Nazia was diagnosed as suffering from stomach cancer, and gave up singing for a while.

Once she had been pronounced out of danger, she decided to marry a Pakistani businessman who had been chosen by her family and settle down to happy domesticity. That left Zoheb, but unfortunately, without Nazia backing him up, he didn't amount to much. And that was the end of the Hasans as music lovers knew them.

Here's hoping that Shaan and Sagarika are dealt a better hand than that by destiny.

Shweta Shetty's *Johnny Joker*, is clearly a big favourite with the Mukherjees. "Biddu knows the pulse of the people," says Sagarika. "He doesn't have to work very hard to write a hit number; it just comes very naturally to him." Adds Shaan, "Even though he composes from London, he still has his hand on the pulse of the Indian public."

But what Shaan and Sagarika appreciated the most was that Biddu gave them plenty of space while working on their first album, even as he guided them closely all the way. Says Sagarika, "Since this was our first album, we wanted to put in a lot in every song. But he advised us against over-enthusiasm and asked us to stick to the tune the way it was."

And it worked. The *Naujawan* numbers have a fresh feel to them, both in terms of the music and the voices. Biddu has tried a new technique in this album, that of using "jungle rhythms", where the music tracks run four or five times faster than the vocals. This technique, which has become very popular in the West, is being used in India for the first time.

The songs that stand out in the album are *Aisa Hota Hai*, the soothing *Meri Wafa* and the enthusiastic *Dekh*. But the one that was the most difficult to get together was *Aisa Hota Hai*, which has Shaan and Sagarika detailing the differences between them in a light-hearted manner.

Biddu was not too happy with the first version because it sounded too contrived. So, the composer and singers sat down and put their heads together to come up with a new version, by bouncing ideas off one another. The result is, says Sagarika, a "sing-along" song, which could well climb right up the popularity charts.

Shaan and Sagarika have already shot for a video for this number, directed by reigning whiz-kid Ken Ghosh, which is currently being aired by Channel V, MTV and a host of other local music and general interest channels. The duo also hope to release another video soon, which should improve the ratings of their album.

Being siblings and working under Biddu has inevitably attracted comparisons with that other brother-sister team that reached such dizzy heights under Biddu's baton in India. Nazia and Zoheb Hassan.

But Shaan and Sagarika are quick to point out that such parallels don't apply. Says Sagarika, "Our album has really nothing to do with their kind of music. And anyway, it's been 15 years since they made it big."

But if Shaan and Sagarika are hoping to avoid the inevitable comparisons with Nazia and Zoheb, they are going about it the wrong way. Their debut album, *Naujawan*, includes a remix of one of Nazia Hassan's greatest hits, *Disco Deewane*, and the song that made the Pakistani singer such a rage in India, *Aap Jaise Koi*, which Biddu recorded for Feroz Khan's *Qurbani*.

But while Sagarika sings *Disco Deewane*, *Aap Jaisa Koi* has been recorded by Shaan, thus giving it a new feel. And Shaan does his bit by infusing the number with all his enthusiasm and youthful vigour.

Surely by singing these songs, the Mukherjees will only reinforce their image as latter-day Hassans? Shaan and Sagarika don't agree. The only reason they included these numbers, says Sagarika, was because they were both new names and Biddu felt that people would need "sort of reference point". But, she adds, "It was not done to remind anyone of Nazia and Zoheb."

The siblings are also very keen to clear up one other misconception about them that has gained ground of late. They are NOT remix artistes, they say with some indignation, though most people see them as such after the success of such numbers as *Roop Inka Mastana*. Says Shaan, "We are not into remixes. It's just incidental that we did a couple of numbers, and these happened to become hits."

The duo are thus very insistent that they will be choosey about what they record in the future, so that the listening public doesn't bracket them in the wrong division. "We want to be trendsetters rather than follow the trend," says Shaan.

And that's exactly what they've tried to do in *Naujawan*: recording songs that they hoped would stick in the public mind for a long time to come. "One significant feature of our album," says Shaan, "is that it is not

based on any current trend or particular style. There are different songs with different moods. A dance track becomes popular for a couple of months and is then forgotten. *Naujawan*, however, has longevity value."

The duo believe that pop is where the future of Indian-English music lies. The days of rap—is Baba Sehgal listening?—are over, but pop is still around, and will become bigger in the years to come.

As far as their own careers go, the duo are laying great score by *Naujawan*, which they hope will catapult them into the big league. But even if that doesn't happen, Shaan and Sagarika are sure that they will be okay. After all, their solo albums are due to come out next year, and that's something to look forward to.

Magnasound certainly has high hopes of the brother-sister pair, and is promoting them in a big way. But rather than distribute publicity pamphlets and posters of the singers, the company is trying to give them a high public profile.

Both Shaan and Sagarika have appeared as veejays on such popular programmes as *Superhit Muqabla* on Doordarshan and *Public Demand* on ELTV. Their *Aisa Hota Hai* video is a regular on every music channel, and says Sagarika, "We're just enjoying everything that's happening to us."

In the future, though, they hope to think more seriously about the kind of music that they make. The pop scene in India, they say, is still at a nascent stage and has a lot of growing up to do. And they hope to do their bit to help it mature.

"Initially," says Sagarika, "we didn't want to get into this whole pop thing because coming from a musical family we had this feeling that pop was very non-serious. The songs did not seem very challenging and it seemed as if anyone could do it."

Adds Shaan, "It appeared to be more showbiz than singing. But then," he says, laughing, "that's what it is."

Currently, the duo appear to be wrestling with the true nature of pop music in India, which seems to be embracing every genre, right from Hindi film songs to folk tunes. Shaan points out how Ila Arun and Gurdas Maan, who both started out as folk singers, are now regarded as pop artistes. And, adds Sagarika, "Even film music these days concentrates on a good beat. In fact the only thing to distinguish it from a pop song is that you need to shoot a video for the latter."

Their own tastes in music are eclectic. Shaan loves everything from the Beatles, The Doors, Queen, Wham, Michael Jackson, Prince, Alanis Morisette, Sting, to Rhythm and Blues to Hindi film music of the Seventies and Seventies, while Sagarika, too, has a varied taste that includes pop, jazz and Hindi music.

Among their contemporaries, Shaan finds Piyush Soni "very nice" and Sagarika admits to liking Ila Arun. They also have nice things to say about Remo and Gary Lawyer, "who have been doing their own thing over the years." *Colonial Cousins*, a new cassette featuring Hariharan and Lesley Lewis also meets their approval. And they add "Shweta Shetty has her own style which makes her stand out and Alisha is good too." Clearly, they don't have a bad word about anyone.

But thankfully, Shaan and Sagarika are slightly more critical about their own work. When they are slightly more "commercially settled", they say, they will start doing their kind of music. "Something really good," says Sagarika, and Shaan adds, "Something with better lyric matter."

In the next breath, however, they hasten to add, that *Naujawan* has all these qualities. But don't take their word for it; buy the album and judge for yourself.■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Communication, job, journey, and quick business returns on the cards While you may drive a hard bargain, it will not pay to be totally selfish and unfair Fuse ambition with tolerance That way, says Ganesha, you will get the best mileage Romance is probable Contracts are foretold Give time to it

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Finances and expenses are going to take up a lot of your time But it will be well worth it Business transactions will be successful Those in import-export, collaborations, teaching, research and public relations work out a scheme perfectly Health safe-guards are essential for the first two days

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Architects, businessmen, professionals and real estate dealers have it made Your friends and well wishers will not neglect you At the same time learn to be innovative and self-motivated You are in for a new enterprise, says Ganesha Do have time for your family though work pressures will be too much Health of elders may cause concern

Cancer
June 21 - July 20

Even the rains and the waves will know that you are the boss Success in work, happiness in the hometront, a round of romance and fun, money in the kitty, laurels abroad, the luck of the draw, and some sharp shooting for Cancerians foretold Time for some introspection You need to devote more time towards pending work

Leo
July 21 — August 21

This is the time for love and romance You will work at a feverish pace, accomplish much, and yet squeeze in time for fun, frolic and fanfare It would be best to follow a hunch, play by the ear and heed not to mindless criticism Home affairs, entertainment and the perks of office are goodies for you Well deserved, for sure

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

There will be chances for writing, teaching, communication, information explosion, scoops news, views, debates and so on Attend to financial affairs and details You could find out a few discrepancies. Capital formation time for businessmen, professionals and builders Meditation will help immensely

Libra
September 23 - - October 22

You will tinker with new ideas and thus bonhomies and camaraderie will prevail It will certainly help to get things done Also, it means popularity for Librans Do accept invitations and respond to requests This is your bonanza for the week, Ganesha says Do take care of the health of elders. Travel time for most

Scorpio
October 23 - - November 22

Ganesha says job opportunities financial security, a legacy, a windfall for secretive you! The last four days will be mighty eventful, say an attachment, a letter, a call a meeting does the trick. Plenty of sunshine and happiness await all Scorpios So make the most of it now. It will do you good A round of socialising foretold

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

The strum of the guitar, and the joy of heart's discovery for Sagittarians The next 21 days are also for joint finances, insurance, loan and funds. Ceremonies for ancestors is a probability Publicity boosts are certain. This is the time to make travel plans as the rest of the year will get taken up with work

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

While home and property have a facelift, you will be busy solving professional and personal entanglements Therefore be alert and shed all inhibitions Rules may have to be broken and initiative taken Do not get too taken up with what others have to say Things may get awry after a while

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

You will be decisive and dominating This forcefulness, in turn, could mean clashes But it also means that you will be respected and your ideas rightly implemented Your instructions will be faithfully followed Romance, outings and hobbies excite you now So do find time for leisure activities Take care of the family

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Buying, selling, investing or shopping are on the cards An enterprise can be started You will have your fill of dinners, lunches, partying, socialising and assorted amusements Pisceans will also succeed in fanning out to people and places Signing contracts or taking on new assignments are on the cards.They will find time to woo

BIRTHDAYS

May 19: Saturn sextile Uranus means success and comforts, and a generous dash of romance and beauty. A year to show the world how good you really are.

May 20: Moon conjunction Venus blending leads to fame and fortune, children and hobbies, romance and speculation. Do socialise to gain and to be happy.

May 21: Moon sextile Mars is like a double barrel gun. Comforts, luxuries, finance and romance (a rare mix) make you happy.

May 22: Moon sextile sun is a formation which signifies that if interested in science, research, and occult will have an excellent year. But expenses will soar. Affairs of the heart are quite likely.

May 23: Moon trine Saturn indicates consolidation and a blue print for prosperity over the year. Focus will be on creativity, leadership, home and property.

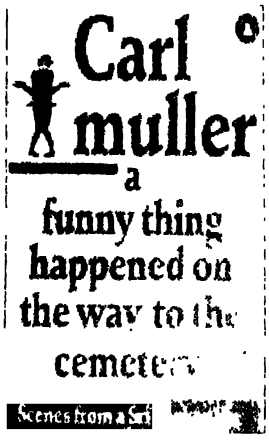
May 24: Moon square Mercury means you will have to be careful in secret matters, journey, and enemies could be active and vindictive. Expenses could skyrocket.

May 25: Sun trine Uranus Get to the gravy. Collaborations, publicity, ceremony, marriage, links, ties, journey, progress, children and joy are the goodies for the year.

EXTRACT

Strange CUSTOMS

Extracting ***Carl Muller's*** *short story about his experiences at Delhi's international airport*



Extracted from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Cemetery, Scenes From a Sri Lankan life,* ***by Carl Muller; Penguin Books; Rs 150***

Fly with me, and all your sins declare, And if you're overburdened, say a prayer!

"This is your captain speaking. Delhi airport authorities require that the cabins of this aircraft be deodorised before landing. We will now commence to spray the cabins. You may close your eyes briefly to avoid any discomfort."

Let us spray.

I was treated to the sight of a little cabin attendant running up and down the aisles, coat flapping, clutching an aerosol in his upraised hand. Like the last of the Valkyries. He hissed as he ran. No. It was the can that hissed. A belligerent goose of a can. The aircraft began to smell like the loo of a five-star hotel. I looked out of the window. Dawn over Delhi was not a pretty sight. The country below the wingtip was like a dirty dishcloth. The sunlight danced on the turboprop. Inside, the

stench of lemon and cut limes was overpowering

We landed with a thud. Coasting the tarmac was like riding the noon stage into Dakota. Even the seat-belt juddered the diaphragm. I was not heavy laden Just a beat-up suitcase, briefcase and camera. I walked into a sea of humanity that, at five-thirty in the morning, was positively unnerving

If anything raises eyebrows at an airport, it is my passport. It looks like the old, oily pocketbook of a bazaar trader in Khota Baru The Sri Lanka government had issued me this passport upon whose black cover were the words, PASSPORT DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA in letters of gold Yes, gold. But the gold had come off long ago

"What's this?"

"Passport."

I get a keen look The kind of look that says, "I've seen passports and passports " I look past the immigration officer's shoulder He studies each page doubtfully. The Indian visa reassures him "Go to Baggage," he says.

Easier said than done Where the devil is Baggage? There's baggage everywhere. Indians, I'll have you know, don't travel light After shuddering over hundreds of heaps of suitcases, boxes, bales of stuff wrapped and hog-tied with straw matting and canvas, I begin to lose orientation. One doesn't go to Baggage ...The whole damn airport is Baggage. You just pick your spot and wallow.

The bag tracks keep up their perpetual motion. People cluster around, mesmerised I lean against a mountain of crates From somewhere, I tell myself, my suitcase will emerge It did, and it came forth so ill-used and wan, I could hardly recognise it. All the spirit had been beaten out of it Like a dry birth plus forceps. I rescued it from the carousel on its second orbit and lugged it to Customs

"I will be taking back my camera," I said.

"Ah, it is your camera?"

"Of course it is "

"*Achcha*.. then you must declare for re-export "

"I declare." Should I tell him I'm for re-export too No, he will not be amused It was too early in the morning

"You have something else to declare?"

I shook my head.

"No dutiable articles?"

"No."

"Where you are staying in Delhi?"

"Ashok Hotel "

"Good You go now and declare your camera that you're taking back "

It was the beginning of a saga.

The line of people who brought in dutiable articles to sell but declared them for re-export in order to avoid paying customs duty was the longest I had ever seen in any airport. I stood There was little else to do A man with a fierce moustache and bleary eyes stood behind a low counter He eyed us with loathing He must have been up since midnight, judging by the bags under each eye The operation, I noted, was a bureaucratic idea of Limbo There were forms to fill and chops to chop, stamps to slap on, cross references to get cross-eyed over and squiggles to make The man behind the counter would pause, suck the top of his Biro, look painfully down the line and mentally consign us all to a special place of torment in ancient Hindu mythology He would then examine the top of his Biro, possibly checking for erosion, then return to his task At length I thrust my camera under his nose and proffered my passport

"You're going back when? Ticket?"

Shown

"You're taking back camera?"

I nodded

"Why?"

"It's mine "

"Ah," he scribbled furiously He looked at his Biro again, decided against taking a nibble and put it down with a sigh "What is the value?"

He had me there The camera was pretty old Older, by far, than my suitcase It had injested its fair share of dust and grit It was also a sort of merger of three photographic companies, one for the camera, one for the lens and another for the flash It was a hybrid of the worst sort for a red-eyed Delhian

"Make is Mamiya," he said unnecessarily

I nodded.

He wrote 'Mamiya' laboriously "What is number?"

"Search me "

"You have anything else?"

"No . what?" I was confused

"Then for what for I must search you?"

I decided to button up We were

getting nowhere.

"You not know the number, ah?"

"No."

He perked up. A new challenge had been thrown at him at seven in the morning. I longed for a cup of tea.

"Lens have number," he informed no one in particular. He wrote that down carefully. He gave the camera the once over. "Ah, have number for flash." This was also written down with a flourish. Good, I thought, we are getting along. The camera proper was given the third degree. "No number," he said mournfully.

"What do you mean? There must be a number?"

I have looked. Here, you look.

"How you can bring a camera with no any number?" asks the man behind me. "My God, now will have to stand behind you for all the day."

I ignored him. Greater things were at stake. I was in possession of a piece of equipment unheard of in the annals of Delhi Customs. The camera was cannibalised with a concentration awesome to behold. The lens was removed and held up to the admiring gaze of other customs *wallahs* who had gathered round to see duty done. A roll of film was extracted and placed on the counter with the reverence usually reserved for the Dead Sea Scrolls. "You see," I was informed in a hushed voice, "inside, outside, frontside, backside, nothing. No number."

"That's bad?"

"Is very bad. I must enter number of camera, no?"

"Perhaps," I said brightly, "the lens number is also for the camera."

"Must be sample camera," put in one of the customs onlookers.

Appealing thought. I had this sinking feeling that my camera did have a number, originally. A sort of etched or raised serial which, through years of usage and roughage, had been obliterated. Telling that to Delhi customs was not going to help. It might even complicate matters.

It was now creeping on to eighteen. I have been in New Delhi for two hours and forty-five minutes and had advanced no more than 800 yards into Indian territory. Wonder what Clive would have done. Up in the gallery behind glass panels, my host was having hysterics. The poor man had rolled out of bed at five in the morning to welcome me. I stood. He stood.

The customs men went into a huddle. A sort of mini-summit. They looked at me on occasion. One frowned. Another grinned. They examined my passport as if it were the Grimoire of Honorius. They scratched their heads. Then they all beetled off to an office and returned with a Big Brass who had several clusters of what looked like silver-plated gooseberries on his epaulettes. He was a cheery soul.

"So you have camera without number? Ha, ha, must be stolen property, no?"

'Tis the season to be jolly!

"You're taking it back, no?"

"That's why I have been here from six in the morning."

"Ha, ha, you should have told us that camera haven't any number?"

The man behind me agreed vehemently. "I am standing and standing," he moaned.

"I'll tell you what? You take camera and go. We will enter that it is a prototype."

"That's fine," I said. Suddenly there was light at the end of the storm drain. The officer sucked his Biro meditatively. He wrote 'camera' but he drew the line at 'prototype'. It seemed that the whole affair had gone beyond his ken. He had never entered 'prototype' before and he was not going to set a precedent now. Besides, how the devil do you spell 'prototype'?

I walked stiffly to the barrier where my host told me that even the garland of frangipani he had intended to hang around my neck had wilted. "What was wrong?" he asked.

I shot him a dirty look. "First tea," I said.

It was 10 minutes to nine. Delhi was wide awake. Scootershaws whizzed by and crows were scolding raucously. The air was as crisp as early lettuce.

I had arrived. ■

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This week: Dimple (Rajesh) Khanna

Popularly known as: Dimple Kapadia. No, she hasn't used her married name ever since she walked out of Ashirwaad, the marital home she shared with Rajesh, or *'Hanji'*, as she then referred to him, rather coyly.

The early days: Were sheer bliss, as the 16-year-old heroine of the runaway hit *Bobby* married the man of every woman's dreams, Rajesh Khanna, the reigning superstar of Bollywood.

Dimple, who had yet to lose her puppy fat (watch her cavorting in a bikini in *Bobby*, if you don't believe us), gave up on the movies and played the devoted housewife to Kakaji. The babies — daughters Twinkle and Rinki — followed soon after, and the couple appeared to settle down to happy domesticity.

So, what went wrong?: Well, just about everything. Dimple, who was used to being the centre of attention, found life difficult on the sidelines. Rajesh spent every evening, drinking with his *chamchas*, and paid little attention to his beautiful wife. And matters got even worse when his movies began flopping. Soon, stories about marital violence were doing the rounds in Bombay.

Dimple's reaction: Was to have an affair; and a very public one at that, with small-time actor Vijendra Ghatge. She walked out on Khanna — this was one of the several separations before they finally parted ways — and moved back in with her parents.

Was Rajesh heart-broken?: If he was, he recovered pretty fast in the company of some of Bombay's most beautiful women. In the end, though, he settled down with co-star Tina Munim, who even moved in with him.

A touch of glamour: Rajesh Khanna campaigns with wife and daughter

And they lived happily ever after?: Not quite. Rajesh was determined to do the decent thing by Tina, whom he loved madly, but Dimple wasn't willing to play ball. She refused to grant Khanna a divorce (friends said that she was worried that if Rajesh and Tina had children, her daughters would lose their inheritance) asking him to go to court if he wanted on.

Not wanting to put his children through the trauma that this would entail, he declined. And not surprisingly, Tina walked out on him.

The ironies of life: Rajesh and Dimple's elder daughter, Twinkle, was affectionately called Tina by the family. And so, Dimple had to endure a rival whose name was the same as that of her daughter's!

And Rajesh had to endure: The constant presence of Sunny Deol, who had become Dimple's paramour. After initially keeping a low profile, Dimple and Sunny increasingly threw caution to the winds, and were soon an open couple in film land.

To add insult to injury, even Twinkle was launched in a Deol home production, starring against Sunny's younger brother, Bobby.

Was Rajesh annoyed?: If he was, he didn't show it. He still took an active interest in his daughters' lives, and in public at least, acted as if Sunny didn't exist.

And at election time: Khanna, in an attempt to bolster his image as a family man, yanked Dimple out of Sunny's brawny arms and flew her out to Delhi. And Dimple, who was only too keen to reinforce her rights as Khanna's — albeit estranged — wife, stood by him in a pristine white salwar kameez as he filed his nomination and later, campaigned in his constituency.

Did it work? At one general election; yes. But this time around, even the glamorous presence of wife Dimple and daughter Twinkle, now a bona fide star in her own right, could not save Khanna from a humiliating defeat.

Moral of the story: Politics may make for strange bedfellows, but even the electorate draws the line somewhere. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code. ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
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AHMEDABAD					
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AIZAWL					
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BAGDOGRA					
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BANGALORE					
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BHUBANESWAR					
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DELHI					
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DIBRUGARH					
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DIMAPUR					
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GOA					
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GUWAHATI					
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HYDERABAD					
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Departures			Arrivals		
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JORHAT					
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LILABARI					
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LUCKNOW					
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PORT BLAIR					
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RANCHI					
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SILCHAR					
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FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

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AMMAN					
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AMSTERDAM					
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BANGKOK					
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BUCHAREST					
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Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
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BG 698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1635	2 5
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG 092	1150	1 2 3 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1 2, 3, 6 7
IC 723	1300	1 3 5 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3 5 6 7	BG-093	185[illegible]	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2020	1 5
Q7 061	1000	4	Q7 060	1230	2
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0720	7
BA 214	2155	5 7	BA 213	2055	1 7
IC-747	1035	1 2 4, 6	IC 746	1350	1 2 4 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
BA-142	2115	3 7	BA-143	1515	3, 7
SU-538	1755	4	SU 537	1555	4
KB-106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2 6
KB 106	1325	5			
SQ-415	2345	2 5	SQ-416	2230	2 5
BI 106	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
17 504	1750	4	17 503	1650	4
AI 306	1910	5	AI 305	1620	6
IC 227	1540	4 7	IC 226	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep. Wed. Thurs. & Sat. Arr. Tues. Wed. & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep. Mon. Tues. Fri. & Sat. Arr. Mon. Thurs. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	16 40	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep. Mon. Tues. Wed. [illegible] Arr. Mon. Thurs. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep. Thurs. & [illegible] Arr. Mon. & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	23 40	**Jodhpur Express**		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday		
[illegible]	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** [illegible] Dep. Tues. [illegible] Arr. [illegible] Tues. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express** Dep. Wednesday Arr. Friday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep. & Arr. Thursday		
[illegible]	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Sun. Mon. Wed. & [illegible]		
[illegible]	20 40	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord		
[illegible]	9 30	**Udyan Abha Tootan Express** via Main	18 15	[illegible]
[illegible]	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 03	[illegible]
[illegible]	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
[illegible]	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Coalfield Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
3015	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	[illegible]
3031	21 00	**Danapur Express**	6 30	[illegible]
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	[illegible]	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	[illegible]-40	[illegible]
[illegible]	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep. Mon., Tue. & Thurs. Arr. Mon.	[illegible]	[illegible]
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep. Wed. Sat. & Sun. Arr. Sun. Wed. & Sat.		
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**		
1161	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep. Friday Arr. Tuesday		

Sealdah

Up	Time		Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	9 45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express**	20 35	5658
3153	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20 00	**Katihar Express**	4 15	5664
3151	11 20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 40	3134
3103	18 25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Tues., Thurs. & Sat.	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Madras Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 25	8001
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 25	2859
[illegible]	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Saturday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ahmedabad Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep. Sun. Tues. & Fri. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Sat.	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** Dep. Sunday Arr. Sunday	13-45	[illegible]
[illegible]	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	6 00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	20-55	**Titlagarh Express**	5-00	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	6 25	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	10 25	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	16 45	**Furulia Express** Dep. Except Saturday Arr. Except Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep. & Arr. on Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	[illegible]	--
	11 [illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10 [illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	--
	14 [illegible]	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13-45	[illegible]
	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 4[illegible]	631
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep. Tues. & [illegible] Arr. Tues. & [illegible]	13 45	631
[illegible]	22 45	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22 [illegible]	--
	14 05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13 45	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37

WORKING MOTHERS, RESIGN!

You have nothing to lose but your minds, says ***Manisha Gulati***

Whoever said mother hood was fun was obviously not talking about working mothers Ask any career woman who is a new mother if you don t believe us In fact the only way that working motherhood can ever be fun is if you increase the hours in a day from 24 to 72

It starts with feeding, washing, playing, feeding, working, playing, feeding, washing, playing interspersed with umpteen telephone calls at the office to inform you about a broken vase a cracked nail misplaced socks unpalatable chicken stew a despicable maid servant You know the feeling

The return home in the evening is greeted with wailing more complaints a demand for Monoply or undivided (by each sibling) attention a visit to Appu Ghar or a bout of horse-riding (you re the horse) On better days the little devils are out playing with friends but the drama starts when they return with a bleeding nose or scraped knees

Of course husbands help but only after a shower a snack and a snuggle But by then you re ready for bed or the asylum

Says Seema Khurana, mother of two who works for Above And Beyond Consultants I ve suddenly moved from girl to superwoman Whatever they say about husbands and wives sharing duties at home is a platitudes The roles are pretty clear You work at office but you work at home too As much The man comes back home to relax and have fun Give him more to do and he ll start coming back late

So much for women s lib

Her boss Vir has complains It it comes to a choice between employing a married woman or an unmarried

A stay-at-home mother : bringing up children

Many mothers are forced to give up their jobs to look after the little one

girl I would definitely go for the latter. I m married myself and though my wife is not working I know the sort of pressures facing working mothers. It's not that they are lax at work but half the time their concentration is directed towards their kids at home and whether they have eaten or not Phone calls go back and forth Their energy levels are also lower as there is no respite for them even after a hard day's work. I also feel guilty if I have to ask Seema to stay back late for some work."

Pooja Khanna, another irate working mother and account director in an advertising agency, stresses, "The role of women has been so well defined over the last couple of centuries that if she chooses to work, that's her funeral But her duties at home as wife and mother must not be neglected."

Which is why so many women these days give up a nine-to-five job at the office after motherhood to work at home instead and also look after child and hearth. The decision isn't easy but the scales are easily tilted. You can keep up your high pressure job and work the same hours as your husband and get stressed out from trying to be a hotshot at work, a perfect mom at home and a hot mama for your husband, while coping with the constant guilt of child neglect. Or you can forget about meetings, deadlines and promotions, and direct all your energies towards making your house a happy home for all.

Vani Pahwa, computer programmer, says, "Back when I was in my 9 am to 7 pm working-warriors mode it seemed unbelievable that I would some day be a stay-at-home mom. But when my little one was born, the choice was clear."

But to be fair to those scant considerate men, one must admit that there are working mothers and stay-at-home pops operating from a room in the house Vir and Nita are one such couple While Nita makes and markets her soft toys and baby paraphernalia, Vir has his office on the first floor of the house so he can also cope with the added responsibity of food and kids He says, "Marriage is a partnership and you should do what's best for both. I say to each his own because what's meat for one man is poison for another."

But why can't more men be seen at the poolside teaching their kids to swim while the mothers do their twen-

She works in office and back at home too

ty laps? Or why can't they be seen wheeling prams at Lodi Gardens making baby talk and answering goo goo ga ga while the mother is out shopping with the girls? And why does the father become this remote figure in the child's life, someone who can only be called upon when the child does something naughty and mummy says, 'I'll tell papa'

He is this demi-god who is only a head of the family and not a part of it Sadly it is these circumstances that lend themselves to father and child not being friends which eventually leads to the dreaded phrase, 'the generation gap'

Psychologist Tehmina Majumdar explains, "The man has for so long been given the role of master and macho figure that breaking away from this stereotype to come to one level with the woman and be accessible to the child as a friend rather than an onlooker will probably take a few more years. But the situation is improving gradually and there is more acceptance and sharing of labour on the part of the man "

A happy stay-at-home father : Enjoying parenthood

She's a superwoman: Keeping a job and bringing up kids

Anju Kaisth, tour and travel manager, says, "Even if you decide to work at home it's like having 15 jobs at once with no assistant And at the end of the day you have people asking you silly questions like, 'what did you do all day at home?'"

Surely it helps if you have a portable computer and a portable profession like, say, journalism?

Pat comes the reply. "Believe me, a 'Do Not Disturb' sign doesn't work with a two-year-old or even a seven-year-old "

In other words you can't really work at home — just a minute, someone's at the door — where you can be with your kids and — Varun don't put your finger in the socket — keep your sanity

Or you can give up your high-powered career to throw your considerable energies into motherhood and become a near raving lunatic as a result of talking to no one except three small kids and an irate maid all day

"Oh ! " exclaims Vani "You be me counsellor to all the wives with weight problems (that amounts to one in each home), to those with boyfriend problems, redecoration problems, pet diseases, as well as a regular watcher of *Santa Barbara* and *The Bold And The Beautiful* — both of which you probably scoffed at earlier."

We stand corrected Working mothers, you are missing quantity time not only with your child but with the entire neighbourhood and their pets as well

Before we start sounding like the problem and not the solution, allow us to give you some invaluable tips

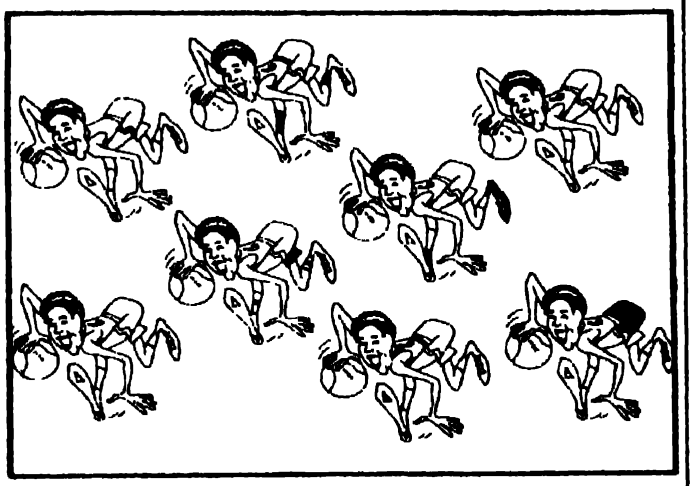
- Be ambitious but not killer-like.
- Be equal to the man but admit that he's slightly more equal than you.
- Reproduce but only when you've achieved absolute selflessness.
- Employ a maid, a cook, a driver, and a shrink
- Pamper your husband's ego and their whims.
- Go for long vacations sans family. Remember, kids eventually grow up.

After all, in the words of an upcoming poetess of Delhi, Anita, this is how most men feel

I want a wife who goes to work,
But housework she must never shirk.
A job that brings her home asmiling,
So I can spend my evenings whiling,
While she slogs and I unwind,
For another day of grind. ■

JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN



DOUBLE DRIBBLE! Two of eight basketball players above look enough alike to be twins. Which two? You decide

DO TELL! Mel fell, Ed fled, Jan ran, Pat sat, Sue flew, Dave gave, Frank drank, Kate ate and Bert hurt. Can you think of some more similar name rhymes? Give it a try.

TRY THIS brain-to-finger signal-crosser. Clasp hands with wrists crossed in the manner of Santa's at right. Twist clasped hands inward (see arrow) so that they appear before you as in inset.

Now, have someone point to one of your fingers and see if you can wiggle that finger. It is not easy to comply.

Put your friend to the test, too, by asking him or her to told hands similarly, and you do the pointing to fingers.

HOCUS-FOCUS

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1 Bird feeder is missing. 2 Plant is missing. 3 Hat is different. 4 Hair is different. 5 Number is missing. 6 Belt is missing.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

KNOCK BLOCKS OFF STAMP

The cluster of 12 stamps, at left, can be separated into sets of four. One such set would be 1,2,3,4 or 5,6,7,8; etc. How many sets can you find? Be creative.

Other possible variations are 1,2,5,6; 1,2,3,7; 1,2,6,7; 1,2,3,6; etc. You're not allowed to rip stamps in half, natch.

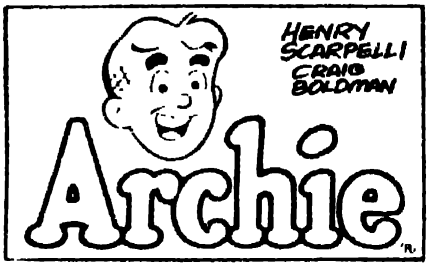
Remember, you're trying to find the stamp number of four-stamp sets.

Too hard to count? Take a guess.

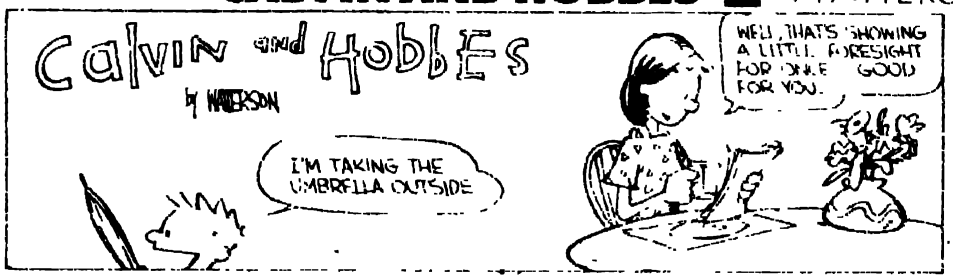
Total number of four stamp sets is 65

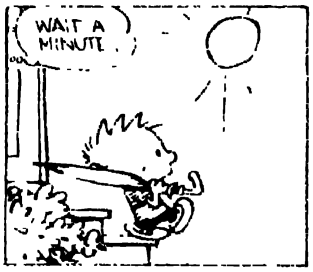
COMICS

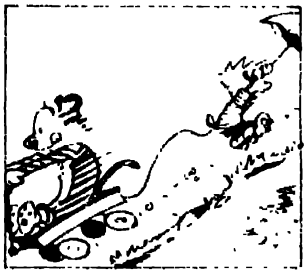
ARCHIE

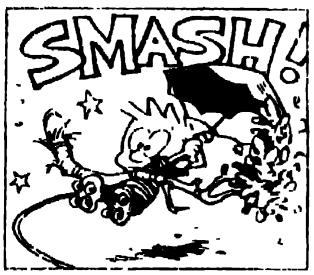


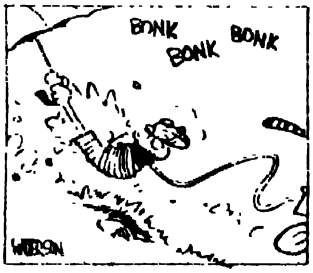
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

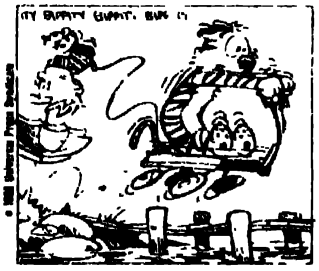






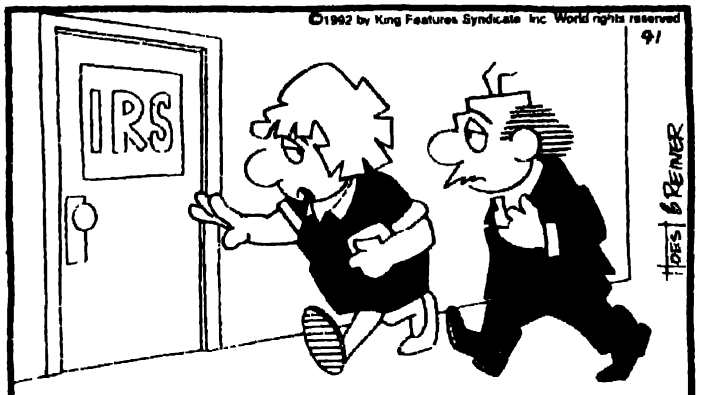




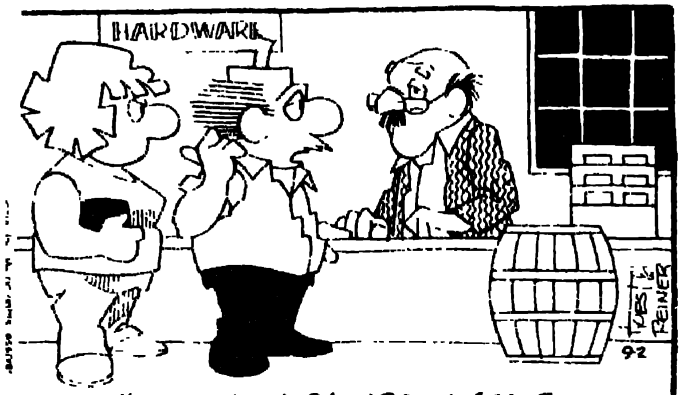


THE LOCKHORNS

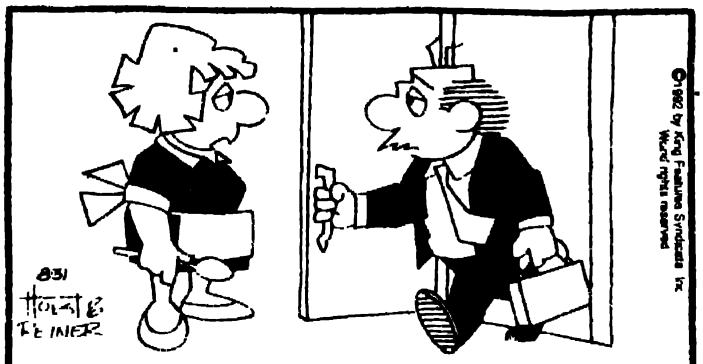
"LEROY CAN EAT AND DRINK, BUT HE CAN'T GET THE HANG OF BEING MERRY."



"NOW, REMEMBER···LET ME DO THE CRYING."

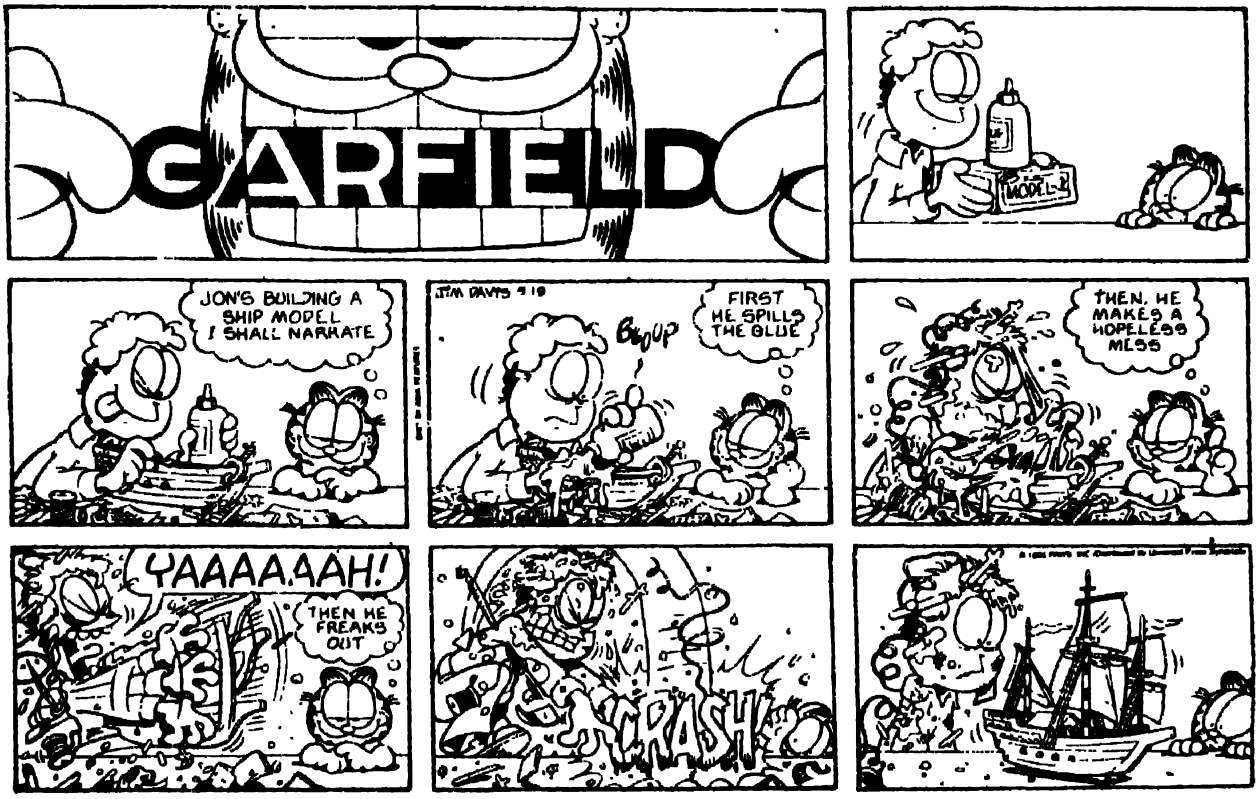


"WE NEED A BATHROOM SCALE. SOMETHING FOR TINKER BELL, HERE."

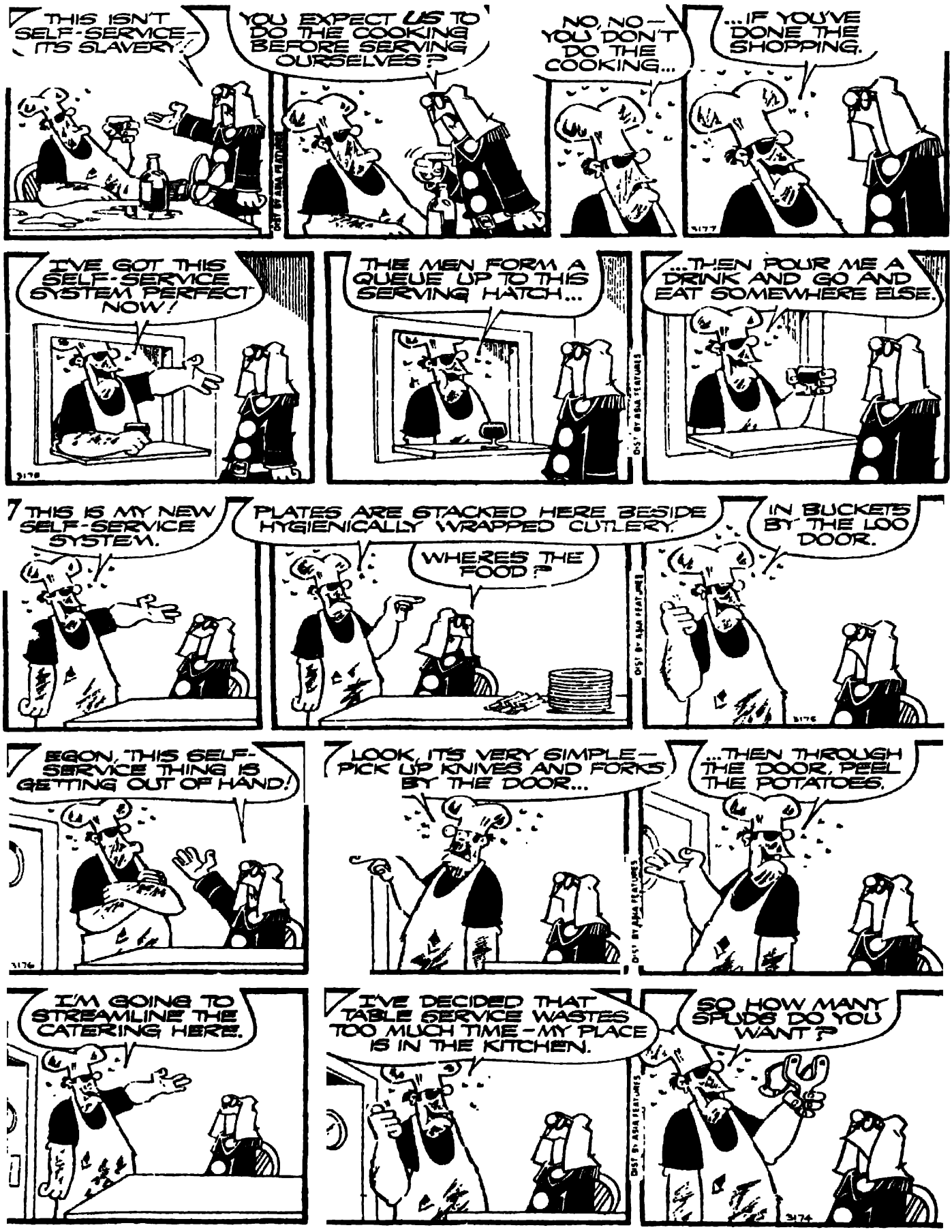


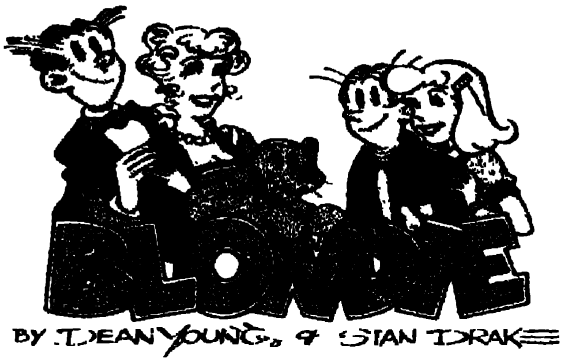
"WE'LL HAVE TO EAT OUT···THE PURPLE STUFF IN THE BACK OF THE REFRIGERATOR HAS REACHED CRITICAL MASS."

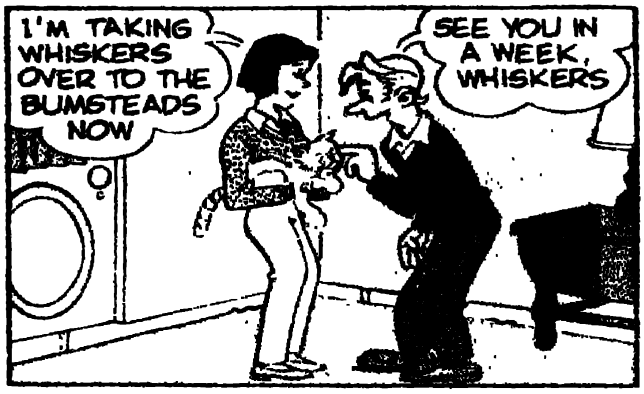
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

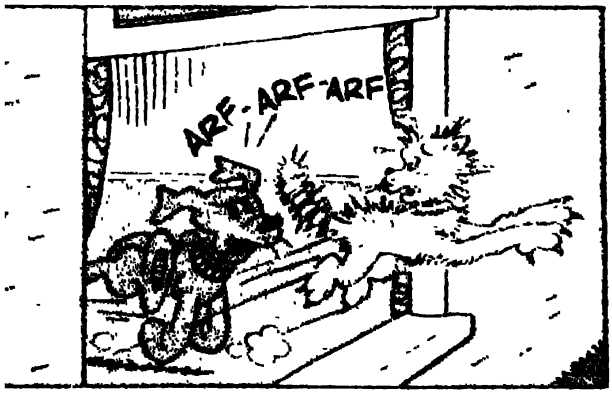



BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE


I'M TAKING WHISKERS OVER TO THE BUMSTEADS NOW
SEE YOU IN A WEEK, WHISKERS

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES WE'D EVER TRUST TO WATCH WHISKERS FOR US WHILE WE'RE AWAY
DON'T WORRY, BARBARA, WE'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM

THANKS AGAIN, BLONDIE!
BYE, HAVE FUN


ARF-ARF-ARF

DAGWOOD! I CAN'T FIND WHISKERS ANYWHERE!

THE BROWNS' CAR IS STILL IN THEIR DRIVEWAY! I THINK I'D BETTER GO TELL THEM
YOUNG & DRAKE
11-20

NAH, DON'T WORRY, HONEY, WE'VE GOT A WHOLE WEEK TO FIND HIM

FILMS

THE MAKING OF THE NEW FELUDA

Sabyasachi Chakrabarty tries hard to fit into Soumitra Chatterjee's shoes, under Sandip Ray's direction. ***Trina Mukherjee*** *reports*

Every time a Bengali tourist turns up in Rajasthan, the friendly local guide enquires with a smile, *Sonar Killa nehin dekhenge?* The location that Satyajit Ray chose to film his Feluda thriller, *Sonar Kella* (The Golden Fortress), is now famous for just that reason, just as Benares is associated with his *Jai Baba Felunath* (The Mystery of the Elephant God)

The cover of the novel *Sonar Kella*

The name Feluda evokes the image of a suave Soumitra Chatterjee stalking the forts of Rajasthan or crouching in anticipation in the dark alleys of Benares. Jatayu immediately conjures up the serio-comic visage of late Santosh Dutta who could not be told apart from the author's—the films were based on Satyajit Ray's detective stories —illustrations of the character. And then, of course, there was the cute yet curious Topshe, played by Siddhartha Chatterjee in the first two films.

After the success of these movies there have been a few attempts to bring Feluda back to life on celluloid, though Satyajit Ray himself decided not to make any more Feluda films after the demise of Santosh Dutta. He was approached by Sabyasachi Chakrabarty, an ardent Feluda fan himself, for the role of Feluda. Chakrabarty, then, was riding high on the success of his television serials *Tero Parbon* and *Rudra Sener Diary*, the latter being a detective serial. But Ray turned him down

It was the late director's son, Sandip Ray, who decided to revive the character of Feluda and chose

A still from *Bakshya Rahashya*. To be followed

Sandip Ray in action: Will his new Feluda, Sabyasachi Chakrabarty, prove to be as good as Soumitra Chatterjee?

Sabyasachi to do it. Says Sandip Ray, "I was looking for an actor who would not only be a good Feluda for my *Bakshya Rahashya* but also would be an ideal Feluda in the long run." Playing Feluda would require a lot of physical action and the former favourite Soumitra Chatterjee is not really young anymore. "So Sabyasachi was an ideal choice," says Ray. The new recruit, a fan of Soumitra Chatterjee as well, was "elated" to be playing his "dream role".

But there was another major obstacle to be surmounted. Who would play the role of Jatayu? Bibhas Chakrabarty, while directing a couple of Feluda adventures for the small screen, studiously chose those stories which did not have Jatayu. Sandip Ray's previous attempt—*Kissa Kathmandu Ka* for the national network—was not well received. Viewers, especially Bengali viewers, refused to accept the attractive but overweight and middle-aged Shashi Kapoor in the role of the ace detective. Kapoor as the Old Fox, yes, perhaps, but Feluda? No way. Mohan Agashe fared even worse in terms of both appearance and performance in the much loved character of Jatayu.

So how did Sandip Ray get around the problem? "My father was very apprehensive about casting anyone in the role of Jatayu. I too was hesitant. But as I *had* to select an alternative for Santosh Dutta, I was confident it had to be Robi Ghosh." Ghosh, undoubtedly is a fine actor, also having acted in a few Satyajit Ray movies which included his legendary Bagha Baiven role. According to Sandip Ray, "This was a test case in terms of any future Feluda feature films."

Selecting a new Topshe was relatively easy. Saswata Chatterjee, the budding actor-son of Subhendu Chatterjee, was found suitable even by the senior Ray who had seen him at a wedding. Already a 'veteran' of two movies, *Atmaja* and *Nayanitara* produced by NFDC, Chatterjee did not find it too difficult "to faithfully follow the instructions of the director".

The only advice the director could offer his new cast was to avoid watching old Feluda movies and to stick to the stories, gleaning as much as it could from the text and the illustrations by the author, Satyajit Ray. Sabyasachi Chakrabarty too, paid more attention to "his facial expressions, eyes, gestures and postures". More brains than brawn, that, according to Chakrabarty, was Feluda.

The new Feluda may have less to worry about, if the word of the old Feluda, Soumitra Chatterjee, is anything to go by. Chatterjee insists that "Chakrabarty will do justice to the role."

So, is there another James Bond-style debate in the offing? Who's better: Connery or Moore .. or rather, Chatterjee or Chakrabarty? According to the latter, "No matter

other movies?

A DETECTIVE IS BORN

Tracing the birth and life of Feluda

Feluda I, II and III: Soumitra Chatterjee, Shashi Kapoor and Sabyasachi Chakraborty

Feluda fans have reason to both celebrate and grieve this year. 1996 marks 30 glorious years of the dynamic detective's career. It would also witness the reappearance of the ace 'private investigator' on the television screen complete with entourage, a fresh trio comprising a new Feluda, the familiar yet new face of Jatayu and a younger, greener Topshe in Sandip Ray's *Baksiya Rahashya*

But there would be no Feluda story to pounce on in the coming Puja specials. And Satyajit Ray, had he been alive, would have completed 75 years on May 2 this year.

The Feluda legacy, however, still runs strong. In 1965 —the younger generation had then grown quite weary of a few stereotyped and quaint detective characters stalking the pages of Bengali thrillers— a new face appeared in *Sandesh*, a children's magazine edited by Satyajit Ray. (The children's magazine was launched by his grandfather, Upendra Kishore Raychowdhury).

A figment of Ray's ever-active imagination,always ready to experiment and explore new genres, this was Pradosh C. Mittet, alias Feluda, accompanied by his young nephew-cum-assistant Tapesh Ranjan or Topshe. At last, Bengalis had their own Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson pairing. Ray wrote the first Feluda story entitled *Feludar Goendagiri*, a suspense thriller set against the hilly backdrop of Darjeeling. And then there was no looking back.

But writing for adolescents was no child's play. As Ray himself admitted in his foreword to *Satyajit Ray: The Feluda Stories* (Viking Penguin India), an omnibus containing all 16 stories translated so far, "To write a whodunnit while keeping in mind a young readership is not an easy task because the stories have to be kept 'clean'. No illicit love, *no crime passionel....*"

Says Sandip Ray, "My father had varied interests and Feluda was one of them." Satyajit Ray was a self-confessed "avid reader of crime fiction" and a fan of Sherlock Holmes.

Perhaps, the Holmes in him egged him on to give Feluda a fresh new lease of life and "forced" him to write a Feluda novel every year. The first adventure was followed by 34 Feluda stories/novellas over a span of 27 years. Sixteen of them were published in *Sandesh* which devoted its December '95 issue (*Feluda 30*) solely to Feluda, 18 in *Desh* (Puja specials) and one in *Anandumela*. *Nayan Rahashya* was the last novel published during Ray's lifetime. And *Robertsoner Ruby* was published posthumously in 1992.

Ray had a new approach to each adventure. Each had a different locale, a picturesque setting and was populated with strange, sinister and comical characters. In 1971, the author introduced Lalmohan Ganguly alias Jatayu in *Sonar Kella* to Feluda fans.

This docile, middle-aged gentleman penned cheap, thrillers and was meant to act as "a foil to Feluda" and "provide dollops of humour". Jatayu, with his penchant for the "mysterious" endeared himself to his readers. So enamoured was Satyajit Ray of his new creation that a Feluda story or even a movie became unthinkable without his presence.

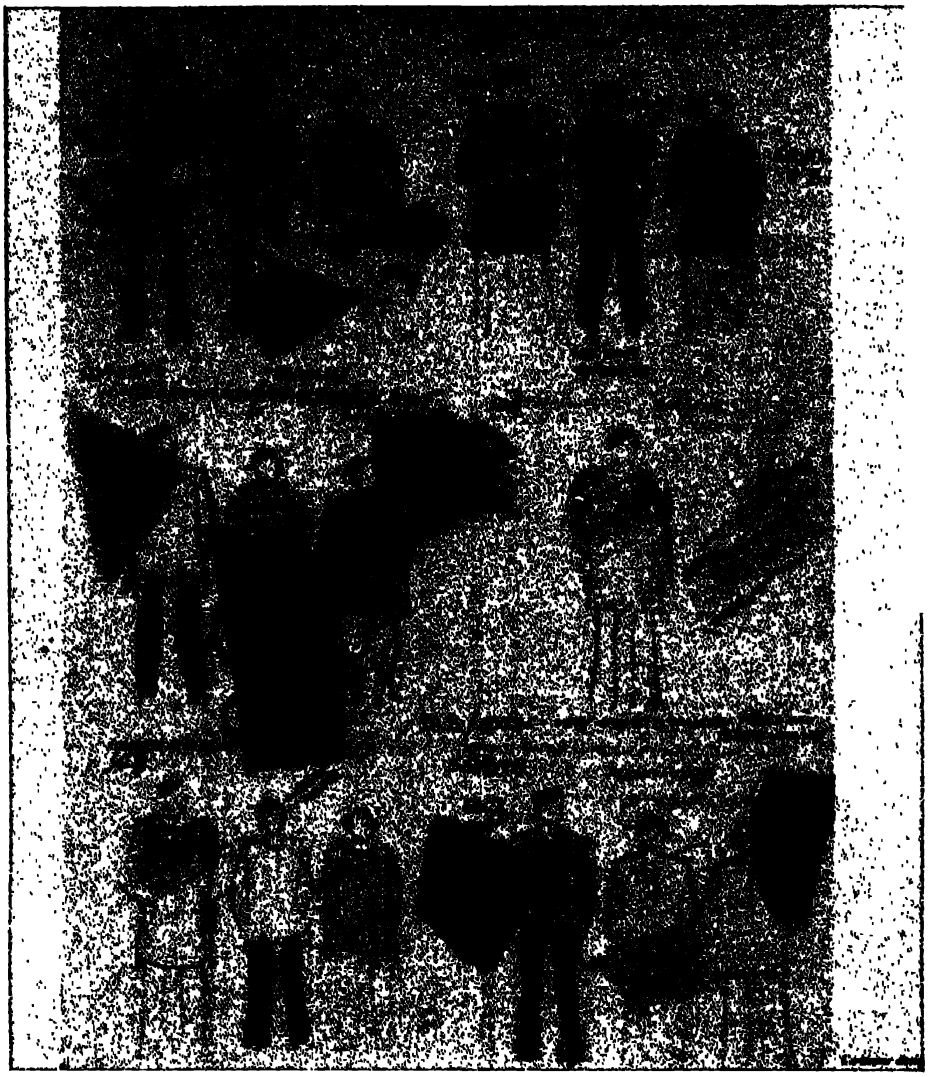
The current year is an interesting one for Feluda & Co. in terms of numerology. This year, apart from being the 30th anniversary of Feluda, also finds Lalmohan Ganguly alias Jatayu completing 25 years in hot pursuit of crimes and criminals along with Feluda. May 2, 1996 was Satyajit Ray's 75th birth anniversary. Feluda made his sixth screen appearance this year.

Ray filmed *Sonar Kella* in 1974 and in 1979, *Jai Baba Felunath* was completed with Soumitra Chatterjee in the lead. In 1990 Chatterjee reappeared as Feluda in a tele-serial directed by Bibhash Chakraborty, *Ghutghutiar Ghatana*, and again in *Golokdham Rahashya*. Later in 1987, Feluda fans all over India followed one of his adventures on the Doordarshan national network in *Kissa Kathmandu Ka*, starring Shashi Kapoor as Feluda, which was shown under the tele-series, *Satyajit Ray Presents*. The current tele-film, *Bakshya Rahashya*, has Sabyasachi Chakrabarty making his first appearance as the new Feluda.

In print, Feluda stories have always been bestsellers. Says Badal Basu, manager, Ananda Publishers, "The cover of *Sonar Kella* was personally designed by Satyajit Ray as usual but after making the movie he suggested that we use a still from the film on the cover." But readers may soon see the original cover in its newly-printed edition of the popular novel. *Bakshya Rahashya*, the latest story to be filmed for television, has already sold 74,000 copies. In 1994, Ananda Publishers came out with an innovative package of the novella accompanied by an audio cassette of its dramatised version. This too had the voices of the original trio; Soumitra Chatterjee as Feluda, Santosh Dutta as Jatayu and Siddhartha Chatterjee as Topshe.

However, the highest selling Feluda novella is *Badshahi Angti* which has sold 91,000 copies to date.

Incidentally, Feluda's fictional rival in terms of popularity, Professor Shanku, will join the world of comic strips on May 2 in a sci-fi adventure entitled *Professor Shanku O UFO*. But Feluda, the Calcutta-based sleuth who is ambidextrous, excells in martial arts, hypnotism, card tricks, languages and writes his personal diary in Greek, seems to have an edge over the clever scientist.



Costume illustrations from *Jai Baba Felunath* by Satyajit Ray

who plays James Bond, Connery would remain the best." One can only hope that he has 'moore' to offer than that.

The telefilm, a taut economical thriller, definitely has a lot to offer: a double crime and two criminals, interesting characters and a dramatic climax against the snowy setting of Shimla. In other words, a 'clean', fun-filled children's movie which could be viewed by their parents too. Considering the dire quality of children's films in India, that itself is a worthy achievement. Whether the 'new trio' will click or not, however, is a tough question to answer.

Every one involved with the movie had his own share of problems. Sandip Ray had to choose an adventure that would offer the scope of good locations and also fit the constraints of the small screen. Robi Ghosh, according to Ray, worked very, very hard to fit into another man's shoes and Sabyasachi Chakrabarty, too, coyly admitted that in a particular scene where he looks around for an address he "could not flash his torch into the camera lens even after trying about 15 times!"

That must be the least of his problems, though, considering his new avatar is – yes, that's right, that of a detective. And it takes a lot playing Sherlock Holmes, Kakababu and Feluda one after the other.

Now it is only a matter of time before Feluda fans decide whether they like the new Feluda adventure or not. This telefilm was a "trial run" according to Sandip Ray to decide whether more exciting Feluda adventures like *Bombayer Bombete* could be made into full-length feature films. But more importantly, *Bakshya Rahashya* would reveal whether the new Feluda can cut it. Or whether he is destined to go the Shashi Kapoor way. ■

Photographs by Hirak Sen

FIRST PERSON

MALVIKA SINGH, *associate publisher of* Business India *and the driving force behind Business India Television (BITV), is one of the great* bon vivants *of Delhi. The daughter of yester-year power couple, Raj and Romesh Thapar, she works hard, lives well and enjoys a nice drink in the evening. And what's more important, she doesn't take herself too seriously.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A stiff whisky.
What is your greatest fear?
The red line bus and failure.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My father.
What do you dislike most in others?
Greed and ego.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My fat and arrogance.
What is your most precious possession?
My integrity and my home.
What objects do you always carry?
My glasses.
What makes you most depressed?
Mean assaults.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My double chin.

What is your favourite word?
"Go for it".
What is your favourite journey?
Driving in the desert.
What is your favourite dream?
Taking on challenges to break new ground.
What is your nightmare?
Fatal accidents.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My son.
What is your source of sustenance?
Myself.
On what occasions do you lie?
For sheer survival.
What is your greatest regret?
That I don't have any formal education beyond high school.
What has been your happiest moment?
Giving birth.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Kind words.
How do you relax?
Dancing and drinking.

What do you envy most in others?
Sharp intelligence.

How would you like to be remembered?
As a funny fat friend.
How would you like to die?
With a drink in my hand.

What is your favourite journey?

Driving in the desert

What is your most precious possession?

My integrity and my home

Over a decade, you've experienced furious monsoons, withering heatwaves and a rapid increase in pollution.

Incredibly, your exterior paint never lost its complexion.

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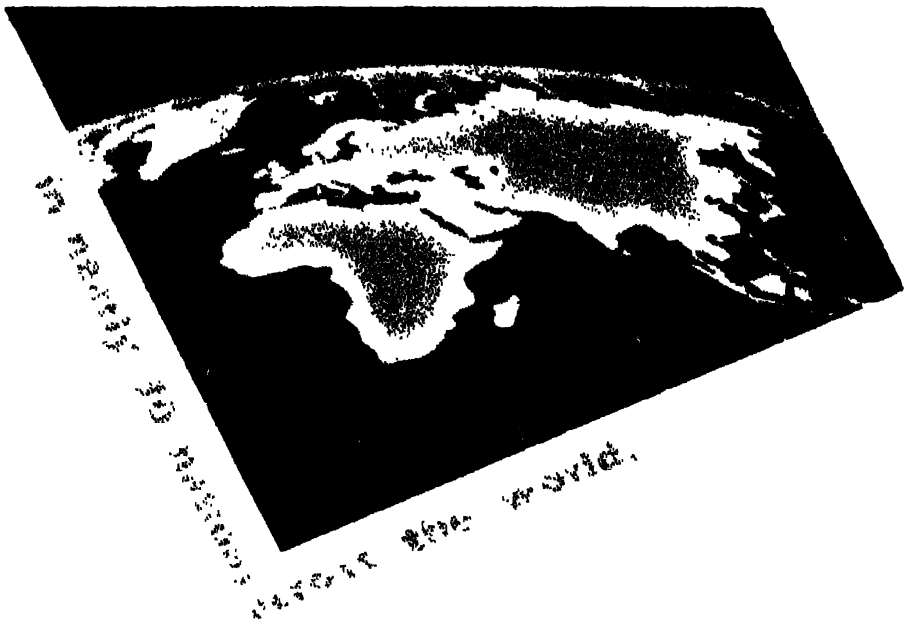

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The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Channel War

on the rivalry between the two music channels was delectable ('MTV Vs Channel V', April 7).

Indians like good music. Hindi songs with lilting Western tunes have proved a big hit in recent times. As a result, Channel V would be the ultimate choice of the people as it presents both Western and Indian songs.

On the other hand, MTV beams only Western numbers and can be popular with a section of young Indians. However, if MTV were to introduce prizes for its programmes, and such other incentives, viewership would definitely soar.

Partha Pratim Modak, Howrah

■ It is difficult to predict the outcome of the music war. But, at least, it has helped the women VJs to further shorten the lengths of their dresses

Arnab Banerjee, Calcutta

■ I and my friends were delighted with the cover story as music happens to be our greatest love. Some time back DD2 aired MTV for about a couple of hours much to the joy of viewers like us who could not afford cable television.

It gave us an opportunity to relax with our favourite Western tracks. Will DD please revive this programme?

Anitava Dewan, Calcutta

A Channel V road show in Calcutta

■ Thank you for the wonderful cover story. MTV and Channel V have really caught on in India. Foreign channels know how to present programmes: from the selection of tracks to VJs and their costumes, they are unstoppable mumbo jumbos may interest the former type. It does not mean that they have been able to win over all Indian viewers.

Debabrata Mohanty, Balasore (Orissa)

■ The so-called war between the two foreign musical giants is actually a creation of the media.

A minuscule section of Indians, of the upwardly mobile and English-speaking variety, may be watching these channels. But the majority Indians watch good old Doordarshan. So, where is the war?

The two channels' promotional programmes like road shows with skimpily clad girls mouthing

Anupama Mitra, Calcutta

■ It is difficult to predict which channel will finally become the favourite with Indian viewers. Both beam lively, pulsating music that endear the young crowd.

But as Channel V also has some Indian music on its list, there is every possibility that this channel will be more popular with the Indians. For there are many young viewers who may like fast music, but not necessarily of the pop and rock variety.

Dhrubajyoti Biswas, Bhadreshwar (W.B.)

■ The success of a channel greatly depends on the calibre of veejays, how they present the programmes and how well they can entice viewers so as to keep them glued to the screen.

Channel V VJs have greater savvy and compelling powers than MTV VJs. Also, Channel V has a greater variety of programmes.

B.N. Bose, Calcutta

INSIDE

Pabitra Das

PAGE 4

FALLING IN love is beautiful and more so when you get the right items in the market to express your feelings. From cards to flowers and soft toys, an entire industry has sprung up to cater to young lovers

PAGE 26

MANPREET BRAR finds herself a new role.

Love gifts

SECTIONS

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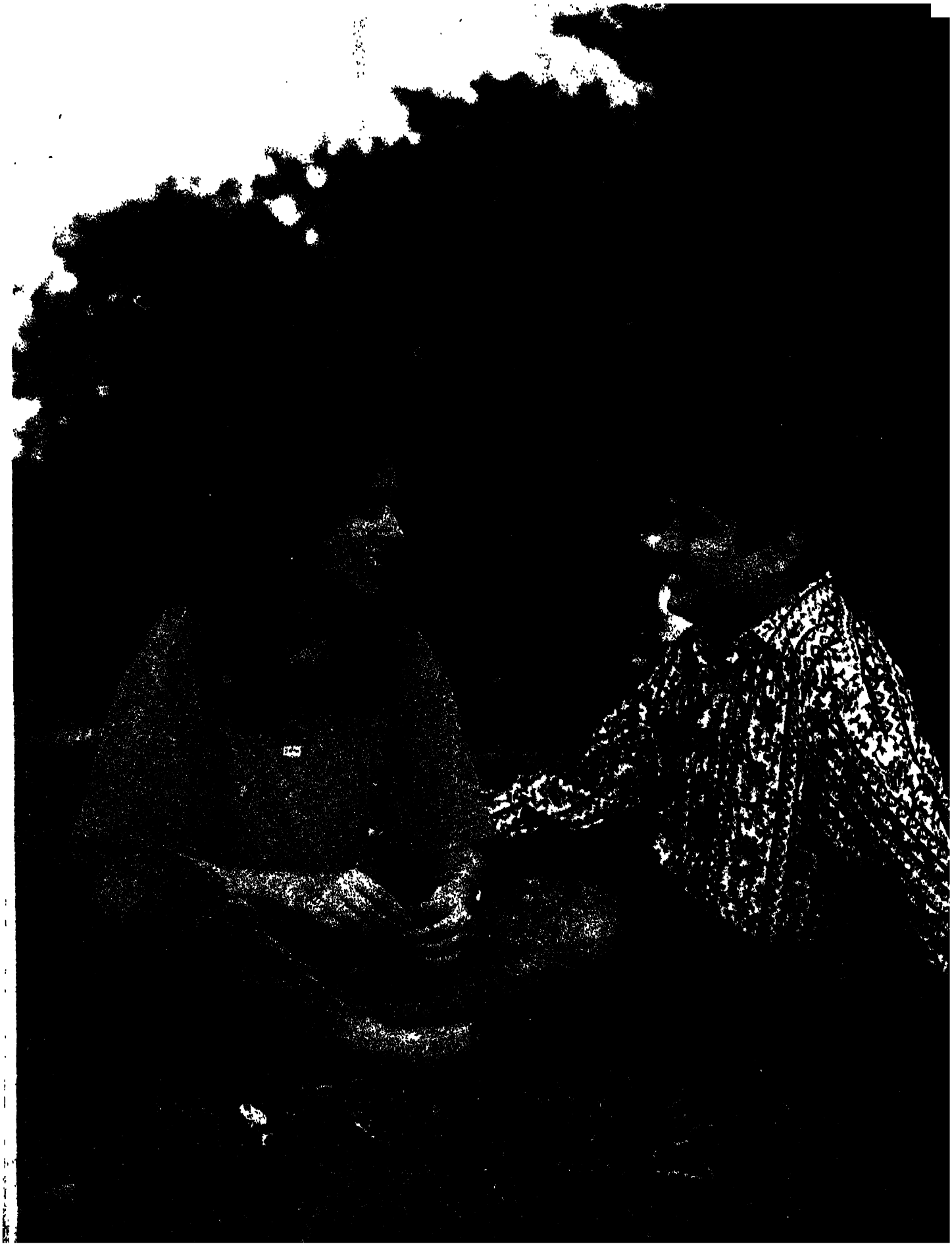
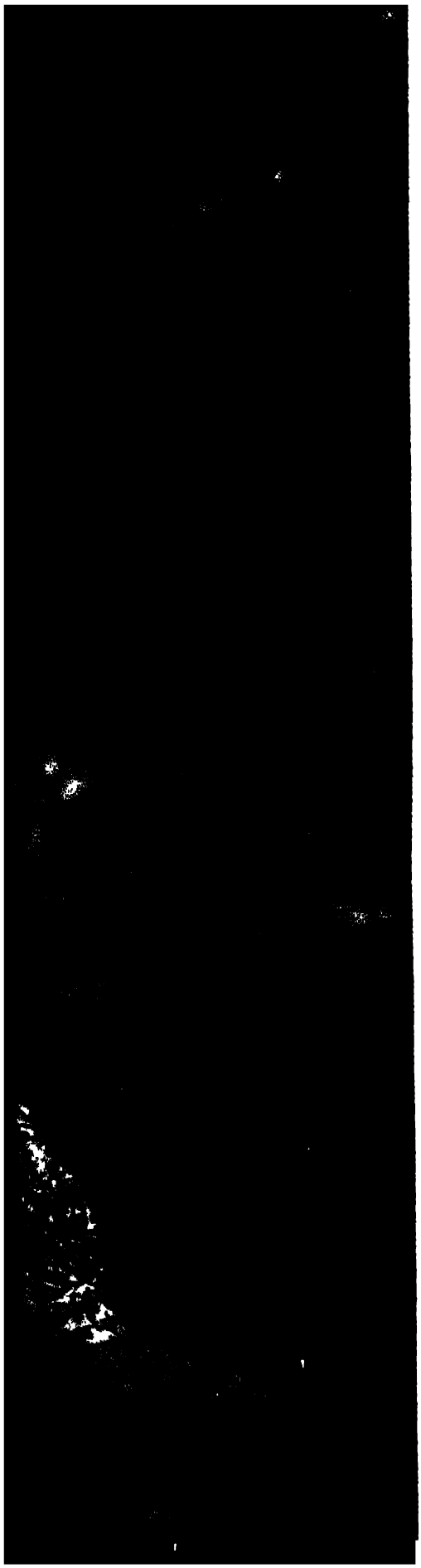
26 LIMELIGHT
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Vivek Das

Models Anshuman Roy and Nayanika Sanyal





Vivek Das

COVER STORY

LOVE IN THE AIR

Greeting cards, flower shops, request programmes; all of them depend for their survival on young lovers. ***Manisha Gulati*** *and* ***Susmita Banerjee*** *report*

EVERYONE LOVES THE IDEA OF BEING IN LOVE. EVEN THOSE WHO haven't found the man/woman of their dreams, go right on dreaming about that ideal love affair. You know the kind: where your boyfriend showers you with flowers and cutesy greeting cards; where your girlfriend declares her love for you on the FM channel, or better still, on television; where you spend hours on the telephone exchanging sweet nothings; and your Valentine's Day gift is a diamond engagement ring.

Pictra Das

And, as they say, the whole world loves a lover. So, there are always special bonuses on offer when you're dating that special someone. Your friends may rag you mercilessly, asking for every detail of what went on during the late-night show of *Basic Instinct*, but the rest of the world will show you a rare indulgence, bestowing sweet smiles as you hold hands surreptitiously beneath the restaurant table.

But while your fellow diners may regard you with fond wistfulness, others will be far more business-like. And who can blame them? After all, that warm romantic glow that

Vivek Das

emanates from the two of you could well keep them in clover for the rest of their lives.

Yes, love these days is big business, helping support everyone from gift-shop owners, greeting cards galleries and florists. And it is lovers — both young and old — who keep personal columns in newspapers and request programmes on radio and television going.

It is this euphoric — and often, all too fleeting — feeling that keeps several million rupees worth of businesses afloat.

Saying it with flowers

At least 80 per cent of men have tried this at one time or another. Whether you're asking a woman for a date, apologising for past bad behaviour, declaring your love or the fact that you miss her: flowers will always do it for you. No matter if its birthdays, anniversaries, forgotten birthdays/anniversaries, mornings after or nights before, saying it with flowers always works

Your friends may rag you mercilessly but the rest of the world will show you a rare indulgence

Certainly, it worked wonders for Hema Malini and Amitabh Bachchan in *Satte Pe Satta* much better than that watermelon, as it did for newcomers Rahul Roy and Anu Aggarwal in *Aashiqui*. Though, we have to admit that Shah Rukh Khan let the side down in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* when he presented Kajol with a flower which was a squirt gun in disguise.

But if you take a more serious and lover-like approach, then a bouquet goes a very long way indeed. Says Sheila Dubke, who works as an air-hostess with Modiluft, "Flowers are beautiful to look at and lovely to smell. When a man gives you flowers he's secretly telling you how you appear to him. And every time you look at them in the room, they remind you of him."

Priya Tandon, an occupational therapist agrees, "Red roses are like an aphrodisiac. Imagine getting one for

every day that he's known you!" As romantic gestures go, that may take the entire bowery, but you'd need to do some serious work with the calculator; and make a dent in your bank balance as well, if this is a long-standing affair.

Nonetheless, men continue to flock to flower shops, buying up anything from carnations, lilies, roses, birds of paradise, gladioli to orchids for their women. Such popular flower shops as Pollen in the Greater Kailash market in New Delhi sell to around 30 men in a single day, and the flowers end up costing between Rs 50 to Rs 2,000 for a really impressive bunch.

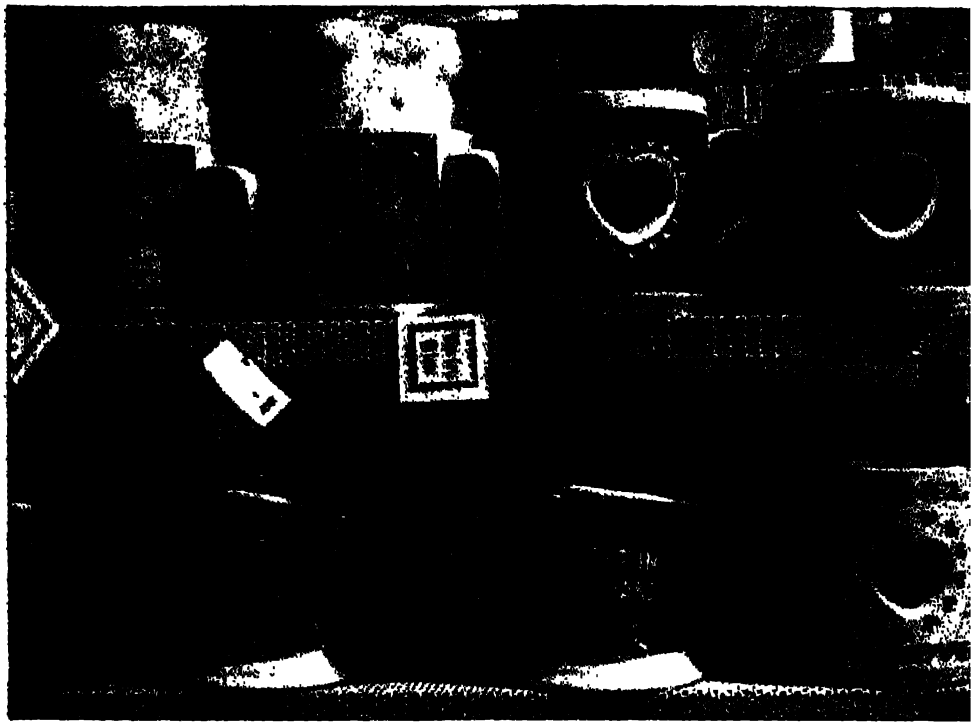
Most people who buy flowers prefer home delivery. This has its advantages. For one thing, there is a certain surprise element inherent in having a bouquet delivered to your doorstep. And then, of course, there are those delicious moments spent in anticipation of that thank-you phone call. Says Bobby Bhatia, a student of architecture, "It is a technique of seduction which teases without looking like the person is touting for business."

This can often lead to the most piquant situations, though. Sailen Pal, who runs the floral boutique for the Agri-horticultural Gardens, recounts instances when his customers insisted that the flowers be sent anonymously. But much to Pal's horror, the recipients landed up at his shop the next day, demanding that he name names. Only when he confessed that he didn't have a clue, did they leave, muttering darkly that they would ensure that his shop was closed down if they were ever pestered in this manner.

Such incidents are exceptions, though; most people — women in particular — are thrilled to get flowers. And Pal tries his best to satisfy all tastes, even flying down orchids from Bangkok, even though the cost is prohibitive. On Valentine's Day, he says, his sales double and he sells up to Rs 10,000 worth of flowers.

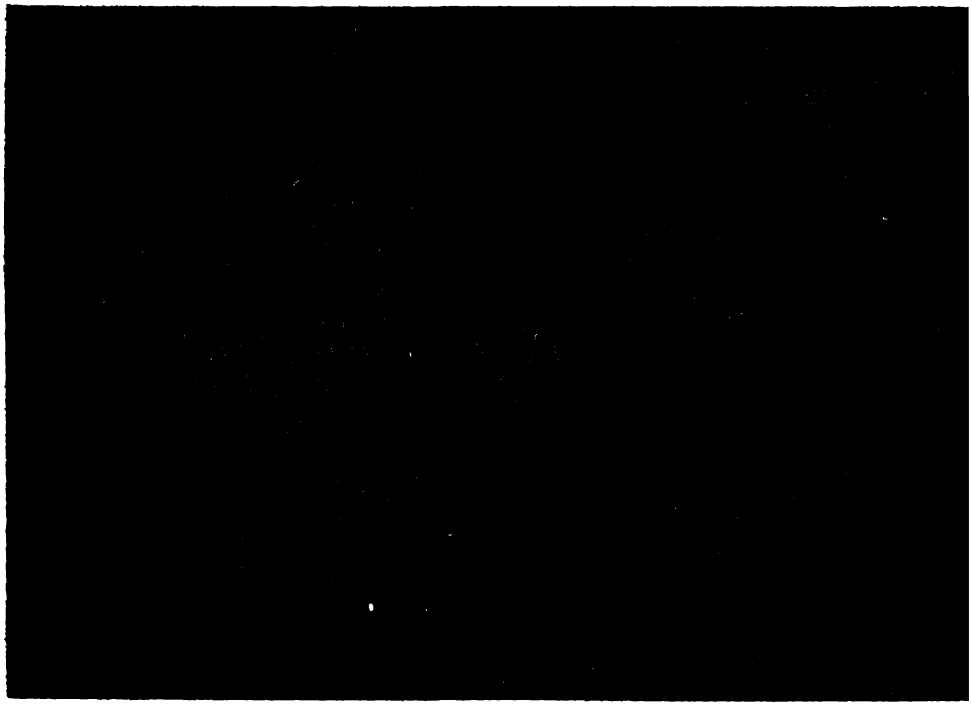
The florist shop of the Taj Bengal is also rather popular, though the blooms here are far more expensive. Ranjit Pradhan, who has been looking after the shop for the last five years and does most of the arrangements himself, says that most of his clients range between the ages of 17 and 35 and think nothing of spending as much as Rs 5,000 on a special bouquet of flowers.

Pradhan, who is something of a romantic himself, has a special touch when it comes to making flower arrangements for lovers: he uses heart-



Pabitra Das

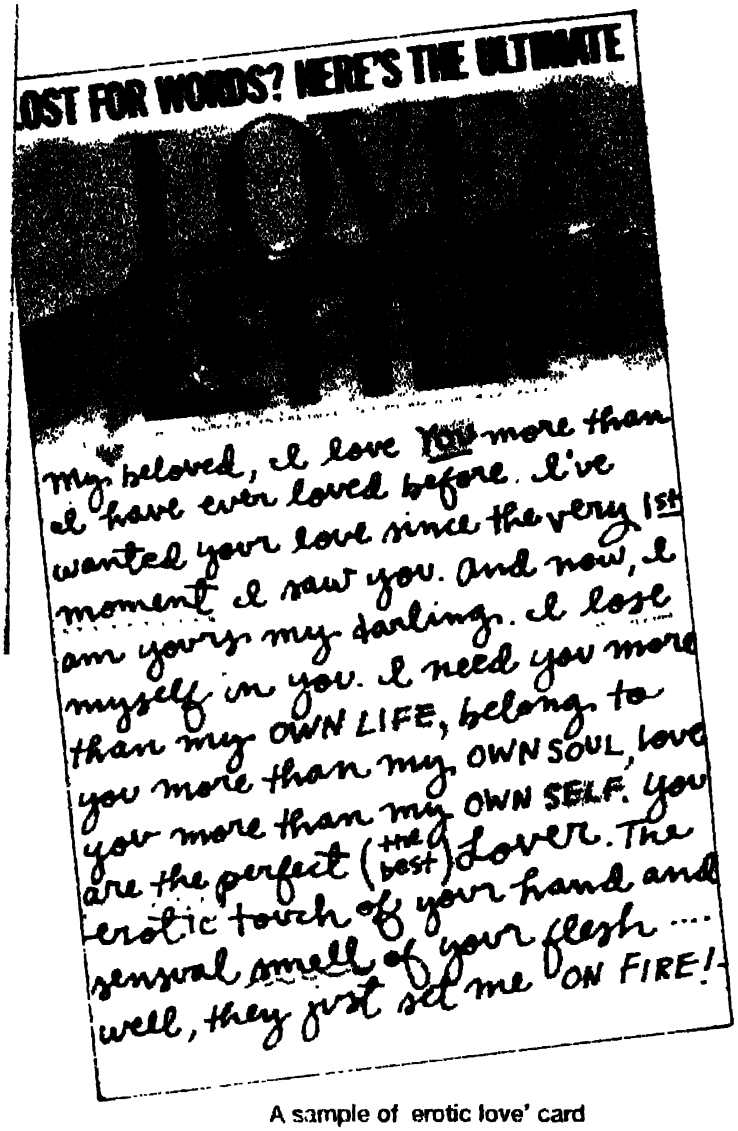
Coffee mugs in different shapes and eye-catching colours at Archies Gallery



Pabitra Das

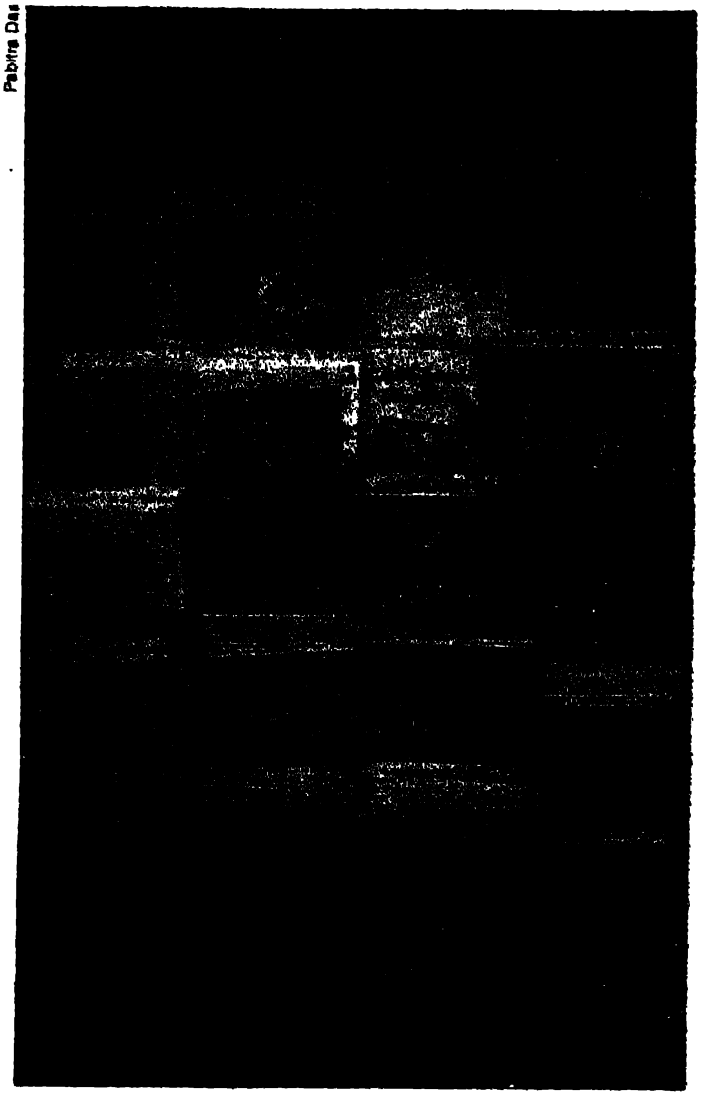
Heart-shaped showpieces for your love; available at Archies Gallery

Love, these days, is big business. It is this euphoric — if all too fleeting — feeling that keeps several million rupees worth of businesses afloat



A sample of erotic love' card

Pabitra Das



The collection of love cards at Archies Gallery is mind-boggling

shaped baskets and trays

But don't belabour under the misapprehension that only men say it with flowers. Even women have been known to send off the odd bunch on such special occasions as birthdays, anniversaries and, of course, Valentine's Day. Says Rajiv Khatri of Delhi Flowers, "I mainly supply to all the Delhi hotels, but on February 14, this huge mass of mankind swoops down on us. It's difficult to even calculate the number, they come in thousands."

And they include men, women and children, some of whom are all of six years old!

Greetings from your lover

Another 'done to death, but works like a charm' ruse is that of a card in the mailbox. The copy may read

Bouquet for the lady love

Pabitra Das

from the downright erotic ("The erotic touch of your hand and the sensual smell of your flesh...") to the sublimely romantic ("You are the island in my sea"), but cards are given in any love affair

Such greeting cards companies as Archies and Hallmark vie with each other for business. The former sells around 300-400 love cards every day in Delhi alone, and the number increases several times over during the month of February. Says Amar Deep Singh of Archies Gallery, Delhi, "The demand is so great that we have to come out with new cards each month as well as reprint older ones."

Adds Hallmark franchise owner Manoj Gupta of the aptly-named Sentiment Gift Gallery, "Of the 1,000 odd cards we sell in a day, 700 are love messages. And nearly 70 per cent of the buyers are girls." Clearly, women are still the more romantic of the two sexes.

Archies Gallery has a branch in Cal-

cutta as well, on Lindsay Street, though the cards themselves come from Delhi. Archies has a special creative team in place which does the 'copywriting' for the cards, studying market trends, watching movies and reading foreign magazines to get new and fresh ideas.

The price of the cards range from Rs 12 to Rs 150. And for your money, you can have every kind of message, from "Just love me" to "It's time we made up with kisses", or even "Please let me in," showing a young man knocking on a closed door.

The cards on display at Giggles on Park Street are also both eye-catching and witty Supplied by Hallmark, they are priced between Rs 12 to Rs 50. And according to Mrs Mehra, who looks after the store, most of them are sold out by the evening, and she has to find replacements for the empty shelves. Love and anniversary cards, she says, are most popular, and yes, her clientele also ranges from ages 17 to 35

Radio ga ga

There is a certain vicarious thrill in hearing your inner-most feelings being described by your favourite deejay over the radio. And these days, more and more love-lorn teenagers — and even some older people — are opting for broadcasting their love rather than merely expressing it.

Says deejay Manish of FM Radio in Delhi, "It's not humanly possible to even listen to, let alone air all the messages we get. There's a whole world of love-sick citizens out there."

Poonam Mehta, a college student, tries to explain this fascination with relaying love messages over the radio. "You do not have to use gifts as an entry visa or a bargaining tool. Compliments delivered publicly are as good if not better "

In Calcutta, you can call up while a programme is in progress and not just deliver a message for your loved one, but even ask for a special song to be played for him / her. Of the shows that are specially popular here are *Phone Aapke, Geet Hamare* (in Hindi), *MP Jewellers Bengali Dial-in*, and a special love programme, *Britannia Little Hearts. Love is On The Air*, which broadcasts as many as 125 requests every week.

FM radio also receives a number of letters from their listeners, which the deejays are then expected to read out on the air. Some of these, says Soubhik, an FM radio deejay, are very emotionally-charged, and often have to be edited to suit the time constraints of the programme

There have been instances when lovers who have quarrelled or had a misunderstanding have made up over Times FM by having a friendly deejay read out their letters of apology. And on other occasions, the songs that they have requested act as messages themselves. One girl, for example, asked that a certain song be played for a boyfriend: *Please release me*, went the lyrics

Says Indrani, the deejay who hosts *Britannia Little Hearts*, "We feel the messages should not be plain love talk They should also be witty and imaginative "

And, for the most part, that's just what they are Sometimes, the listeners compose a nice, long poem comprising phrases from various songs And on other occasions, they contain themselves with a romantic, mushy message with a song to match.

Cute carry-bags: With love and all

Kishor Roy Choudhury

Cuddly teddies: For your loved ones

Sometimes, love even spills over to the people who are reading the messages. Consider the experience of Rishi Prasad, the man who started such FM programmes in Delhi as *Dial-In-Hour* and *Time-out Confessions*, for instance. "Girls used to write love letters to me in blood," he says, an incredulous expression on his face. "I mean, deejays are all fools themselves. You can't take them seriously You'll only end up feeling foolish about yourself a day later."

Prasad may be bemused by all this attention, but most other men are quite happy to receive an ode from their loved one over the wireless Feelings and messages are reciprocated, and the radio often ends up doubling as a dating agency.

Says Rajat Pahwa, a hotel owner, "The more imaginative you are, the more you achieve An extremely verbal description of what I am feeling and planning to do, delivered over the radio, added greatly in my favour I won her heart"

Not every love note gets broadcast though Says Gurbani Malik, also an FM deejay, "We air the less bizarre messages Sometimes, though, the male will provide himself with a variety of imaginary talents, which he is far from possessing in reality, from windsurfing to a three-month stint in the army" Such messages, apparently, are a strict no-no.

What *Musical Band-Box* was to teenagers in the Seventies and Eighties, television request programmes are to their Nineties counterparts The most unusual of these, of course, is *Mere Message, Mere Geet* on Sony TV Here, young lovers - or even fond parents, aunts and uncles -- don't have to restrict themselves to writing a maudlin message which is then read out by a vivacious deejay. On this programme, the persons in question actually appear on camera to send their messages across to their loved ones It may be to a girlfriend who is sulking for some reason, to a fiancee who lives in another city, or even to a wife on an anniversary but the essence of the message hardly ever varies from the "I love you, I miss you" variety

Then you have such programmes as *Rasna Song Tere Naam*, where you can ask for your favourite song to be played for the one you love, along with a meaningful message Okay, you don't get to appear on television, but then not everybody wants to Remember, love in India is still a rather secretive

Roy Choudhury

Gilded butterflies: Bound to set your heart aflutter

venture And most young people would die of mortification — or would be put under house arrest — if their love affairs became public knowledge In fact, say deejays, sometimes the names of the lovers in question are not real either, and even their messages are conveyed in elaborate code.

Sample quote. "Would the young lady in red at the college social get in touch with Mr X He hasn't had a good nights sleep ever since they attended that poetry reading. " Well, you get the picture

Kishor Roy Choudhury

A Gift for Someone You Love

If you're still at the stage where you need to inundate him/her with gifts to spark their interests, then you couldn't possibly go wrong at Giggles, the gift shop on Park Street. On offer for the incurable romantic are ceramic mugs that are twisted and misshapen and come with the message, "I melt in your hands"; or even those which have a hole running through the middle which say, "I love you hole-heartedly." For those with a less adventurous bent of mind, there are the usual cuddly toys, or heart-shaped cushion which say "I love you" and can be hung on your bedroom wall. You could also buy her a sticker for her car that says, "I love you too much to let you go" or pot-pourri filled heart-shaped plastic jars. There are also plastic heart-shaped pieces on offer which would look just right on her study table, and have such messages as "Lots of love to someone who means so much to me," embossed on them

If you're loaded, of course, you needn't bother with these trifles Just go right ahead and splurge on that solitaire. After all, doesn't the saying go "Diamonds are forever"

SCENES OF OLD CRIMES

***Anita Mehta** revisits the haunts of her student days*

A return to the scene of old crimes is always dangerous, specially if the return is soon after the first parting — there are so many ghosts to be laid to rest, whether these be of old enmities or old friendships. So I was understandably wary when I went back recently to the terrain where I'd lived for almost two decades, until my return to this city last year — but I felt obliged for professional reasons to make the trip to France and England, somewhat earlier than originally planned.

Shades of old partings returned as I made the midnight trip to Dum Dum, past rows of sleeping houses on the VIP Road and along the deserted highway which was to symbolise for years the loneliness of impending farewell; at the airport, I played once again the role of an earlier life when time after time, the breaking night would swallow me up and away from Calcutta, as I moved away from the extended bouquets of loving hands that waved goodbye. This time, however, I knew it was only a role — this time, the thought of return lulled me to eventual sleep as we headed towards the western horizon, the sun rising at our heels.

First to Paris, and to the welcome that only that city of all others can make to me — somehow there is a sense of deep belonging that surfaces slowly when I am there, akin to the way in which its sibilant language makes a gradual comeback to my linguistic nerve centres, causing me to remember words and phrases that I'd thought were as buried as the times when I first learnt them as a child.

My friends there were as warm as ever, possibly more so now that they could no longer take my proximity for granted — a far cry from more northern societies where one is forgotten along with the sound of one's retreating footsteps. I, too, was deeply aware of how little I could take for granted what had once seemed within easy reach — the friendship and love that exists despite a deep knowledge

The Eiffel Tower, Paris

An image of Durga resplendent in *shola* carvings

of the other, the lazy mornings over rich black coffee and *pain au chocolat*, the morning rush on the sparkling cobblestones of the 16th arrondissement, somehow never devoid of sartorial elegance and the whiffs of French fragrances, the sloping grey rooftops that lend a unique signature to the dullest of skies, the presence of so much art so concentrated, as in the tip of a blazing needle, in this one city, the restaurants with cuisines from around the world that provide a trip to another culture of an evening.

Paris is for me the city of cinema — nowhere else can one find Bunnuel, Ray, Bergman, Allen, Almodovar and Fellini coexisting with an air of normalcy, week after week, year after year; nowhere else are there movie halls in every arrondissement which shows films of every type, every gestation and always with avid viewers of every age and class. I recall seeing *Aranyer Dinratri* for the fifth time in Paris, being surprised at the quality of the French translation (which far surpassed the English in its acuteness), surprised at the ability of the French audience (still numerous, despite the many times it has been shown here) to laugh at the right times, to appreciate the quality of the unsaid despite being in the presence of a translated culture.

Perhaps this is because less is lost in translation here than in many other cases, Paris has aspects of great cultural affinity with Calcutta in ways that are often not the most obvious. That the French are as passionate about their language as the Bengalis are about theirs, is well known — but what, on one occasion I found truly evocative of Calcutta, was when a stranger I'd asked directions of in Paris insisted on walking me to my destination simply because he registered real pleasure in the fact that my request was made in French.

There is an undefinable something, as well, that unites our two languages, the social complexities, behind our use of *apni* and *tumi* are instantly comprehensible to my French friends, the feeling for the unspoken at the end of a sentence, the use of generalities pregnant with symbolic exchange, are aspects of both French and Bengali conversations which lead in the end to extremely verbal societies.

Paris is also, for me, the city of jazz, specially of the Latin American variety: the lambada was first vulgarised here from its origins in Bahia, and in so doing given the consciously sensuous Parisian twist which was much less self-conscious in its place of origin. Star Brazilian singers like Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque are easier to access in this city than they are in their country, and I recall a memorable night where they performed to a clamorous audience, which ended in an impromptu display of warm and all-embracing brilliance on the dance floor.

Paris seems somehow the home away from home for the manifestation of a culture where subtle intellectual perceptions rub shoulders with a hard, almost rough sensuality; and Parisians above all, with their love of logic seem able to appreciate the inner contradictions which generate and sustain this cultural vibrancy.

Lest I am accused of being overly Francophilic, let me say that I was not blind this time to the scourge of homelessness, to the alarming increase in begging, to the boarded-up houses

A still from Satyajit Ray's *Aranyer Din Ratri*

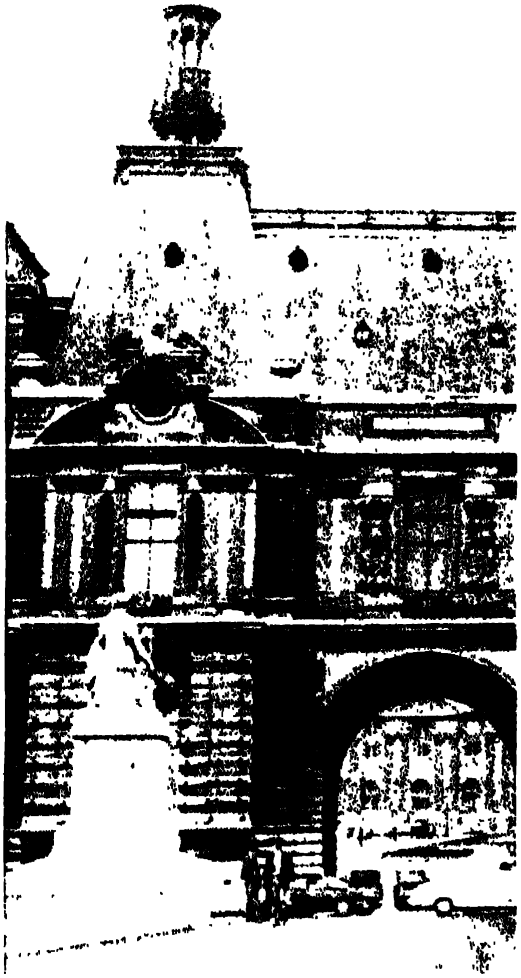
characterising the areas where the unemployed and underemployed live, which have begun to afflict even the most deeply imprinted images of endless sparkling evenings in roadside cafes

However, the images I carried away with me were those of the steeple of the church of Louveciennes glimpsed across a bare forest under pale late afternoon skies, of glasses of full-bodied wine raised in celebration with an ever-increasing ring of friends, of a glut of Renoirs at a museum that left one breathless with undigested richness

And so to Cambridge, and to even more dangerous personal territory, as I went as a visitor to a place that was for years my home - it seemed strange to know a place so well, and

The gate of Palai du Louvre

The homeless catching a bit of warmth on the banks of river Seine



yet to be denied now, the full knowledge of love, to be constrained to the level of well-bred formal exchange as befitted old acquaintances. The bookshops and music shops which were my haunts here are still largely unaltered, and I felt I was melting into time past as I slid unnoticed into alcoves peopled with my favourite authors

Kings College Chapel, to which I made a delayed visit as I wanted to make sure I could withstand the onrush of memories deriving from years of singing and listening to music there, made me a beautiful offering, quite by chance, the choir performed at Evensong the Poulenc mass that our choir had sung there many years ago under the same conductor, Stephen Cleobury

The bright candlelit faces of the choristers the resonances of the great old organ, the grace of the fan vaulting, the limpid luminosity of the stained-glass windows, the echoes of the singing fading softly, softly into an ether thick with memories and majesty and mystery, were reminders that immortality attaches itself to the moment, even when the present succumbs to the inevitable.

The parallels with Oxford, the scene of even older crimes for me, are obvious – - there, it was Evensong at New College, in front of the altar that has always reminded me of the *sholar thakur* that one sees during the pujas in Calcutta with its resplendent white carvings in their vertical ascent to the ceiling

There, it was another old favourite, one of Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs, *"Rise heart, thy lord is risen"* that provided the miraculous element, transcending the moment, and leaving it burnished on the histories of all who heard it The sun shone, that Sunday in Oxford, unusually for spring this year in England — and the gardens around me were idyllic, as only English gardens can be with their silvery, filmy willows, their sprightly daffodils

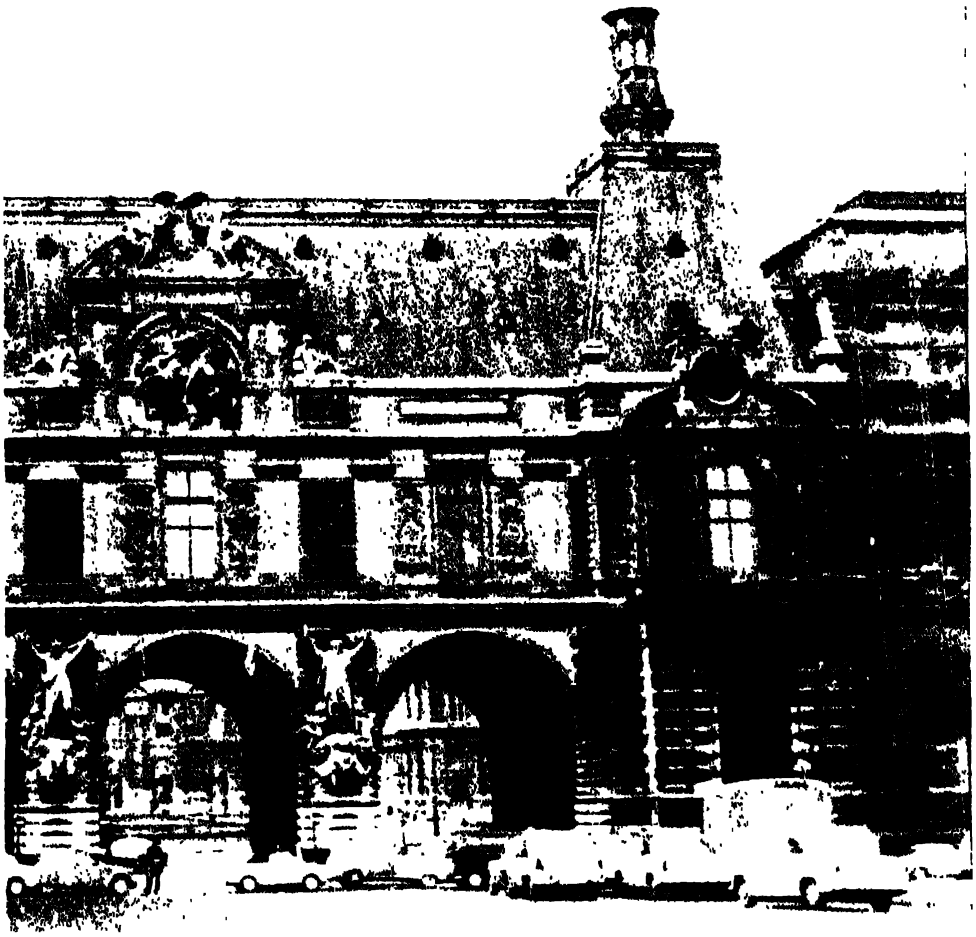
And most importantly, the solid friendship of those whose presence formed the staple of my student days there, was everywhere in abundance - whether in college rooms at Christchurch on a rainy Monday or in the welcoming home in 'Botley of my closest friend' as we watched on video a stunning six-hour BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The BBC, one of the things I most miss about England, allowed me to wallow in the nostalgia of other mornings when I would wake to the sound of the *Today* programme on Radio 4, to John Humphreys' sardonic humour delivered in an eminently comforting voice, to the point that its very tones would conjure up the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and rolls, the vision of sunlight streaming through my kitchen windows

Nostalgia for a vanished England was also the basis of the great success of Emma Thompson's brilliantly scripted *Sense and Sensibility*, evoking as it did the spirit of another time within the quickfire pace of the 20th century, of reserve couching lives intensely lived rather than being a meaningless chaff for emptiness within in a world a million miles away from the post-modern drabness of roundabouts and shopping arcades that disfigure the same places today

When I left Cambridge early in the morning to catch my return flight from Stansted, the sun was rising in the eastern skies, and it would be untruthful to claim that the mist through which I saw it was entirely atmospheric I was returning, once again, from a place to which I'd returned a month ago, to the one I lived in now, which I'd also loved and left many years ago for the place I was now leaving – the concept of return seemed to be turned on its head, the concept of leaving was something that I had clearly left behind long ago, and all trajectories were circular

Everywhere there was a return to a part of life once lived, contingent on a parting from the same in another place, home was both the place to which I was flying, as well as the one I was leaving behind, and the idea of return was no longer directional no longer had a unique sense ■



TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4 THURSDAY 5 FRIDAY 6 SATURDAY 7 SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GOA					
GUWAHATI					
HYDERABAD					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
IMPHAL					
JAIPUR					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
MUMBAI					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
AMSTERDAM					
BANGKOK					
BUCHAREST					

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC 22[illegible]	0700	1	IC 22[illegible]	0920	1
BG 696	1[illegible]5	2 [illegible]	BG 697	1155	2 5
DHAKA					
BG-012	08[illegible]	4	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG 09[illegible]	11[illegible]0	1 [illegible]	BG 011	1110	1 2 3 [illegible]
IC-72[illegible]	1[illegible]00	1 [illegible]	IC 721	1520	1 3 5 6
BG 094	1[illegible]	1 [illegible]	BG 093	162[illegible]	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1[illegible]10	1	BG 09[illegible]	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1 [illegible]	BG 095	2020	1 5
DOHA					
QT 061	10[illegible]	[illegible]	QT 060	1230	2
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	[illegible]	BI 106	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
RA 114	[illegible]	[illegible]	RA 21	2055	3 7
[illegible] 47	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	1250	1 2 4 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
BA 142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1015	3 7
MOSCOW					
SU 538	17[illegible]	1	SU 537	1555	4
PARIS					
KB 106	1105	1	KB-105	0810	2 6
KB 106	132[illegible]	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
SQ 415	234[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ 416	2[illegible]	[illegible]
BI-106	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SOFIA					
LZ 504	17[illegible]0	1	LZ 505	1600	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	1	AI 309	1620	6
YANGON					
IC 72[illegible]	1500	4 [illegible]	IC 72[illegible]	195[illegible]	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	6 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	17 0[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	10 1[illegible]	238[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	2306
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	3030
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	1 30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	7 00	3010
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	15 30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	11 55	[illegible]
[illegible]	10 05	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	6 30	5666
[illegible]	6 [illegible]	Black Diamond Express	21-25	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	10 30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	6 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	15-40	2030
[illegible]	15 25	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	1165
[illegible]	15 [illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	1172
[illegible]	14 [illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	15 25	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	[illegible]
[illegible]	19 15	Darjeeling Mail	8 45	3144
[illegible]	20 15	Lal Quila Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	5 15	[illegible]
[illegible]	20 00	Kathar Express	4 15	5664
[illegible]	11 20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15-50	[illegible]
[illegible]	20 55	Mughal Sarai Express via SBG Loop	[illegible]	3134
[illegible]	18 25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10 25	3104
5085	12 40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr Tue Thurs & Sat	4-25	5096

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express Dep & Arr Except Saturday	[illegible]	[illegible]
8034	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	16 20	[illegible]
2911	11 0[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
700[illegible]	[illegible]	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express Dep [illegible] Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6311	[illegible]	Bangalore Express Dep Tuesday Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
8111	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
8001	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
801	16-4[illegible]	Purulia Express Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
107[illegible]	15 [illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express Dep & Arr on Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
24[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via Howrah Sunday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via Howrah Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
6[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express Monday only	[illegible]	
	14 [illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
6314	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	
6316	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep [illegible] & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays) In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: The Chat Show

First gained popularity in India: Strangely enough, in a foreign incarnation. Yes, it was the mother of all chat show hosts, Oprah Winfrey, who brought this format into our living rooms, and made us all addicts to her brand of confessional television. It wasn't long before we were hooked on to the emotional outbursts of sundry dysfunctional American families, who would discuss anything from incontinence to incest under the glare of the studio lights. And even those among us who'd never heard of bulimia or anorexia in our lives were completely involved with Oprah's personal battle of the bulge.

Nikki Bedi: Fiery exuberance

How we suffered when she gained an extra pound! How we exulted when she reported that she hadn't gone on a binge for a couple of weeks! And what bliss reigned when Winfrey finally came down to her ideal weight and stayed there.

Across the gender barrier: Was none other than Phil Donahue, who seemed to revel in bringing every freak in America on to his show, his special preference, though, seemed to be for trans-sexuals and transvestites. With his shock of white hair and hyperactive style, Donahue maintained an iron control over his show, though he did have the grace to look discomfitted when a particular abusive person called in. While he lacked Oprah's easy charm, he more than made up with his own peculiar brand of aggression.

Across the ocean: Was Robert Kilroy-Silk, the Tory MP who resigned his seat in Parliament and started a Phil Donahue style show on television, emboldened by the fact that he had been labelled the prettiest face in the House of Commons. But before he was allowed on the idiot box, he had to drop his double-barrelled surname—on the grounds that it would alienate most middle and working class viewers—and call himself Kilroy.

His show too was based on an unhappy compromise formula like this one. He tried to put up a show which combined Oprah Winfrey style theatrics with intellectual concerns, and it simply didn't work.

His female counterpart: Had her own eponymously named show, *Vanessa*. Her lumpy frame dressed in ill-cut suits, she looked just as down-market as her programme. But she did manage to find quite a few faithfuls in the lower end of the English social spectrum.

And here in India: Well, we have *Shakti*, the programme that deals with women's issues. This is more serious stuff, which deals with such problems as the empowerment of women and their place in Indian society. The original hostess, Malvika Rajkotia, has taken time off to have a baby and the show is now fronted by Punita Roy. But the staple fare remains the same.

Dealing with men's issue: Is none other than the beatifically-smiling Kiran Kher, on the appropriately-named *Purush Shetra*. The programme is as much a showcase for Kher's impressive collection of saris as it is for such 'male' concerns as impotence, pre-martial sex, pornography, and how important it is to have a virgin for your bride. But to be fair, Kiran deals with all such tricky issues with consummate ease, getting her participants over tricky ground and defusing the tension when things appear to be getting too hot for comfort.

And you have to admire her *savoire faire* when you realise that the poor woman has to discuss such issues as the female orgasm in Hindi!

Bringing up the rear: And very badly at that is Priya Tendulkar. If you want to know how *not* to conduct a chat show, then all you have to do is catch Priya in action. She looks awkward and out of place on her own sets, lets the participants yak on and on and on without asking them to get on with it, or even cutting them short, allows them to go off on a tangent. In short, Tendulkar has no control over the programme which is more often than not taken over by the people she has invited to the studio for their 15 seconds of fame.

Priya Tendulkar: Quite a disappointment

It is an abiding mystery how her pilot ever got passed by Doordarshan. And it is even more difficult to understand how the show continues to be aired on the channel, one would have thought some kind soul would have yanked it off by now.

Vinod Dua: The suave chat show man

Perhaps she could learn a lesson from: Vinod Dua whose *Chakravyhu* dealt with serious issues without making them dead boring. But then, Dua knew his stuff: he kept the comments short, pithy and to the point, and never allowed any participant more than a couple of minutes of air time. What's more, he ensured that the discussion never went off on one wild tangent or the other.

The one that got away: Why, Nikki Bedi, of course! And in some ways, that is a pity. Bedi may have had her detractors in the media — and certainly, there's no denying that she tended to go completely over the top on occasion — but she knew how to keep an audience engrossed in her show. And if that took discussing breast implants and the like, well then, so what? But in time Bedi would have learnt to keep her natural exuberance in check, and have developed a more responsible style. And then, with her theatrical good looks, overwhelming smile and ease in front of the camera, she would have been hard to beat

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says buying, selling, shopping, funding and investment will feature once again in your scheme of things. Also, you will reach out very splendidly to people and places by all media of communication and transport, and that should help you to grab the goodies. All is well in your work area. Expect a promotion.

Taurus
April 21 -- May 20

Mercury-Mars conjunction indicates a flurry of activity for those in business, trade, commerce, industry and the arts. Children, education and high voltage creativity are assured to give pleasure. Your heart pounds with passion as lady luck favours you with love, money, socials and functions.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

The sun in your sign gives you the necessary boost to win friends, start a new enterprise, win people over to your side, home and office influences will also dominate. This is a good time to buy, sell house, commodities and so on. So much needs to be done so quickly that 24 hours might just not be enough for you. Health may cause temporary concern.

Cancer
June 21 -- July 20

Money, time, passion, investment, tantra and mantra are on the cards. You will spin, dance, do a jig. The trick is to move fast, take chances, move if you have to, and forsake the old for the new, though it might cause a wrench. News, views, letters and calls and behind-the-scene activities are highlighted.

Leo
July 21 -- August 21

This is very definitely a time to meet, to stretch yourself out, till the fingers that give meet the fingers that receive, be it money, gifts, love, contracts or plain taxes. It is certain that work pressures and demands could be almost terrifying in their intensity and urgency but you will do a superb job.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

The moon's first quarter in your sign means time to concentrate on your job, but keep your weather eye wide open for promotion or job switch. Journey, ceremony, publicity, collaboration, child birth, higher education and research are fated and therefore cannot be blotted. Stomach and nerves may need medication.

Libra
September 23 -- October 22

A grand reaching out to people, varied entertainment and the immense joy of creation, be it a recipe, a melody, a painting, a poem, a child, or a business deal. Those in research, financing, investments, housing, calligraphy, telecommunication, writing, teaching, acting and modeling, TV and films strike it lucky.

Scorpio
October 23 -- November 22

Shades of glasnost and glamour too for you as the sun and Saturn form a fine placing this week. The sun gives you just that bit of confidence and perception you need to overcome obstacles, Saturn the tenacity to hold on. A journey is envisaged. Good for you, says Ganesha. Financial muddles, taxes, loans, investments are predicted.

Sagittarius
November 23 -- December 20

Legacy, property, finances and work make the important quartet of your life. This trend will continue right through the month. Business could demand a lot of your time and attention. Taxes and transactions take up your time. Whittle the expenses. Do away with unnecessary clutter and wastage.

Capricorn
December 21 -- January 19

You cut a wide swathe in terms of publicity, money, ceremony, journey, collaborations and new assignments. For some, a wish fulfillment comes through as the moon's first quarter turns out to be most favourable. Your managerial and artistic skills and tendencies come into full play. News, week too.

Aquarius
January 20 -- February 18

Partnership, health, posers a tension to the homefront. Buying, selling, loaning and funding are the salient features for Aquarians. You will make the right decisions though they may not be the most happy ones. You could feel a wee bit restless, even irritated but that is a passing phase. Keep sharp implements out of children's hands.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

Be it expenses, an engagement, a marriage or a collaboration, it is partnership time at all levels. Group activities is the way it goes now. Also, you will be tying up all the loose ends. Those in religion, astrology, teaching, research, editing, writing, films and theatres, healing, farming, nutrition do remarkably well.

BIRTHDAYS

May 26: Sun sextile Saturn, says Ganesha, means victory and money. Wish-fulfillment, changes in the home front and a home away from home seems likely.

May 27: Moon trine Neptune will make you egoistic, adventurous and intuitive. That in turn, will help you to make headway.

May 28: Moon trine sun indicates work will be done, people will be friendly and new heights of power and glory. The trick is to define your goals.

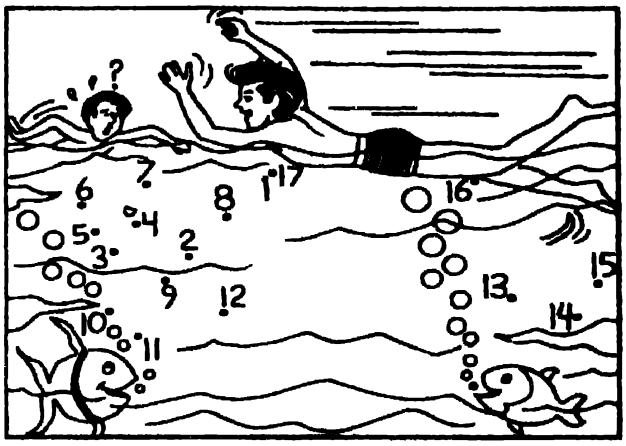
May 29: Mercury conjunctions Mars means skills, dexterity, speed, messages and powers of communication making you enterprising, successful and famous. Children and money make you happy.

May 30: Moon square Uranus could lead to complexities and a trying time. It will be difficult to be in control all the time. Tough but not an impossible year.

May 31: Moon sextile Jupiter leads to marriage, collaborations, journey, overseas connections, loans and investments.

June 1: The full moon conjuncts Pluto making you daring and ready to explore and experiment. You will be travelling, reaching out to people and places.

JUNIOR WHIRL HAL KAUFMAN



SWIM PARTY! A missing figure is needed to complete this swim scene. To complete picture, simply draw dot to dot.

WEIGH FARE! It seems that if Lorna weighs less than Fran, and Hazel weighs as much as Lorna, and Sue weighs more than Fran, then Hazel weighs less than Sue. True or False?

The statement is true

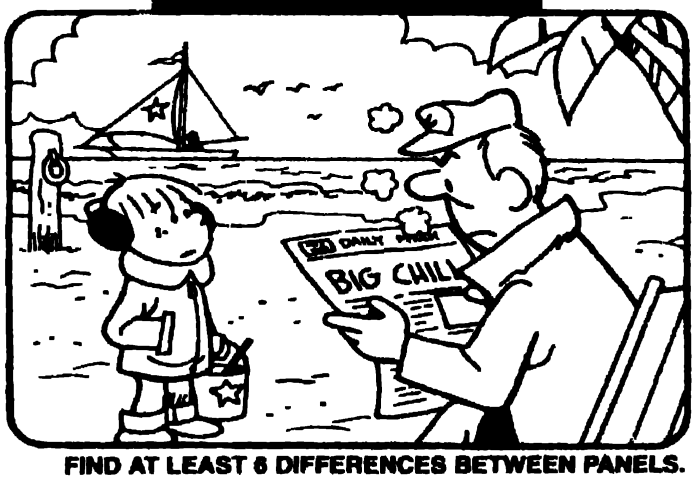
PAIR GAME!
A dozen words shown in the diagram at right are to be paired to form just six words (of varying lengths) having two syllables each. Words at left are to precede word at right in the new words formed.

STAND	TAM
SPA	STILL
SKY	WALL
SIDE	RING
BAN	TRACT
AT	LARK

A way to avoid confusion in solving this poser is to start with first word in the first column, find a compatible word in the second column and draw a connecting line to the second word. Do the same with next word, etc.

Word combos: Standstill, sparring, skylark, sidewall, banlam and attract will comply

HOCUS-FOCUS



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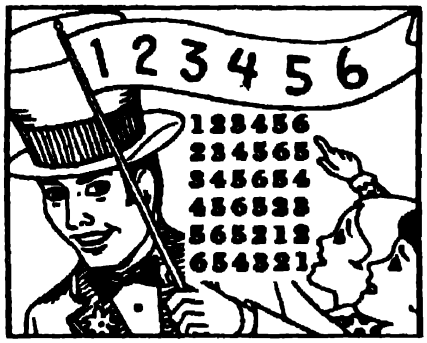
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Sail is different. 2. Pocket is different. 3. Headline is different. 4. Glasses are missing. 5. Umbrella is missing. 6. Camera is missing.



1-To-6 SEQUENCE COUNTDOWN

LOOK over the systematic arrangement of numbers 1 to 6 at left. Then see if you can determine in how many different ways you can find 1 to 6 in order, moving up or down, to right or left, but not diagonally.

Each 1-6 run must differ. That is to say, each six-some must be traced out in a varying path to include at least one new number.

Perhaps you lack the patience to make an actual count. If so, take a guess instead.

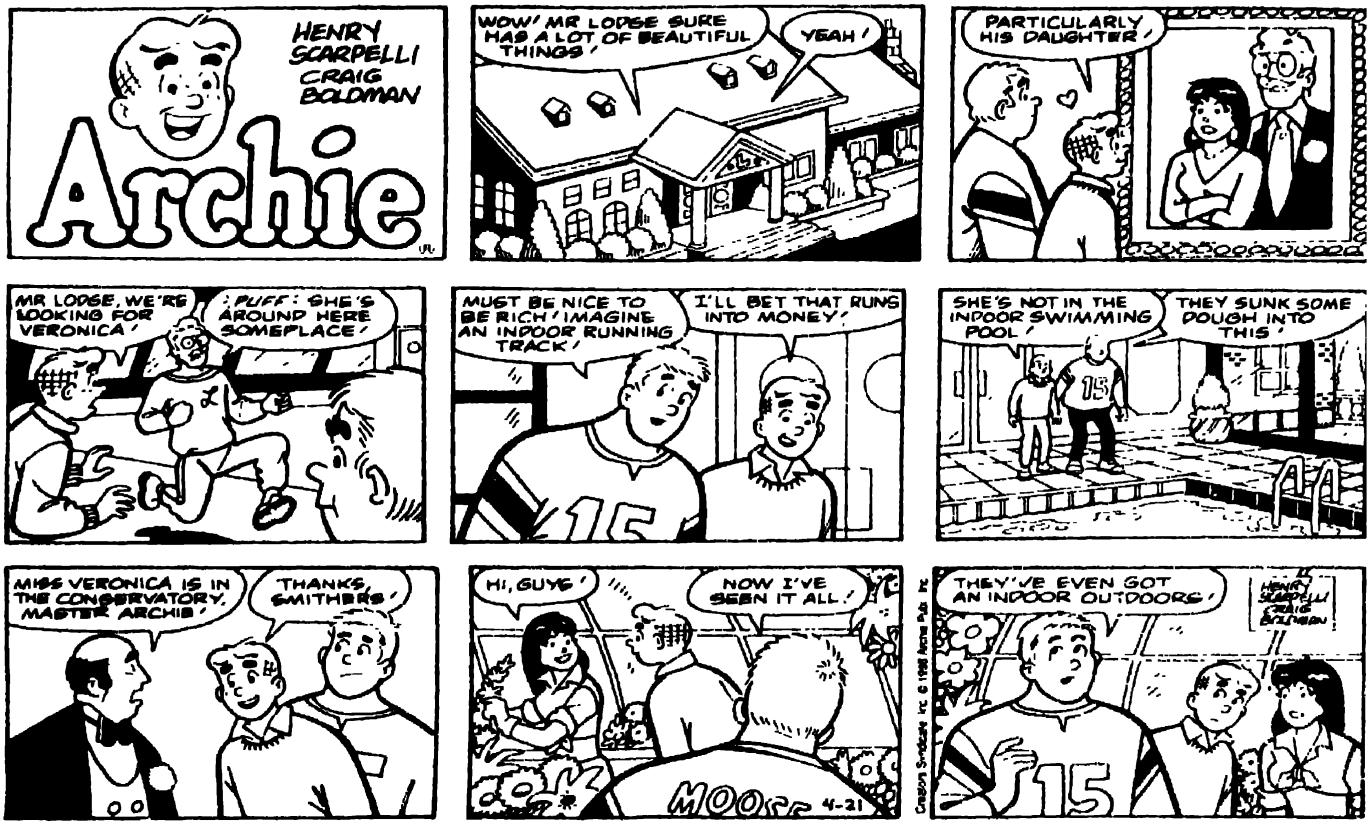
Check answer below.

Would you believe fifty six different ways?

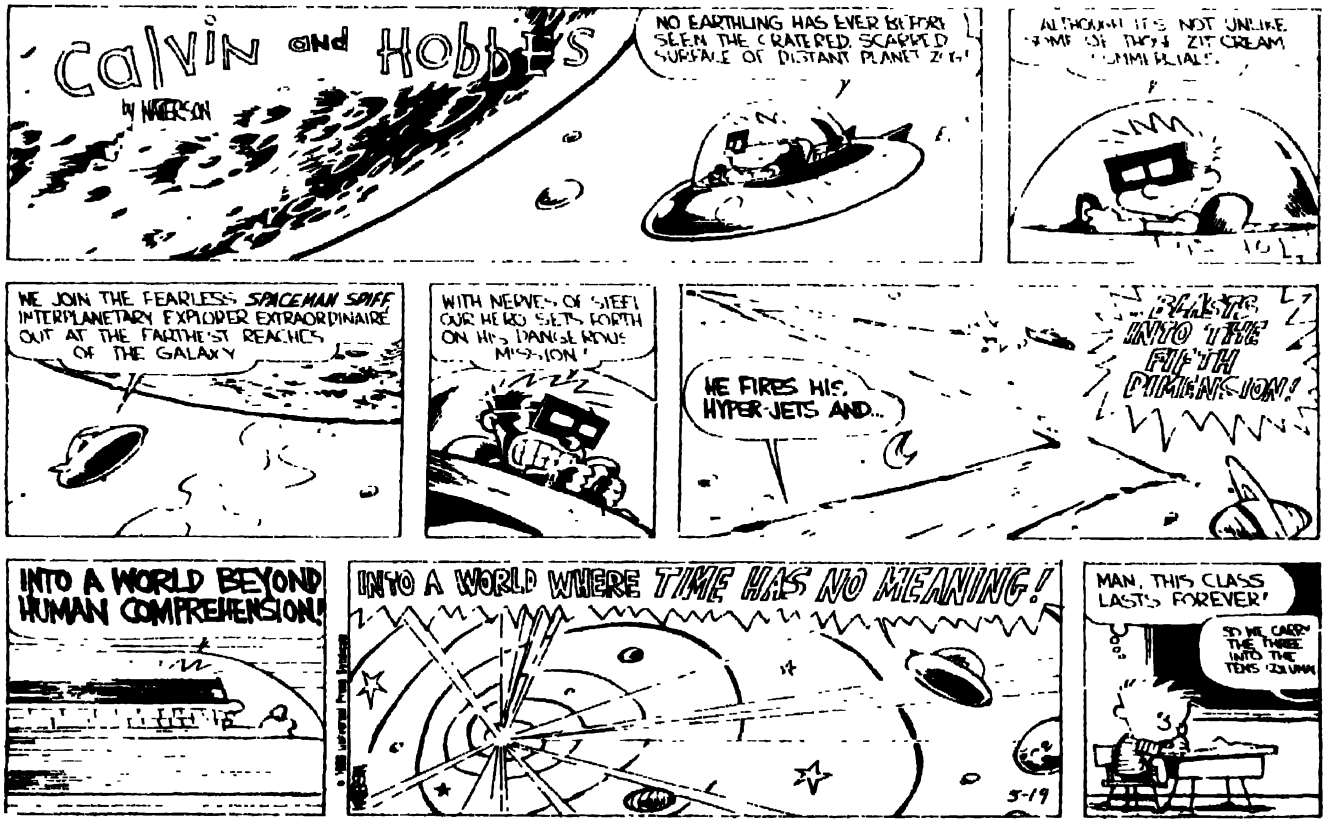
SHIRT SHRIFT! Say fast: Every single tie-dye-treated two-toned T-shirt shrunk.

COMICS

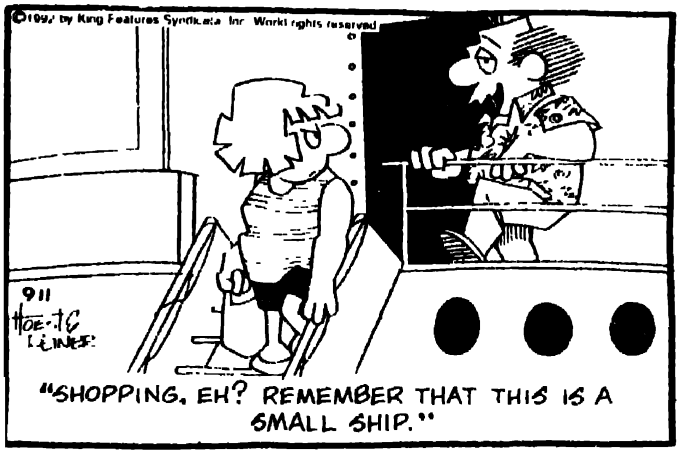
ARCHIE

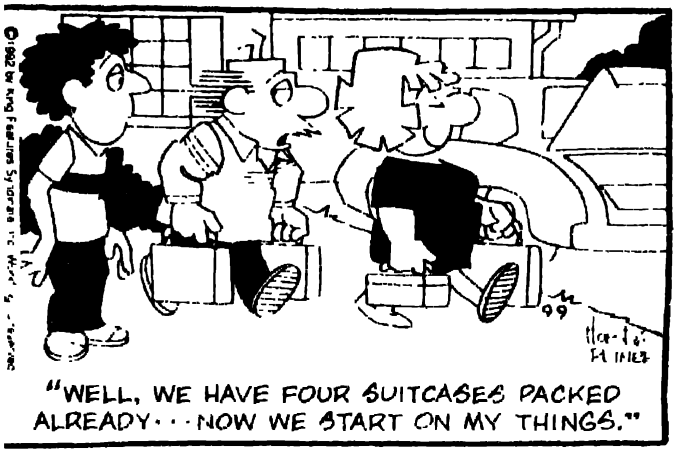


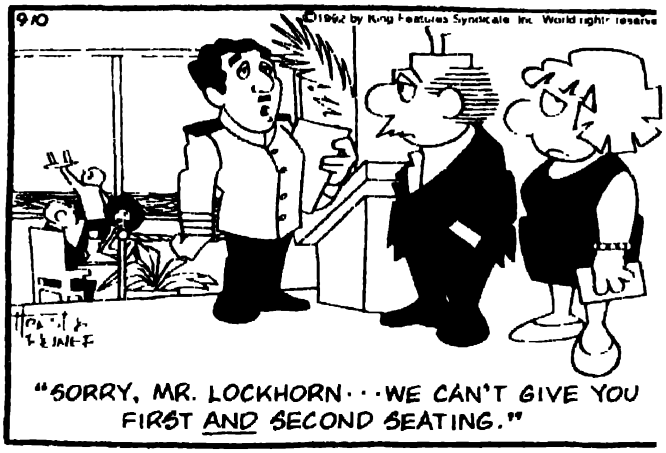
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



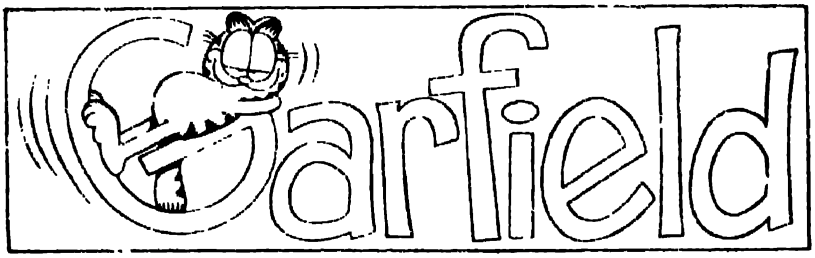
THE LOCKHORNS

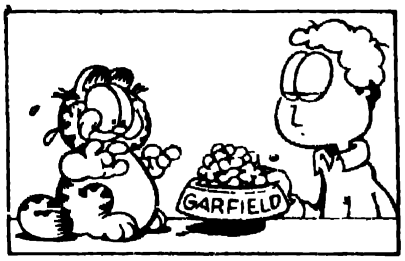


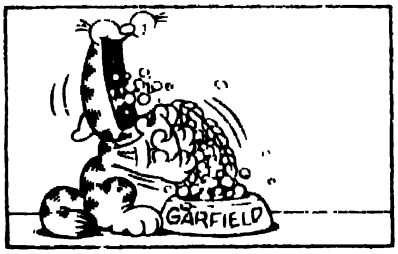


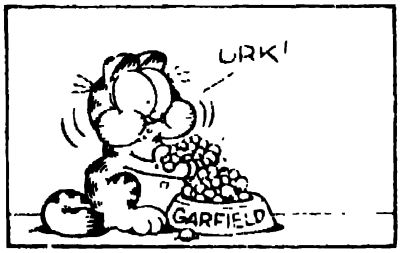


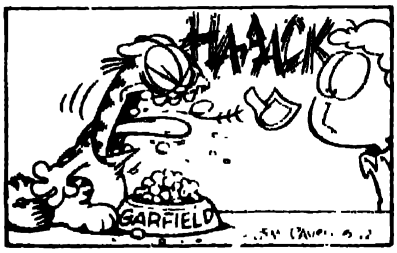
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

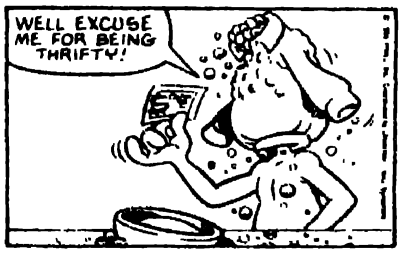




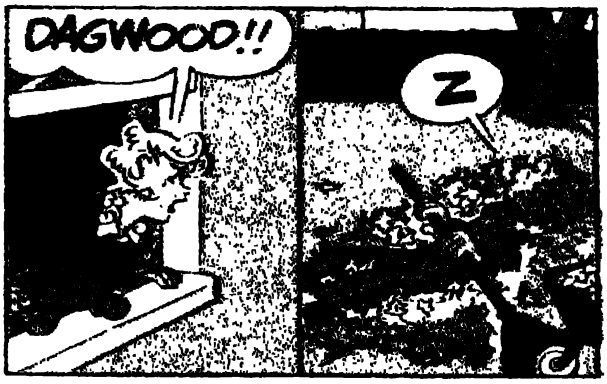








THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP



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MODEL TO VEEJAY

Manpreet Brar, ex-Miss India, is the new veejay for Channel V, reports ***Samita Bhatia***

She zips around Delhi in a brilliant yellow Zen, dwarfs you with her heeled six-feet frame and hopes to co-star with Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan when she hits the silver screen. That's Manpreet Brar, India's ex-Miss India. Ask her where she gets that hint of an accent from while Veejaying *Sansui Mangta Hai* and she's shocked: "On the contrary, compared with other VJs, I sound like a poor country cousin. As a matter of fact, I must get myself a twang immediately!"

Ask her who she'd like to star with in her very first film and she says cockily: "Kishen Kumar!" As you gawk at her wide-eyed she promptly bursts into a huge laugh. Ask her where she did her schooling from and pat comes the rejoinder. "Wrong question. I changed about 11 schools. Should I name all? I am an 'army kid' through and through."

She confesses in the same breath that developing roots in one place makes her very nervous, "I never had any affinity for roots whatsoever" — which she puts down to her army background. And though she wears rings — there's not one significant one as "essentially men can't take the success of a woman. If the ring is to come he'll have to be very successful in his own right."

Last year saw this ex-Miss Universe runner-up do a juggling act — travelling for fashion shows, studying for her MBA exams and finding the time for an Agra-based organisation dedicated to children's causes.

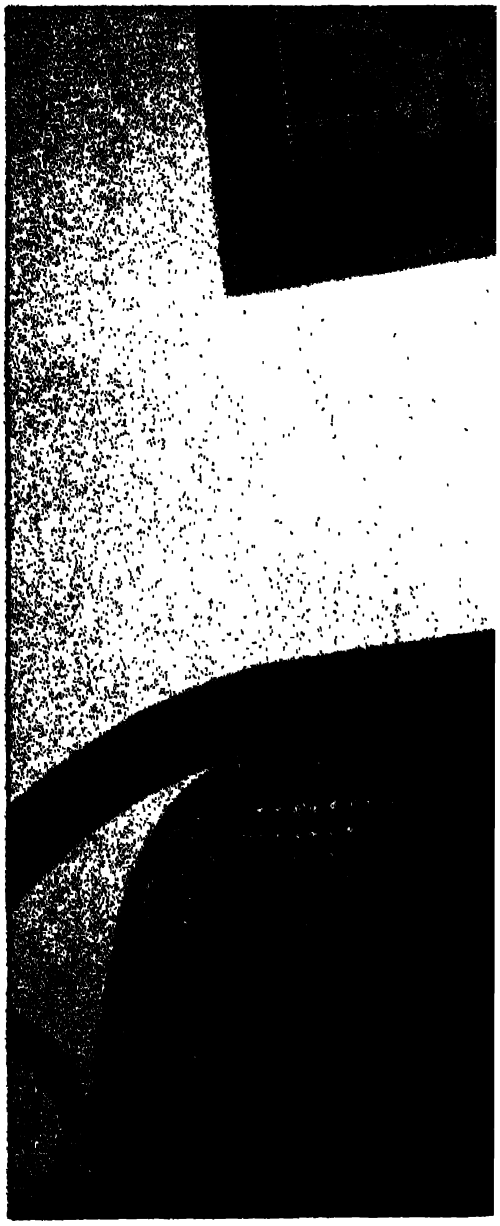
"Thank god for the fact that the institute that I was studying in was flexible with me as far as attendance goes," she says sounding very relieved. With her parents pretty determined about insisting that their daughter finish her education and not leave it off mid-way, Manpreet found herself shuttling between Delhi and Bombay, slogging hard at studying for her MBA finals and shooting for *Mangta Hai*. "Peer advise makes a lot of difference and perhaps if it wasn't for them I wouldn't have gone through with the course, and they knew this and thus their insistence."

Though now armed with an MBA degree, this newest entrant on Channel V doesn't think she'll have much use for it in the near future. She explains, "I hadn't thought of any other career when I took on this MBA course. In a way I'll perhaps use it every day of my life but, frankly, I don't think I'll follow it though to take on a job. Probably, few years down the line — but not right away anyway."

With her MBA exams now over and done with, Manpreet is all set to make a semi-permanent home for herself in Bombay. "I was shuttling between the two cities quite frequently last year but now I think I'll be spending a lot more time in Bombay in the future. So I guess I'll be getting a place for myself there."

And *Mangta Hai* — the request programme that earlier featured Meghna Reddy and Anish — came to Manpreet quite easily. The channel which was on the lookout for a VJ asked her if she'd be interested. A couple of days later Manpreet was auditioning in Bombay, the next day she was asked to join and two days later she was on the sets shooting her first programme as VJ. The channel was hard pressed for time and the first two episodes had to be rushed through, "but it was interesting," she adds.

And it's not really bothering her too much that her involvement with the programme ends with its presentation. The letters are sifted through by the producers and requests pertaining to those bands that are in the news internationally are aired. "The first few episodes were quite like a warm up for me. Chatting with the viewer didn't come naturally to me, however, in the last two episodes we shot I was more spontaneous and the shoot, too, went off far more smoothly than the initial episodes. The more you see yourself on screen and the more feedback you get on your performance, you alter your style. It takes some time but you get there sooner than you expect."



While she's enjoying her new role, it's too soon to tell whether the audience has taken to her. She says, "I've been on air for just about a month or so. It's a slow process and it takes people some time to realise that the VJ is there for good and is not compering the programme for just a couple of episodes."

With her in the pilot's seat, amongst the changes that one notices in the new avatar of *Mangta Hai*, is that outdoor locations are being given a preference over a static studio environment. Recently, one saw Manpreet weave her way through the resurrected Neemrana Fort.

She, too, prefers the outdoors to the sets as a lot of uncontrollable things happen during such shoots which make for some very interesting reactions. "Besides being visually

Manpreet Brar (middle) after winning the Miss India 1995 crown

Jagdish Yadav

pleasing, there is so much more stimulus that you can react to on an outdoor shoot that is not found in a studio." In the case of the latter the script has to be very gripping as the onus falls entirely on the VJ to carry through the show.. "Take Javed Jaffery's programme for instance -- he needs a static background."

The show may have shifted out of the studio ambience, but the effort is not to allow it to become another 'Public Demand' programme. "There is no point in doing what the others are doing. We just can't do that *tapori* thing all over again. It can't be the same."

Samar S. Jodha

While Manpreet is under contract that prevents her from hosting any other music show, she's not too excited at the thought of acting in soaps. With her eye fixed on filmdom she's in no mood to be typecast as a small screen actress. "Besides, the quality of production and even the story-line of our soaps is very poor. There are very few worth watching and the majority are really bad. I doubt it whether too many people actually follow them." However, what she'd like to do eventually is a chat show quite on the lines of Kiran Kher's *Purush Shetra*.

Besides being the newest VJ on the block, Manpreet has been actively involved with UNDEP's HIV cell. The organisation has hit upon the idea of putting together concerts for a larger purpose rather than creating AIDS awareness. The concerts emphasise on helping and accepting those afflicted with AIDS. She's depressed by the fact that even today people are not willing to accept HIV patients readily.

Though there are countless cases of 'AIDS deaths', the people have actually died of tuberculosis, she adds. "Concerts such as these are very heartening; the mood at our last concert was one of joyousness, one that struck a very cheerful note. We were just trying to establish that HIV doesn't mean death. So there were no serious or doleful speeches." She feels HIV has been painted too black. "We've gone too overboard in trying to create a fear psychosis in people, and to get people to accept those who have contracted the disease has become practically impossible," she laments.

She explains her involvement in social causes thus: "Whatever said and done, when there is a familiar face making a statement, people do stop and listen far more than they would if

it was a face they didn't recognise. So why not use that? Specially if it is for a cause that affects all of us."

For her own part she would much rather be a doer than a talker. But a question that gets Manpreet's hackles up is the one oft thrown to beauty queens past and present. "Do you ask of a sports-person what he's doing for charity or what he'll do for some cause once he makes it big? At beauty pageants you are shot this question only for one reason which is that for one year the winner has to take up a cause. The organisation for its part wants to arrive at where your interests lie, so that you can channelise your energies in that direction for the next one year." A trifle unconvincing, perhaps?

For the sake of record she clarifies that at no stage did she make any promises which she couldn't keep. If she didn't have the urge to return to society all that she had got from it, then she wouldn't. On the other hand if the desire to involve herself in something hit her even 10 or 20 years down the line she'd probably drop everything else and get into it full time. She adds, "When I was crowned I definitely held back from making any statements or tall claims that I couldn't see through. Social work is very personal and you don't do it because 10 people ask you, you do it because it makes you happy. It has to come from within and you can't do it half-heartedly. And if you are doing it half-heartedly then you are obviously doing it for the publicity or media attention — in that there is an inherent hypocrisy. On the other hand are those who are working silently without bothering about who is making note of their work," she explains.

She cites the instance of Michelle, Miss Namibia, and Miss Universe at the time when Madhu Sapre was runner-up, who has dedicated a lot of her time and energies towards the uplift of children, through her organisation, Michelle's Children's Fund. "And she's not into movies — she's just into collecting funds for children that she's helping support. So I really don't think it's fair to generalise and make a blanket statement that all beauty queens use their titles for promoting themselves."

But largely, are these titles just springboards to stardom; the glamorous world of the films? The 'social committment' lasting for the year of her victory, and then it's on to pursuing her own goals? Agitated she responds, "That one year does not belong to you as you are practically bought over by the organisation. After the year is over, perhaps the first thing that the person wants to do is get on with pursuing her own life and ambitions, into things that she wants to do." Which need not be true all the while, she adds as an afterthought.

For Manpreet offers for films started pouring in the day she was crowned Miss India. Now that Bombay is to be her second home, she weighs the options once she returns: "Last year was a matter of priorities. I couldn't take on films as I was still in the middle of my MBA. There is no point in doing two things and failing at both. And other than having missed a few good offers I don't think I've lost out in any way."

So, has becoming a public figure changed her in any way as a person? She says thoughtfully, "Well yes and no. While I have become a lot more patient I have also learnt to say 'no'. When people began to notice me after Miss India and subsequently Miss Universe, I found it very difficult to say 'no' to their requests for shows, functions etc. I just couldn't bring myself to turn them down and since it was humanely impossible to live upto all the committments and 'yeses', I would end up cancelling at the last minute. Today, if I want to do something I do it willingly, if I can't I don't make a promise." ■

MADHU TREHAN *is best known as the fiesty anchorwoman of Newstrack. Though this high-profile sister of Aroon Purie has been missing from our television screens of late, she still packs a mighty punch.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Symbiotic relationships.
What is your greatest fear?
Being locked up in a 3 x 2 box.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
The question mark.
What do you dislike most in others?
Image building.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Failure in office and domestic politics.
What is your most precious possession?

How do you relax?

Relax?

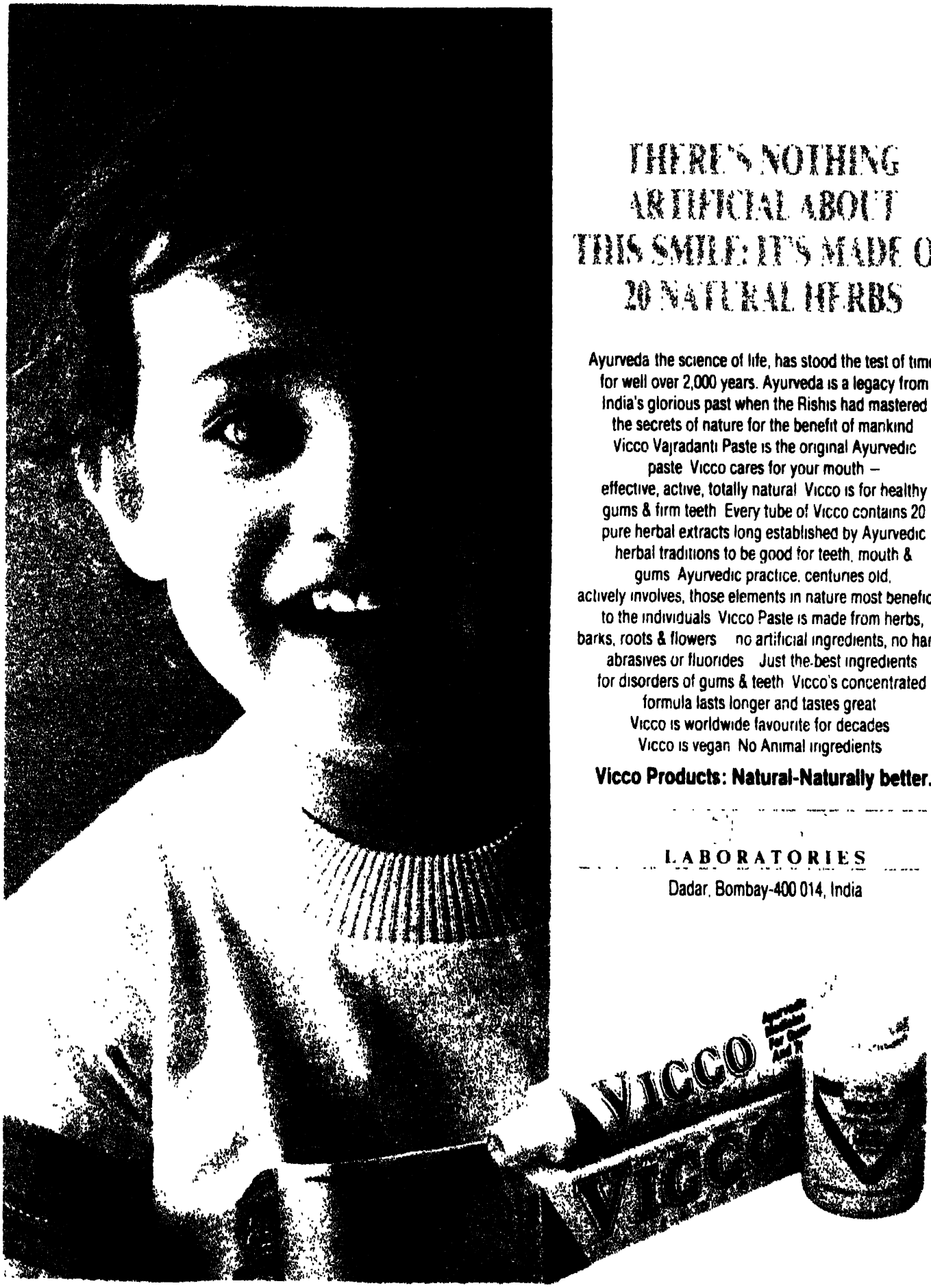
The way my kids feel about me.
What objects do you always carry?
A question mark.
What makes you most depressed?
When I don't get answers.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Everything.
What is your favourite word?
Perspicacious.
What is your favourite journey?
Trains through greenery and fields of snow.
What is your favourite dream?
Flying like Superman.
What is your nightmare?
Being stuck in a small dark box.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Life.
What is your source of sustenance?
Children, of course.
On what occasions do you lie?
To avoid hurting others.
regret?
That I didn't have five children.

moment?
When I saw my reflection in my baby's eyes.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

Failure in office and domestic politics

Losing a loved one.
How do you relax?
Relax?
What do you envy most in others?
Peace of mind.
How would you like to be remembered?
With joy and laughter.
How would you like to die?
I would like a
like surprise.



THERE'S NOTHING ARTIFICIAL ABOUT THIS SMILE: IT'S MADE OF 20 NATURAL HERBS

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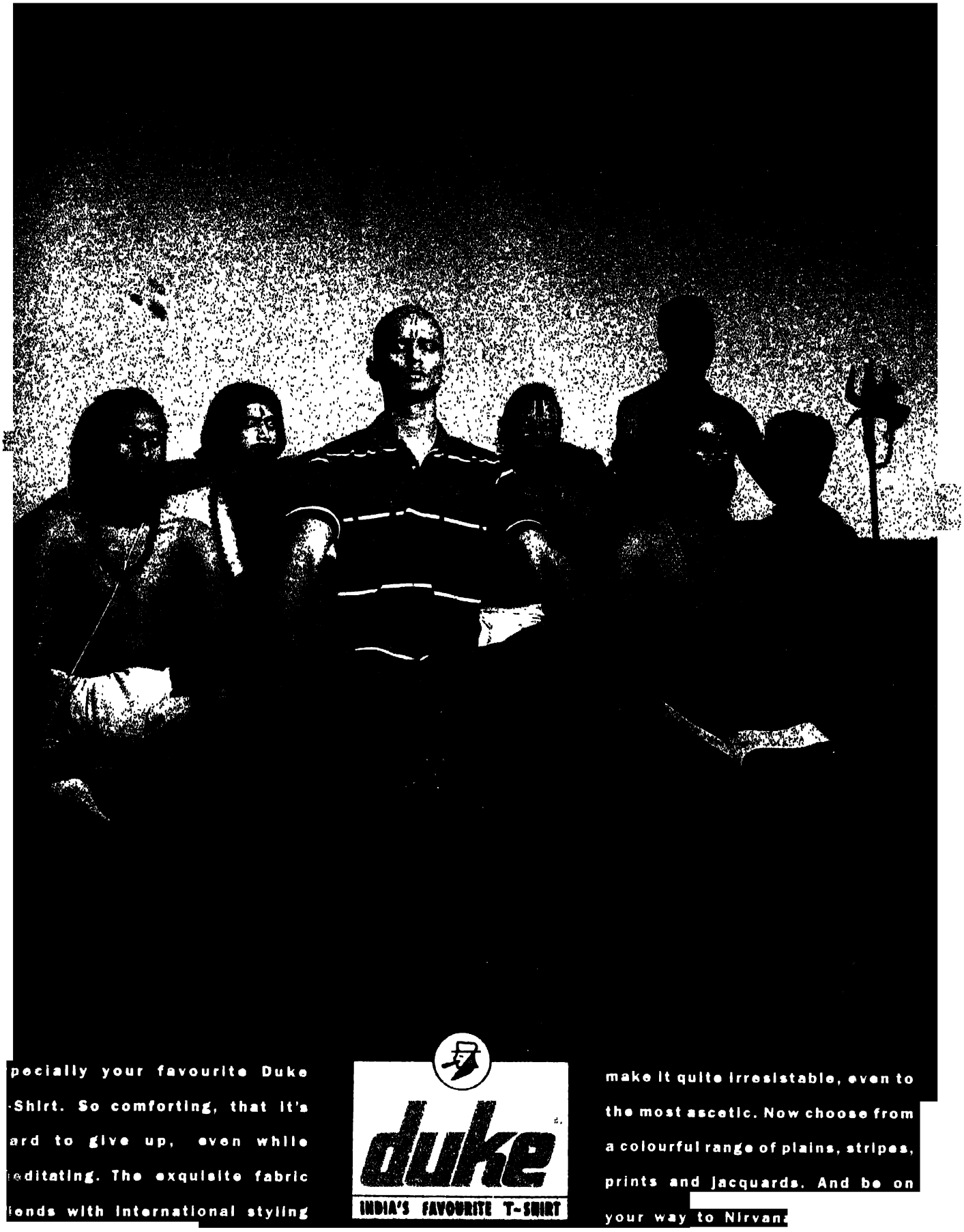

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The Telegraph

POST MORTEM

Only Women

■ The cover story on [illegible] photographer Prabuddha Das Gupta was brilliant ('The Man Who Loves Women', April 14). Das Gupta's sense of [illegible]ity and aesthetics deserves appreciation. He has not concentrated only on faces like other photographers. And he has chosen a medium which says a lot visually.

The black and white photographs, reminding us of the Fifties and Sixties, were mindblowing.

Apurba Majumdar,
Calcutta

■ The cover story headline reads, 'The Man Who Loves Women'. But Das Gupta is not the only man who loves women.

Any man is going to be swept off his feet at the sight of a beautiful face.

Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

■ Thanks for the wonderful cover story profiling India's ace photographer.

The careful selection of models and the patience [illegible]

Sonali Das,
Calcutta

■ Discovering beauty in nudity not only requires great sense of aesthetics but guts, too. History shows us that the study of the nude form was there in ancient India as our various monument and temple architecture will bear us out. Some even verge on the erotic and obscene. But Das Gupta's shots are anything but obscene; and he has deliberately opted for the black and sswhite medium in an era of colour to make his collection stand out.

Panchanana Baskey,
Baripada (Orissa)

■ Das Gupta is very emotional by temperament and gets very involved with his subjects which sometimes may look like an obsession.

Das Gupta's book, splashed with pictures of women in various forms of nudity, gets the nod from the guardians of morality and sells for Rs 1,500 per copy. But another work of art, Shekhar Kapur's *The Bandit Queen*, gets banned as it shows some sequences where the dacoit queen is raped.

What could be more hypocritical?

Babita Arora,
Kharagpur

■ Das Gupta likes to be at the centre of a controversy. First, it was the Tuff shows ad and now this book, *Women*, which is being touted as India's first book of nudes.

It has already proved to be a big sensation, with Das Gupta enjoying a lot of media attention.

Sanjib Chatterjee,
Calcutta

A photograph from Prabuddha's book, *Women*

INSIDE

PAGE 4

SANJANA KAPOOR shines as the hostess of the *Amul India Show*. But theatre still continues to be her first love

PAGE 26

THE MARKET for gourmet cooking is obviously booming with the rise in the number of chefs and a host of cook books

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COVER STORY

UTTERLY BUTTERLY DELICIOUS

Sanjana Kapoor brings the small screen alive as the hostess of the Amul India Show. *But, says* ***Vaishali Honawar****, theatre is still her first love*

SANJANA KAPOOR IS A RELUCTANT CELEBRITY. She hates the spotlight and would do anything to stay away from it. So what is she doing hosting the *Amul India Show* on Star Plus, a programme designed to showcase highlights of Indian life?

Ask Sanjana about her relationship with this "little monster" — as she describes television — and she laughs. No, she wasn't exactly brimming over with enthusiasm when she took on the job of anchorperson, but despite her misgivings, she did end up having a "super time" on the show. And, she adds, "There's also been a lot of positive feedback on the show, which is encouraging."

Those who have watched the *Amul India Show* on Sundays swear that Sanjana is perhaps the best thing about it. She is beautiful, elegant, bright, and most of all, she knows to hold the diverse bits of the programme together with her brand of patter.

And even though Sanjana does remind people of that other fair-haired television host, Nikki Bedi (of *Nikki Tonight* notoriety), her line in chatter is very, very different. Not for Kapoor, the theatrical, slightly over the-top style of Bedi, or even the camp commentary of Ray C., who used to host the India Show earlier. Sanjana prefers the more laid-back approach, but is all the more effective for that.

According to Rakesh Sharma, executive producer of the show, having Sanjana as anchorperson has been a definite plus. "She is a familiar face," he says, "and it is easier for the people she is interviewing to relate to her as they know what she is talking about. She is also able to focus the conversation, so there's a visibly easy, relaxed atmosphere."

All for the laid-back approach

The lady behind Prithvi Theatres

His point is well taken. There may be a slightly no-nonsense air about Sanjana, but her bright smiles flashes through all too often, and she laughs an often lot. And she's breathtakingly attractive, even on an unbearably hot summer day, clad in a long, sleeveless dress with just a dash of lipstick for make-up. Right now, she is in the midst of doing her bit by way of publicity for the *Amul India Show*, and it is clear that she's not really enjoying any of this.

Sanjana's aversion to being in the limelight perhaps has its roots in her family history. The only daughter of Shashi and Jennifer Kapoor, she grew up in a world where both her parents were public figures. Her mother, the daughter of English stage thespians, Laura and Geoffrey Kendel, was more interested in the theatre — though she did play the lead in *36 Chowringhee Lane* — but father Shashi was the heart-throb of millions when Sanjana was growing up. And having seen him being mobbed by people on the road, celebrity status was not something Sanjana aspired to.

And Jennifer Kapoor made sure that her children — both Sanjana and sons Karan and Kunal — had their feet planted firmly on the ground. "We had an absolutely normal childhood in that there was no *filmi* atmosphere at home," recalls Sanjana. "We were given Rs 5 as pocket money and we would go to school by bus. Even at school we were never treated as celebrity children. Belonging to a film family really did not make any real difference to us as there was no starriness in our lives."

But for all that, Sanjana was a fully-paid member of the Kapoor family, which had been part of the Hindi film industry for several generations, and that influence was not going to go away in a hurry. As a child, Sanjana did cameos in such films as *Junoon*, *36 Chowringhee Lane* and later in *Utsav* and *Salaam Bombay*. But her first film as heroine came only in 1988.

Titled *Hero Hiralal*, the movie was an unmitigated disaster, but Sanjana is not prepared to be apologetic about it. She acted in the movie, she says, only because she wanted to work with director Ketan Mehta and Naseeruddin Shah, who was her co-star in the film. But her performance came in for a great deal of criticism and, says Sanjana, "It was then that I realised that belonging to this family was not going to be enough."

Getting ready for a show

A scene from the play *Gaslight*

Shashi Kapoor: Doting father

Sanjana then dabbled with television, acting in a couple of serials, *Himalaya Darshan* and *Aap Kya Karte*. But it wasn't long before she was completely disillusioned with the small screen as well, especially since one of her serials never aired, and the other fizzled out after a while.

But then Sanjana always had her first love to come back to: theatre. "I have always wanted to act," she says today, "but joining mainstream Hindi cinema was never a choice for me. I do love watching Hindi movies (Govinda is a hot favourite), but I would never want to be a part of it." So, the stage was the next logical place

THE FAMILY KAPOOR

What are Sanjana's siblings and cousins up to?

Kunal Kapoor

The surprise package. Despite some early success as a hero in *Ahistu Ahista*, and a strong performance in Govind Nihalani's *Vijeta* (produced by Shashi Kapoor), Kunal and the Hindi film audience decided that they weren't meant for each other

Normally, that should have been the cue for a descent into loaferdom, but Kunal has bounced back as an extremely successful ad film maker. He makes lots of money and is the one who runs the house. His wife, Sheena, is Ramesh Sippy's daughter.

Karan Kapoor

The Nordic-looking member of the Kapoor family. Went into Hindi cinema only to flop badly in such films as *Sultanate*, but his heart was never in acting. He saw himself as a photographer and chose to move to London, where he does freelance assignments for a variety of publications.

In India, he is still best-known as the Bombay Dyeing model, though the launch of a jeans label in his name has proved abortive.

Randhir Kapoor

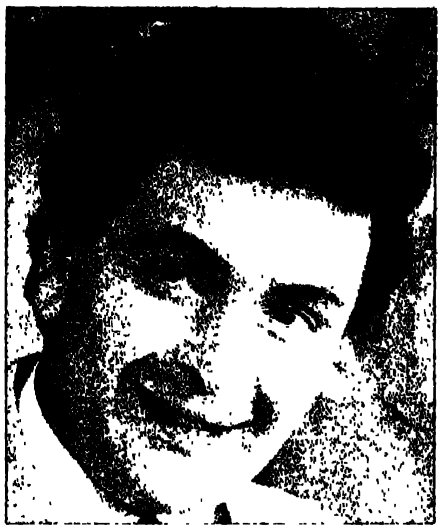
Has led a roller-coaster of a life. He was given the best launch any son could hope for when he directed his father andgrandfather in *Kal Aaj Aur Kal*, but neither his directorial ventures nor his career as a hero saw any great success (though,to be fair, he did have some hits including *Jawani Deewani*).

In the last years of his father's life, Randhir took over the running of R.K. Studios, a job he performs to this day. His image in the film industry was transformed after the success of *Henna*,which he directed. It is now up to him to prove that this was no flash in the pan

Rishi Kapoor

The most successful member of the third generation of Kapoors.One of the enduring mysteries of Indian cinema is why audiences are willing to accept the thick-set, paunchy, short, forty-something Rishi Kapoor as the young lover. But for some reason, they are. And though Rishi's career has had some ups and downs after the super-success of *Bobby* in 1973, he remains a box-office draw.

Karan Kapoor: Better known as the Bombay Dyeing Man



Rishi Kapoor: Forty-plus and still going strong

Karisma Kapoor: Known for her bump-and-grind numbers

Ranbir Kapoor

When he was launched, there. were those who predicted that Chimpoo would be the real star of the family. His resemblance to the young Shammi Kapoor led to many jokes about *Yahoo* days returning, but somehow Chimpoo's career never took off even though he acted in one of the biggest hits of Indian cinema, his father's *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*.

His first film as director, *Prem Granth*, has Madhuri Dixit and brother Rishi in the lead. He now hopes to become a Daboo like figure who is better known for his skills behind the camera than in front of it.

Karisma Kapoor

Not really a member of Sanjana's generation, Karisma is Randhir Kapoor's daughter and the second member of the family after Sanjana to disregard Raj Kapoor's dictum that Kapoor women don't join the film industry.

And worse, unlike Sanjana who concentrates on Prithvi Theatre, Karisma has become a full-fledged film star, who executes the most lurid of bump-and-grind routines clad in skimpy outfits.Grandpa would not have been amused.

for her to be.

In 1989, still in search of her medium, Sanjana attended an eight-month actors' workshop at the Herbert Berghof Studio in New York. As a child, Sanjana had toured schools in England with her grandparents, playing Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And once the workshop was concluded, Kapoor had decided where her future lay: in theatre.

But where would she work? Would it be in theatre-loving Britain, where her grandparents were based with their company, Shakespeareana? Or would it be Bombay, where theatre is still in its infancy, despite the years of effort by dedicated lovers of this art form?

Says Sanjana, "Making the choice was difficult initially. It could have been easier for me to stay on in England because there is so much work to be done in theatre there, and the scope is also much wider." But she was never very comfortable with the grey, rainy weather of England "I seem to have inherited my English grandfather's love of the sun," she says: so sunny Bombay it was.

On her return to India, Sanjana took over the reins at Prithvi Theatre, which was run by her family and named after her grandfather, as honorary director. And since then, there's simply been no time for second thoughts

In her six years at Prithvi, Sanjana has worked hard to find for it a special niche in the world of Bombay theatre. In 1991, she began holding annual theatre workshops for children at the theatre, and in 1992 she organised the International Prithvi Theatre Festival, which has been held since then every two years with both Indian and foreign theatre groups participating.

In 1993, Prithvi Players, the theatre's own group, was set up and it has mounted two productions since then. *Gaslight* and *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?* To encourage young talent, Kapoor also began platform performances every weekend at the theatre and in 1994 she re-opened the Prithvi Art Gallery, once run by artist Tyeb and Sakina Mehta, which had closed down 10 years earlier.

Sanjana's future plans include the setting up of a library at the theatre, and "trying to get Prithvi Cafe back to what it used to be" Also, later this year Prithvi will be organising a national-level theatre festival for children. And next November, Kapoor intends to "take a close look at where India stands in the world of theatre today" by organising a national festival. "Sitting here in Bombay, it is so difficult to know what's happening in the rest of India," she laments.

Since 1989, Sanjana has also been working with the children from the Happy Home School for the Blind, and her eyes light up as she talks about this experience. "This was something I was roped into doing.s I just didn't want to do it but I've really grown to love it since," she says. "The children are far more perceptive and intense than regular kids; they're wonderful."

And while doing all this, Sanjana has also found time to work in such well-recieved plays as *Rashomon*, *Arms and the Man*, *Gaslight*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and even a television serial, *Thoda Sa Samudra, Thoda Sa Aakash*. Two years ago, she even tried her hand at films again, acting in *Aranyaka*, directed by A.K. Bir, whom she has great admiration for.

Sanjana Kapoor with Naseeruddin Shah in *Hero Hiralal*

Considering how much Sanjana has achieved in her 28 years, it is surprising to hear her say that she is not the ambitious sort. But Kapoor is quick to clarify what she means: "But I am ambitious about the work I do; about where I want to take it. I've never wanted to be an achiever because I don't think what I'm trying to do will be achieved in many more years to come."

Certainly, dragging Indian theatre both in Hindi and English out of stagnancy is an uphill task. There's no money to promote it for one thing, and for another, whatever talent there exists is being sucked away by television and now, even Sanjana appears to have succumbed to the lure of the small screen

But Kapoor doesn't agree with the view that there are no audiences for theatre in India. As she says, "At Prithvi we have a play every single day of the year, except Mondays when we are closed, and there are people queueing up for tickets."

She concedes, however, that money is a problem Advertisers, who can and do sponsor plays, are more inclined to go in for more glamorous productions, where their jingles will be played and their banners put up on stage. But, says Sanjana, "In serious theatre we cannot give the sponsoring brand more importance than the play."

Prithvi Theatre was sponsored by Vazir Sultan Tobacco (VST) for 10 years, but the company backed out of the arrangement two years ago and Sanjana is yet to find another sponsor And though nothing has been worked out until now, she is optimistic about the future. "Within the next two years we should be all right," she says.

Clearly, all her plans for the future revolve around Prithvi; television is just something that pays the bills. And certainly, Sanjana has no intentions of compering another show "But if I were to hear of a good film," she says, "I wouldn't mind going up to the director and asking for it. And I would love to do more plays if I could only get the time. Next year, may be "

After all, acting is in Sanjana Kapoor's blood. And blood is a lot thicker than Amul butter ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, with the change in sun's position, there will be new opportunities and a fresh scope for advancement. It is important for you to reach out to people and places. News, views and messages will go a long way in furthering your career goals. So the make the most of this hectic phase.

Taurus
April 21 -- May 20

This is a week when joint finances, loans and legacies will play a major role in shaping your future. Guests and visitors will keep you busy. The work front proves demanding, and that should leave you with little time to relax. The health of elders may cause concern but only temporarily.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

You will be the master of all you survey and that should be very satisfying. Do not neglect your responsibilities as it will only complicate matters. Children, hobbies and socialising will keep you occupied during the latter half of the week. Time for communication, travel, contacts and contracts. You would do well to plan things in advance.

Cancer
June 21 -- July 20

There will be much activity and gains in the coming weeks. You will have to take the initiative to galvanise things into action. Relationships with family and friends show a marked improvement. Do take time out for socialising. This will also be the week when work pressures mount. Publicity and communication gain in importance.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

This is the time to make the most of opportunities that come your way. It will be better not to neglect the homefront as it now needs your undivided attention. It is best to find solutions to the problems of the mind that prevail. Be patient with yourself and others around you. That should go a long way in settling matters smoothly.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

There will be enough scope for partnerships though business or professional ties could be a little strained. Use tact and diplomacy to further your goals, for that's the way to make it. Attachments will give a whole new meaning to your life. There will be ample funds and loans available for a project you'll handle.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Be it business, job or a work you have been assigned, Librans will do wonders. A transfer or a move is definitely on the cards. A lot of buying and selling foretold this week. On the workfront, you will gain the confidence of your superiors which should boost your confidence. Health caution essential.

Scorpio
October 23 -- November 22

Friends and well wishers prove their loyalty to you despite the pressures that mount. You will hold a conference, a meet, which will eventually keep you socially busy. Finance, children, travel or research are highlighted this week. It also proves lucky for teachers, writers, media persons, artists or technically qualified persons.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

There will be ample gains this week. This is also the phase when you will go in for buying, selling, renovation, decoration, a move or a transfer. So there is much that is happening around you. Do not get too pessimistic as happy tidings are foretold. Your hard work will finally pay dividends and that should keep you happy.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The planetary position in your sign helps you to get things done. You will be overworking this week. So take care of your health. Success is definitely indicated for most of you. Try to communicate at all levels as this will prove beneficial to you. Do devote time to yourself and your family. Both need your undivided attention.

Aquarius
January 20 -- February 18

You will certainly get going, be it in romance, finance, loans, legacies or at the work front. This week a trip is on the cards. That should lift your spirits. You will communicate very effectively at public meets or social gatherings. Money matters improve though the homefront bothers you.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

This is the time to look inwards and assess your tremendous potential for interacting with people and gaining grounds through sheer grit and determination. You will be extending a helping hand to others. There will be a hectic bout of socialising, parties, meets and conferences. Expenses soar but it would not go to waste.

BIRTHDAYS

June 2: Ganesha says despite the moon Venus oppposition, money will come to you through various avenues. A little care in romance essential.

June 3: MoonSaturn square leads to disturbances in the homefront and misunderstanding about money though there be no dearth of money for sure.

June 4: Moon Jupiter conjunction leads to power and pelf and if your personal horoscope is also strong, you will reach dizzying heights of success and glory.

June 5: Moon conjunction Uranus will help you to a degree that you can expect the impossible. You will be exceptionally creative and thus win acclaim. Children and friends will stand by you.

June 6: Moon sun trine helps you to push ahead in life and have a happy life. However, there is some danger of accidents if you are not careful.

June 7: Moon Pluto square leads to inner tension, despite all you have, and you do have plenty. On the physical and material plane all is well.

June 8: Moon's last quarter can make you famous and rich because opportunities are sure to knock at your door repeatedly. Despite pressures your work will be done.

EXTRACT

The politics of RELIGION

In this extract ***Hari Jaisingh*** *raises some pertinent points about the government's handling of the Hazratbal crisis in Kashmir*

Extracted from *Kashmir. A Tale of Shame;* ***by Hari Jaisingh; UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd.; Rs 250***

Dr Karan Singh, a former Governor of J&K, has said that the Hazratbal incident (in October-November 1993 when the Indian army laid siege to the mosque after receiving reports that the locks of the safe containing the holy relic had been tampered with) was a "municipal issue" and that it was not for the army to intervene. One is inclined to agree with him. Yet, the incident snowballed into an international scandal due to our inept handling of the episode.

The government of India is not responsible for the upkeep or security of temples, churches, mosques and gurdwaras. This is the

Militancy in Kashmir: Valley of guns and terror

job of the communities to which they belong. But if any of these holy places is threatened by communal violence, then the Central government or state government has to step in. This was the case with the Babri Masjid in December 1992.

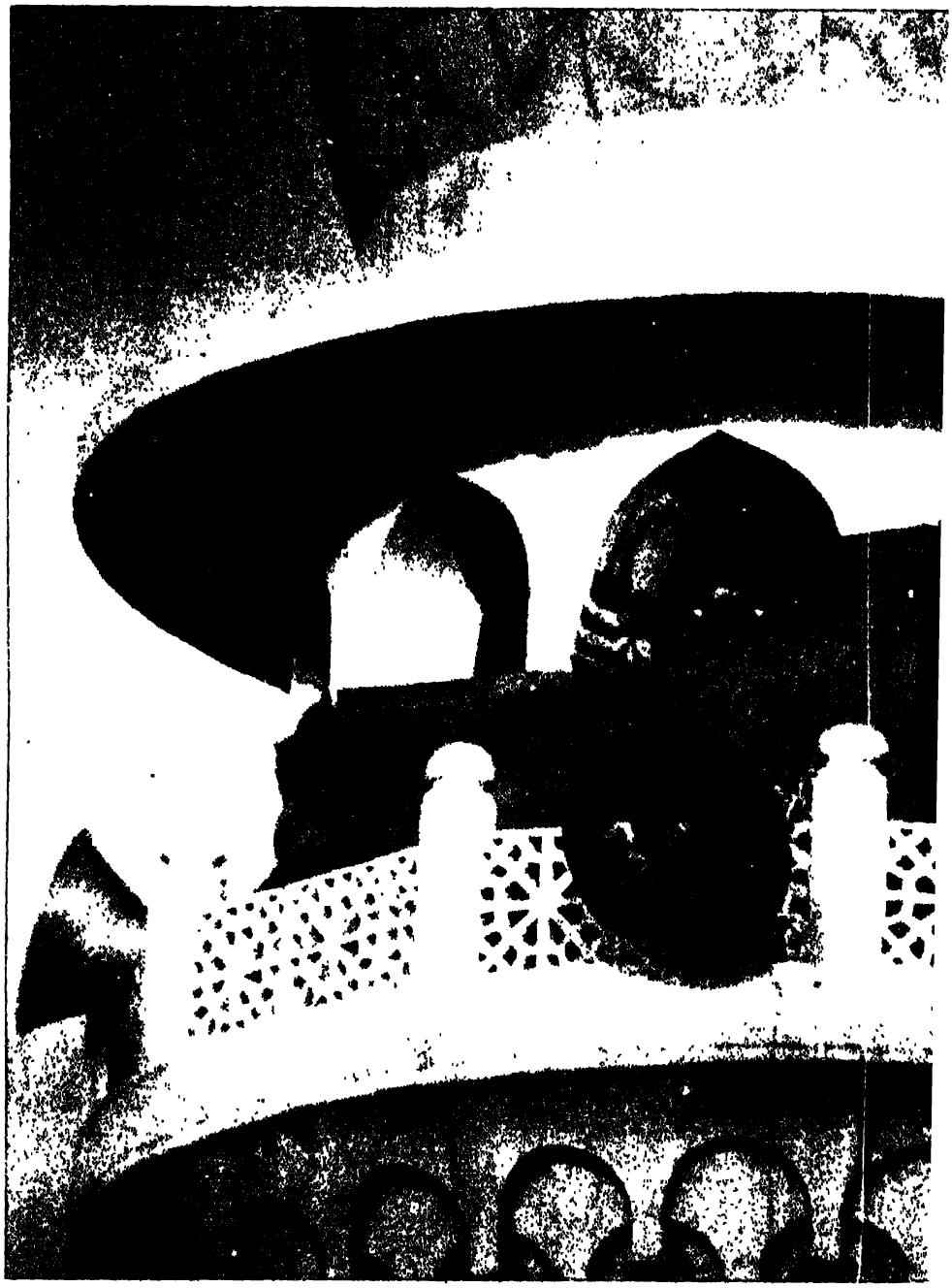
Neither the Centre nor the Kashmir administration is responsible for the maintenance or security of the Hazratbal mosque. If Muslim militants had turned this mosque into an armed camp, it was the job of the Muslim Auqaf Trust to throw them out. The Trust could have asked the police for help. The trustees must have been aware of the Central government policy — that places of worship are not to be misused for political purposes. There were precedents in Punjab. Yet the Hazratbal authorities had permitted the terrorists to use the mosque for their activities, and the Kashmir administration looked the other way.

Protection of the relic is the primary responsibility of the mosque trust. It was wrong for the security forces to lay siege. As for the militants they had been using the mosque for a long time

Our policy should be clear and unambiguous. It is not the duty of a secular state to storm a holy place to flush out militants if they hole themselves up inside it, nor should the law-enforcing authorities make a body-check of pilgrims as they enter a holy place. These functions are for the community authorities to perform. But once it becomes known that a religious place is being misused, people who go in or come out of it after worship should be subjected to a thorough search for arms and other clandestine materials. If militants take shelter inside a holy place, it is not for the state to decide whether or not the place has been desecrated; it is for the community to do so. Unfortunately, the Centre has no clear policy on any of these matters even after our bitter experiences in Punjab. Why can't the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir ask the trustees of the Hazratbal mosque to furnish a monthly report that it is not being misused for political purposes and that no militants have taken shelter inside? These are routine administrative precautions, which any decent administration will enforce. But the Governor has taken no such initiative to make the trustees responsible in the first instance; hence the burning incident at Chrar-e-Sharief in May 1995. It is said that no Muslim would attack a mosque and that Chrar-e-Sharief could have been burnt down only by the Indian army. This is utter nonsense. Were there not fundamentalists who attacked the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia, the holiest place for Muslims? And, in Karachi, have not Shia and Sunni fundamentalists been attacking each other's mosques regularly? Yet, Abdul Ghani Lone, a Kashmiri leader, declared on Doordarshan that no Muslim could have torched the Chrar-e-Sharief mausoleum.

Coming back to what happened at Hazratbal, it is now clear that there was practically no coordination of approach among the various official authorities. The Centre, the Governor and his administration, as also the army, all acted on their own and at cross-purposes. That is why this episode becomes interesting, for it again demonstrates that the Central government has not even

Hazratbal: Militants holed up inside the shrine turned into it into an armed camp



laid down a proper drill to deal with an emergency, and allocate responsibility to each authority. The state of affairs explains the total ineptness in the handling of the episode. This is the situation in a state which has faced a series of crises from 1947 onwards.

It is widely believed that the siege of Hazratbal was undertaken on the basis of a report that two locks of the room which contains the holy relic were tampered with. There was no effort made to verify the report. It could have been a planted story. Governor Krishna Rao says there was no time to verify the truth. He could have, in that case, denied the report and ordered an examination of the locks. In any case, whose job is it to report such an event? And to whom should it be reported? Is there no drill or guideline for these matters? Did we learn nothing from the December 1963 incident?

Protection of the relic is the primary responsibility of the mosque trust. It was wrong for the security forces to lay siege. As for the militants, they had been using the mosque for a long time When the government got the report, why did it panic?

Governor Rao says that he was forced to order the siege because loss of the relic could have created

Governor K.V. Krishna Rao

unprecedented violence as in 1963-64. If his administration was so concerned about the holy relic, why did it not post a regular police guard? In 1964, after the theft of the relic, the state administration allowed the Sheikh's followers to fully exploit the incident for political purposes. The authorities should have known then that the same method could be used by anyone else to create mischief. Yet the Kashmir administration failed to arm itself with a proper response to such challenges.

Having laid the siege, there was no effort on the part of the Governor to allot specific tasks to the army and the civil administration In any case, he was in conflict with the army The idea of flushing out the militants holed up inside the shrine was given up. It was decided by the army to starve them into submission. But what was to be done with the pilgrims? Here was an excellent opportunity to use the pilgrims to break down the will of the militants, but the softies at the Centre and in the state administration decided on a different course. There were foodgrains inside the mosque. So the militants could have held out But with the depletion of food and water, the pilgrims would have raised a howl against the militants The militants would have been compelled to finally let them go Instead, the Kashmir administration (more precisely Wajahat Habibullah, the divisional commissioner) ordered the supply of hot *biryani* to the people inside the mosque The army naturally asked what then was the siege for? Neither Governor Rao nor his administration had an answer. Serving food defeated the

army's objective It was immaterial as to who ate the food The army decided not to let the militants have a telephone facility. This was overruled by the Kashmir administration. As a result, the militants could remain in touch with ISI agents and foreign media The army would have liked each militant to surrender with his respective weapons so that he could be identified and kept in a camp Instead, it was decided to give safe passage to all, including the foreign mercenaries and let them leave their weapons in designated dumps.

Most of the negotiations were conducted by the administration, and the army had no hand in them However, the army opposed the deal worked out by the administration which allowed the militants safe passage from inside the shrine The army is reported to have objected to this deal as it would have appeared like a moral victory for the militants and their supporters in Pakistan and as a major setback to the Indian army The deal was to hand over the shrine to the police in order to let them allow the militants to escape

Even when the militants refused to accept food from the government Wajahat Habibullah did not give up the idea of feeding them. Instead he came up with the proposal that the supply of food should be entrusted to a private caterer

under the cover of darkness and transport them to special places from were they could flee

The day after the siege began, General S M Zaki, adviser to the Governor, claimed that a decision had been taken to cut off water and power. Later, it was reported that there was a well inside. But the point is: the employees of the concerned departments refused to carry out the decision and no action was taken against them In fact, they refused to carry out any orders against the militants. So the army had to carry out the order. Yet, when it was seen

Former J&K Governor, Karan Singh

that the militants were collecting water from the Dal Lake, the water supply was promptly restored by the administration. Habibullah was responsible for all these soft approaches and he claimed he had Governor Rao's authorisation. Even when the militants refused to accept food from the government. Habibullah did not give up the idea of feeding them Instead, he came up with the proposal that the supply of food should be entrusted to a private caterer.

One can only say here that even a permissive state like India should draw a line beyond which it should not allow its citizens to stray. Such a line has not been drawn by our rulers because they do not want themselves to be bound. Instead, they follow the policy of adhocism, judging issues as they come along, making arbitrary and contradictory decisions. "They are our boys", they say about the militants. This is the usual retrain of the politicians, specially the softies, with regard to rebels who have taken up arms against the rest of the population, against our state, for they do not want to be identified with any drastic decisions against the militants. These "boys" are, in reality, our enemies, for they intend to kill us indiscriminately in order to advance their own cause In fact, they want to enjoy total power and edge out their opponents. They do not believe in the ballot, and in sharing power In any case, India is not a tyranny. It has a buoyant democracy, and although it is by no means perfect, here we can change things through the power of the ballot. The process may take time, it may be frustrating, but things do change As for other problems, the rebels should understand that India

The controversial Babri Masjid that was demolished in December 1992

The Chrar-e-Sharif: Another instance of desecration of a holy place

is a conferadation of equal states and that the Centre has a responsibility to look after the uniform development of all states. If there have been failures in this aspect, it is because some states want to march ahead of others by exploiting Central resources or because those who are denied equality are not strong enough to protest There is no way by which the Centre can bestow special advantages on a state. In any case, Punjab has the highest per capita income and the Kashmir valley comes second

Advocates of "our boys" should know that justice cannot be different for different people How is it that a bank robber has to languish in prison for years, while a militant who robs dozens of banks goes scot-free? This is the easiest way to destroy the sense of justice and respect for law and encourage political revolt. This way we have already created a privileged community of criminals in a number of states, particularly in Punjab and Kashmir. These people are not likely to give up the "privileges" they have enjoyed.

Thus, in the entire episode, the army personnel were made to look like fools, for while they wanted to pursue the general objective of bringing the militants under control, the governor and his administration wanted to give them a safe passage Can there be worse contradictory policies? The militants must have understood from the whole episode that there is no unity of will among those who are entrusted with the task of containing militancy.

This is not to say that the army alone has a solution to the problem or that it is beyond blame. In fact, it has given cause for embarrassment to the Central government whenever it overreacted to provocations by the militants This was the case at Bijbehara, where 37 persons died and over 70 were wounded in army firing (on October 22, 1993) in reply to serious provocation by the militants Such incidents are bound to be blown out of proportion by human rights activists and Western press and media hostile to India. The army officers must know that years of their good work can be damaged by a moment of wrong reflexes. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4 THURSDAY 5 FRIDAY 6 SATURDAY 7 SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC-741	0025	1 2 4 6	IC 742	0845	1 3
			IC 742	1010	4 7
IC-741	0945	daily	IC-744	[illegible]	daily
M9-327	[illegible]	3 5 7	M9 327	1810	3 5 7
M9 323	1230	2 6	M9 323	1555	2 6
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304,147	0650	1 2 3 4 5, 6	M9 113/308	2235	1 2, 3 4, 5 6
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1555	2 4 6
			PF 302	1630	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1030	1 3 5	IC-722	1300	1 3 5
IC-721	1250	4 7	IC-722	1520	4 7
D2 161	1330	1 2 3 4 5 7	D2 161	1600	1 2 3 4 5 7
D2-163	1200	6	D2-163	1430	6
BANGALORE					
IC-771	0600	daily	IC-772	1140	daily
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
M9-305,423	0640	1, 2 3 4 5 6	M9 438,308	2235	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-402	0700	4	D5 401	1630	3
IC-544	1115	3 7	IC-543	1035	3 7
IC 769	1015	2 4 6	IC 770	2120	2 4 6
VF-105	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
DELHI					
IC 763	0630	daily	S2-026	0810	1 2 3 4 5
S2-026	0850	1 2 3 4 7	M9 303	0820	daily
M9 304	0950	daily	A-662	0925	1
IC 401	1115	daily	IC 401	1130	1 2 3 4 5 6
4S 816	1700	1 2 3 4 5 6	IC-401	0850	daily
S2-006	2045	1 2 3 4 5 6	S2-005	2000	1 2 3 4 5 7
M9 302	2000	daily	M9 301	1937	daily
IC 804	1840	1 7	IC-804	1930	daily
			IC 855	0950	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
4S-816	1200	2 4 6	IC 702	1630	1 3 5 7
4S 817	1200	1 3 5	4S 816	1630	1 3 5
IC-701	1230	1 3 5 7	4S 817	1530	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
IC 217	1145	4 7	IC 217	1330	4 7
PF-301	0645	1 4 5	PF 300/302	1555	1 4 6
GOA					
M9 304/121	0640	1 3 5 7	M9 428,308	[illegible]	daily
GUWAHATI					
D5 401	0700	daily	D5 402	2015	daily
IC-703	[illegible]	2 [illegible]	IC 704	1020	2 6
IC 705	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 704	1800	1 3 5
9W 511	1400	1 7	9W 512	1330	daily
PF-301	0630	1 3	PF 302	1500	1 4 6
			IC 270	1330	daily
IC 209	1900	1 [illegible]	IC-811	1630	2 4 6
4S 816,811	1205	2 4 6	4S 816,817	1630	1 3 5
M9 304	1230	2 7	M9 302	1630	1 5 7
M9 302	1230	1 4	M9 27	1610	1 4
HYDERABAD					
IC 77	1115	1 5 7	IC [illegible]	2150	1 5 7
IC 703	1630	2 4 6	IC 770	2120	2 4 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
VF-106	1740	1	VF-105	1700	1
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
JAIPUR					
IC-255	0915	3, 5, 7	IC-256	1405	3 5 7
IC-213	1140	2, 6	IC-213	1540	2 6
JODHPUR					
S2-026/027	0850	1, 2, 4 5	S2-028/005	2005	1 2 4 5 7
KANDLA					
IC 257	1145	4, 7	IC-257	1550	4 7
KOCHI					
PF-301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF-304/302	1630	1, 3, 6
KOLKATA					
IC-812	1620	1, 3 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
S2-026/011	0850	1, 2, 3 4, 5	S2-012/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5, 7
KOLKATA					
D5-402	0700	4	D5-401	1630	3
IC-542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5, 6
IC-544	1115	3,	IC 543	1035	3 7
D2-172	1640	daily	D2 173	[illegible]	6
			D2 171	1550	1 2 3 4 5
IC 765	1720	daily	IC-766	2210	daily
LEH					
IC-676	0730	daily	IC 675	0820	daily
9W-202	0715	1 2 4 5 6 7	9W 201	0930	1, 3 4 5 6
D2-102	0420	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC-273	1945	daily	AI 305	1730	5
9W-212	1940	daily	9W 211	1105	daily
AI-309	1930	6	IC-274	1550	daily
M9 305	0640	1 2 3 4 5	M9 306	1125	1 2 3 4 6
M9 307	1700	daily	M9 308	1215	1 7
D2 104	2000	daily	D2 103	0910	5 6
MADURAI					
IC-760	1015	2 4 6	IC 759	2125	2 4 6
NAGPUR					
IC-267	1015	2 4 6	IC 268	2125	2 4 6
PATNA					
D5 406	1130	1 5	D5 405	1845	3 5
IC-812	1520	1 3	IC-811	2100	1 3 5
IC 249	1410	2 6	IC-241	1620	2 6
PORT BLAIR					
IC 265	0640	1 3 5	IC 266	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 249	1445	2 6	IC-249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 252	0115	2 5 7	IC-252	1405	2 5 7
IC 254	0700	2 4 6	IC 254	0940	2, 4 6
M9 325	1220	1 4	M9-326	1610	1, 4
M9 329	1220	2 6	M9-329	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC 211	1140	2 6	IC-212	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	1 5	D5 405	1835	3 5
M9 301/111	0850	daily	M9 112/301	1935	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 2 4, 5 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4, 5, 6
D5-402	0700	4	D5-401	1630	3

FLIGHTS

AMMAN					
RJ 185	1140	4	RJ 184	0400	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0320		KL 875	0130	7
BANGKOK					
KB 102	0900	2 6	KB-106	1070	3
			KB 108	1240	
IC 731	0805	2 5	TG 313	1240	1, 3 6
IC-731	1105	1 3	IC-732	1730	1 3
IC-855	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1305	1 3, 6	IC-732	1505	2, 5
AI 306	1910	5	AI-302	1825	6
BRUNEI					
RO-076	2130	5 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
IC-225	0700	1	IC-226	0920	1
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3 6 7
IC-723	1300	1, 3 5, 6	IC-724	1520	1 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3 5 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1 2, 3, 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
Q7-061	1000	3	Q7-060	1230	2
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
RA-214	2155	3 7	HA-213	2055	3, 7
IC-747	1035	1 2, 4 6	IC 746	1350	1, 2, 4, 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
BA 142	2115	3 7	BA-143	1515	3 7
SU-538	1755	4	SU-537	1555	4
KB-106	1105	3	KB 105	0810	2, 6
KB-108	1325	5			
SQ 415	2345	2 5	SQ-416	2230	2, 5
BI-108	0830	7	BI-107	2000	6
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
AI-306	1910	5	AI 309	1820	6
IC 227	1530	4, 7	IC-226	1955	4, 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 35	3006
3003	20 00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13-00	3004
2381	9-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16-15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	10 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues, Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	13 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12-50	2306
2307	23 30	**Jodhpur Express**	4 40	2308
2019	6-20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21-10	2020
3073	23 05	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri-Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11 45	3074
3045	22-00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday, Arr Friday	12 25	3046
5049	21-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11-35	5050
5047	13-00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun, Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
3009	20-[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	9 30	**Udyan Abha Tooran Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	11-55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santhiladah Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs, Arr Mon, Thurs & Fri	7-55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep. Wed, Sat & Sun Arr Sun, Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-30	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7-55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	11 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express**	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5-15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SRG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr Tues, Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20-30	**Madras Mail**	6-55	6004
8002	19-20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	12-30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15-25	2859
2021	6-50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20 40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5-15	8033
8030	11 20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	14-35	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12-05	2842
7003	8 10	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon, Thurs & Sat	19-40	7004
6311	22-35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6312
8013	17-30	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8111	6 00	**Igatpuri (Jharsuguda) Express**	21-25	8112
8005	20 55	**Tilagarh Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21 40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-10	8016
8007	22-15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-30	8008
8409	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-25	8410
2821	6-15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22-05	2822
8045	10 25	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15-10	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11-35	8018
1030	15-50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16-40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16 10	—
- -	11-05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10 45	2422
6322	22-15	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22-15	- - -
-	14-05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13-45	6321
- -	14-05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13-45	6313
6314	22-35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	—
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	13 45	6315
6520	22-35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22-15	
- -	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13-45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2208545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah. 3503535/37.

A HEAD FOR HEIGHTS

Do short men try harder? ***Manisha Gulati*** *investigates*

What do Sachin Tendulkar, Aamir Khan, Dudley Moore, Pesi Shroff, Danny DeVito, Al Pacino, Billy Joel and Napolean have in common? They're all short. And they're all successful. These are all accomplished men, some of them gifted, others obssessed But all in the limelight We look forward to seeing them, pay money to be entertained by them, admire them, even worship some of them.

All of which leads us to wonder, is there any correlation between height and ambition? Are they classic examples of compensation? In other words, do short men try harder or does the benevolent one up there make up for what they lack in height by giving them that extra edge somewhere else?

According to psychiatrists and other observers of human behaviour, the answer seems to be yes. Says a psychiatrist, "I think a person who's compensating for something about himself that he perceives as a disadvantage often strives to achieve a large success A lot of small men run businesses for example They've compensated their way to the top of the heap "

Raman Kumar, another psychologist, however feels success is not necessarily a manifestation of height, or the lack of it. "Possibly, just because they are short we are laying more emphasis on their success," he says. "After all, there are enough and more tall success stories in the world But definitely a short man does have a complex about his height and he would like to overcome emphasis on it if possible. Whether that happens through his becoming a success or whether he uses it negatively is a very individual thing "

A large number of short men seem to dominate the entertainment business. Showmanship brings with it it's own merits: a flaunting of self without any self-consciousness and misgivings and a massive pumping up of the ego. But not every short man handles his shortcoming in such a positive and constructive

Brigitte Nielsen with ex-husband Sylvester Stallone: Height is no problem

Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man:* Short and successful

manner. Some end up becoming loud, aggressive and obnoxious Others try to feel better by making the other feel worse American author Erica Jong had once described this kind as, "The kind of short man who compensates by automatically putting you on hold."

And then there is the the worst kind the man who doesn't have a point but still thinks he has one to prove Psychiatrists have even given this particular affliction a name. They call it 'little man's disease'

This can also be handled in two ways: reaction formation, in which you end up doing the opposite of what you really feel so you become the tall man in real life that you feel you aren't in stature This is the most common and successful way The second is to become permanently embittered, feel small, second rate, at a disadvantage.

One would think that in this age of equality and liberation centimeters would be irrelevant, right? Wrong. Advertisements for modelling, acting, on-flight jobs in planes and even matrimonial advertisements stress on height. Traditionally, men have to be taller than women and in looking for a suitable match many are rejected on the basis of their height.

In this tall and short rigmarole, women come out luckier Required to be shorter than the man in any case, they can also get away with heels: platforms, stilletoes, wedge, you name it, fashion has made it easier for the fairer species.

Alan Ladd, the great ladies man of the Forties was so short that his directors had him stand on a box or had trenches dug for taller actors who were playing opposite him (Rishi Kapoor probably had the same problem with Amitabh Bachchan.)

Tom Bronson, a Hollywood costume designer who works on all of Sylvester Stallones movies, has confessed that all actors nowadays use build-ups in their shoes. Stallone, who has a larger than life image on screen actually stands only 1.78 metres in his socks. Initially a sore point for the actor, he wore doctored shoes for all his movies. But then realised that his height was more or less average and resigned himself quite happily to normal shoes. So much so that he married Brigitte Nielson who is a full five centimetres taller than him.

Tom Cruise, too, is rumoured to have worn elevated shoes in the movie *Interview With The Vampire* so as not to be overshadowed or towered over by Hollywood hunk Bradd Pitt.

Dustin Hoffman spent many an aggrieved year as a short child. His mother is claimed to have said that he would act up in class, make jokes

Tom Cruise arrives with his actress-wife Nicole Kidman for the world premiere of his new film, *Mission Impossible:* Height no deterrent to stardom

and distract the other students, possibly compensating for being the smallest kid in town. Hoffman himself agrees that he wanted to go out with the tallest girls in class even though they made it amply clear that none were interested in dancing with him. He said, "If I were to rate girls on a scale of one to ten, I'd have to say I went out with a lot of short fours."

Raman Kumar explains, "That's a perfect example of looking outside for something that you lack in yourself. The person has such a low esteem of himself being short that he doesn't want to associate with someone else who has the same problem as it reminds him of his, and also because he doesn't look up to the person because of it."

Actor Dudley Moore at 1 59 metres, for instance, is known as Cuddly Dudly. But for him that's never mattered. He went out with actress Susan Anton for three years, and she is a staggering 24 centimetres taller than him. Brave Dudley Moore even stood on a chair while she stood on the floor, looked her in the eye and sang to her. Romantic and oh so cute!

Like Shashi Dua, a five foot three inch male bemoans, ' That's just the problem. We'll always be cute Never handsome, a stud or macho "

Ask our *desi* Bollywood actors. Many have apparently switched to elevators since joining the industry. Salman Khan, Rishi Kapoor, Aamir Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Govinda (he, of course, unabashedly wears the heels outside).

Stature is a state of mind While victims of dwarfism can be treated with hormones, not much can be done for a normally short man except boost his self-esteem at home and make him learn to accept that shortness is not a deterrent to success.

Rishi Kapoor

Pesi Shroff

But why is height, and by that we mean tall and big, such a fundamental issue to us? What makes 'bigger is better' such an oft' quoted phrase?

Answers Raman Kumar, "We live in a society in which everything big connotes prosperity: houses, cars, salaries, jewellery. And this also extends to the size of a human being A taller human being is looked up to, a shorter one is looked down upon. Even in a spat, by sheer dint of size the taller person has an edge "

For women too, taller means safer. They feel more protected by a man who is tall than by someone who is their height or shorter As Charu, a five foot six inch, taller-than-average Indian girl says, "I would feel like I would have to protect him or that he was younger than me. I don't know, it's a mind block and I feel mean saying it but I've always dreamt that my man would be able to take me in his arms and I could just get lost there. You know, a bear hug "

We know Charu, and unfortunately, so do the men. All too well. Perhaps that's the reason some of them feel the pressure to try harder than a taller man to get noticed, to command attention, and to stand out in a crowd where everyone else seems to tower above them making them feel pretty left out

But there are those women out there who seem to prefer, not just mind, going out with a shorter man Whether it's because the shorter men seem to go out of their way to make the woman feel special because in a strange way he feels obligated and grateful, or whether it's because he's not so full of himself as a taller stud might be and can therefore be more sensitive to his partner's need, remains to be debated

Says Seema Suri, 26 years old, five foot seven inches, and married to Ravi, five foot five inches tall, "A shorter guy really puts his heart into the relationship He values you more. When Ravi and I look into the mirror together, I know Ravi will be looking at me and not obsessing about himself like a guy who is more concerned about his looks might be doing."

Whatever our reasons and whatever our preferences, the fact is that sex appeal lies in the person inside and not on the cover. And certainly not the height Besides the good thing about being 'small is beautiful' is that you can shop in both the children's and the adult's sections. No searching for the 'fountain of youth' for you. A shorter person will always look younger than a taller one. So there you go, you six foot, hags! ■

Sachin Tendulkar

Aamir Khan

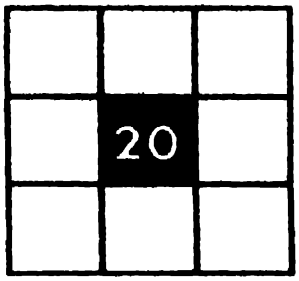
JUNIOR WHIRL ✻ HAL KAUFMAN

SPOT TWINS! Two of 16 lighter-than-air craft shown above are twins. Can you find them? P.S.: Study them carefully

AIR BASE! Earth's atmosphere is said to be composed mainly of three gases in rough volume in amounts of 78 per cent, 21 per cent and 1 per cent. What are the three gases in order of volumes?

Nitrogen, Oxygen and argon, respectively

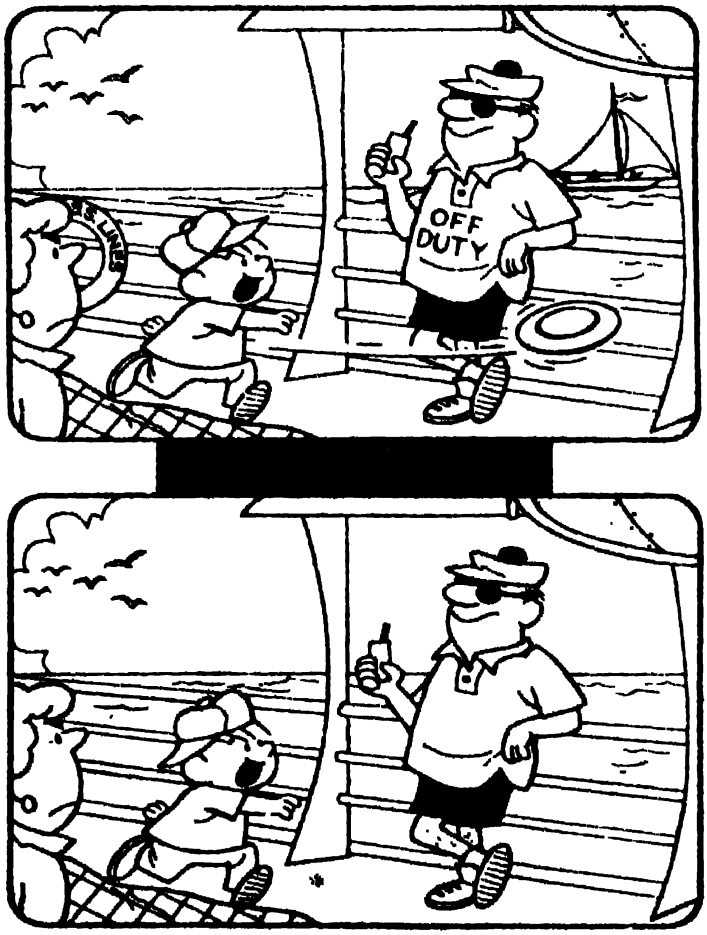
9-COUNT! Let's say you have 24 marbles — that's right, 24 — and you wish to place them in empty compartments of the square at right so that the sum on each side is 9. Place three in each box and alakazam, the deed is done.



BUT, let's say now you have only 20 marbles and wish to achieve the same result — that is, have 9 on each side. How quickly can you insert the 20 marbles to achieve another 9-per-side arrangement? Give it a try.

Answer Place four marbles in each corner box and one in each middle box

HOCUS-FOCUS



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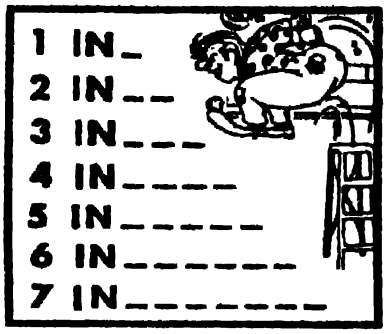
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Life preserver is missing. 2. Cap is reversed. 3. Arm is moved. 4. Shirt words are missing. 5. Frisbee is missing. 6. Boat is missing.



COUNT-ME-IN STEPWORDS

YOU are asked to find seven progressively longer words beginning with IN (see left), in accord with the following definitions:

1. Sign, as a contract (slang.)
2. Move along slowly in a traffic snarl.
3. Back of the book subject matter.
4. Vital tax form info.
5. Out of the elements on a nasty day.
6. Footsoldier branch of the army.
7. Player at third or short stop, for instance.

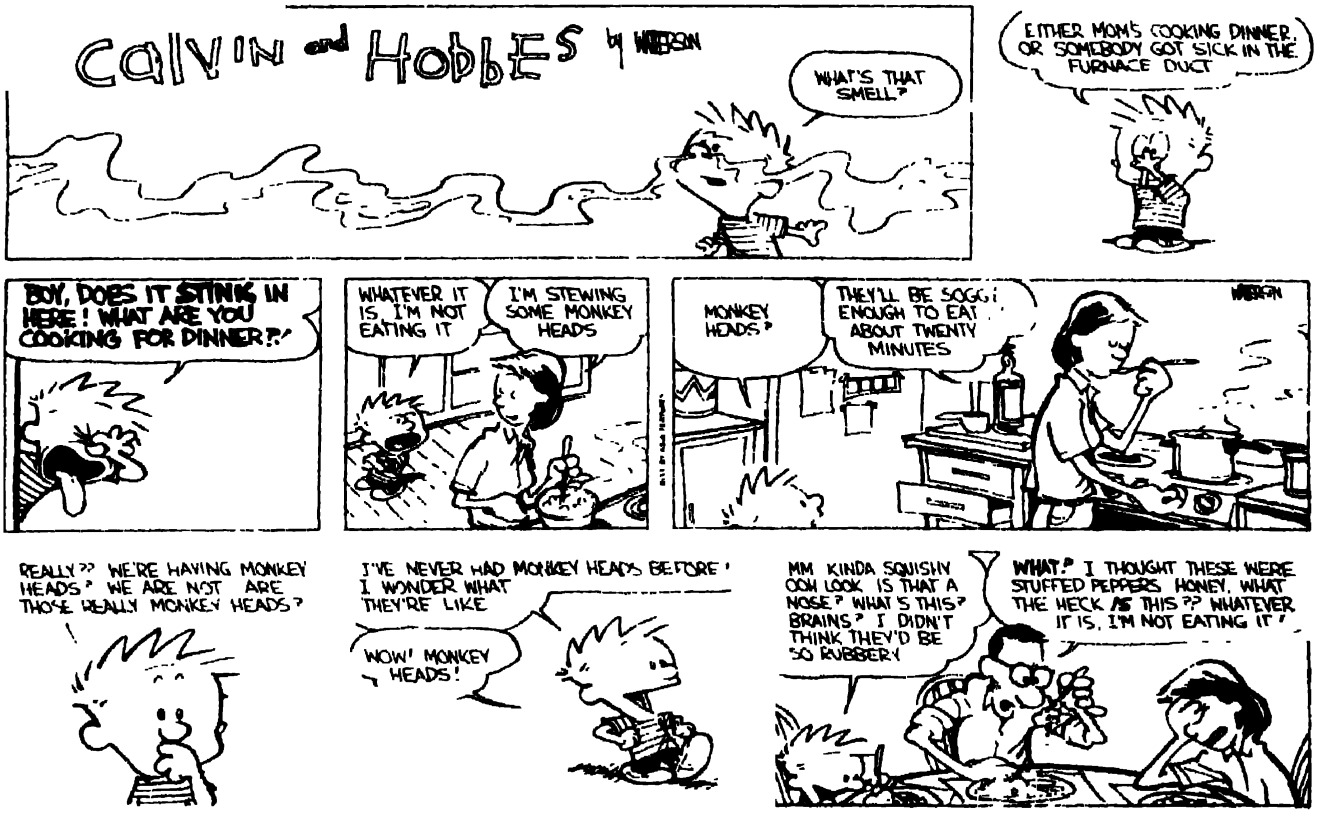
See how quickly you can find the answers.

1 Ink 2 Inch 3 Index 4 Income 5 Indoors 6 Infantry 7 Infielder

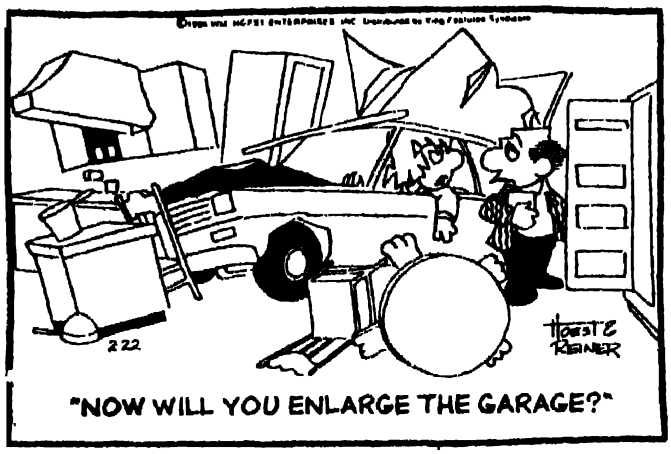
COMICS

ARCHIE

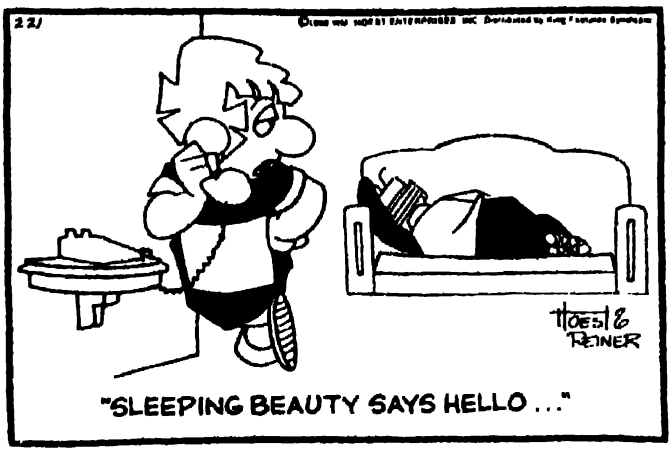
CALVIN AND HOBBES : WATTERSON



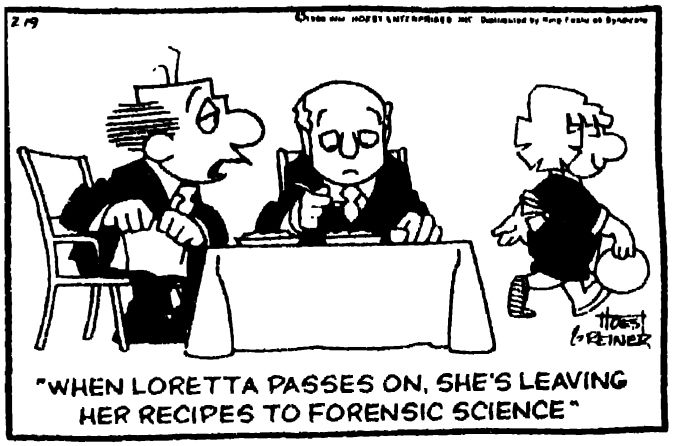
THE LOCKHORNS



"NOW WILL YOU ENLARGE THE GARAGE?"



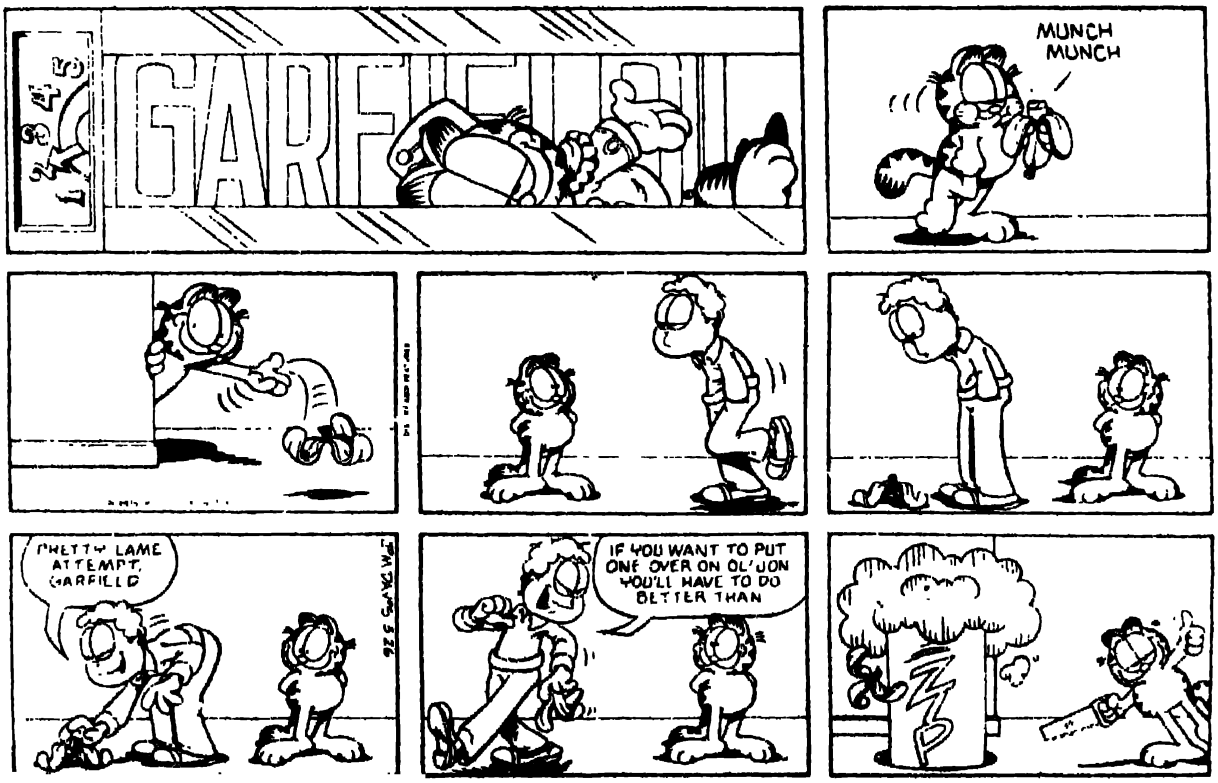
"SLEEPING BEAUTY SAYS HELLO . . ."



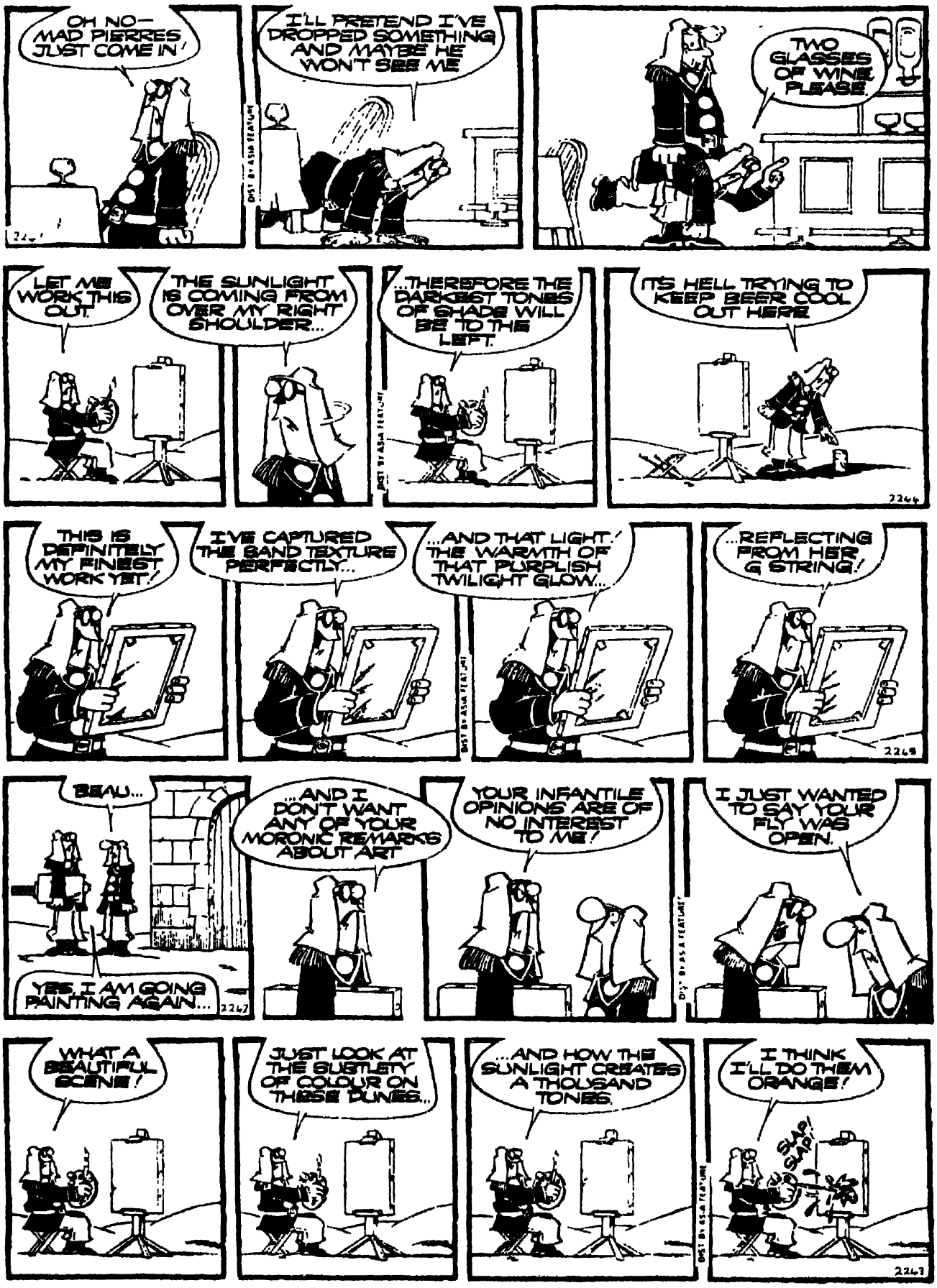
"WHEN LORETTA PASSES ON, SHE'S LEAVING HER RECIPES TO FORENSIC SCIENCE"

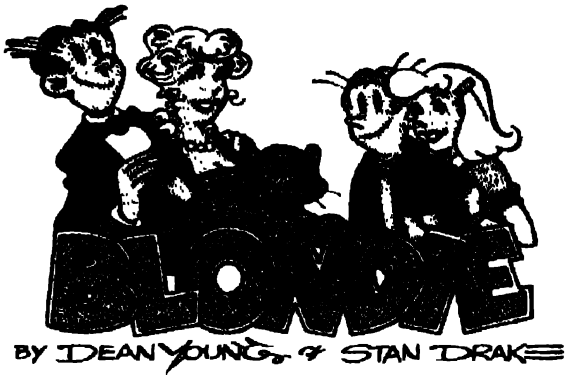
"I'M NOT GOING SHOPPING UNTIL TOMORROW, SO I'LL NEED $20 TO HOLD ME OVER 'TIL THEN."

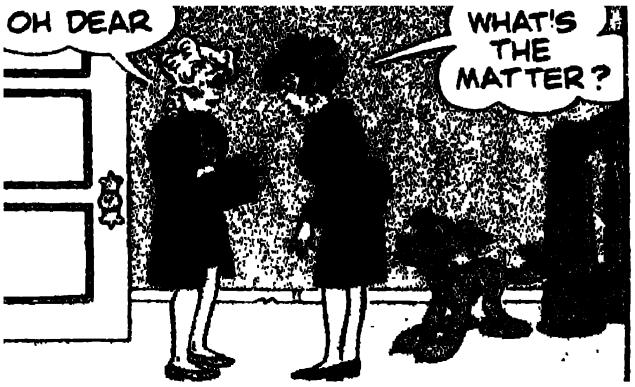
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

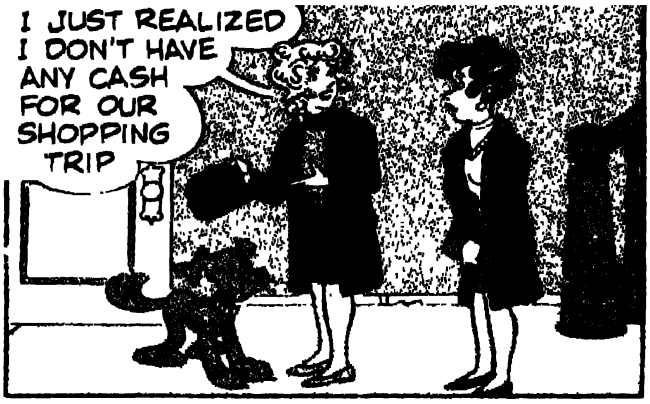


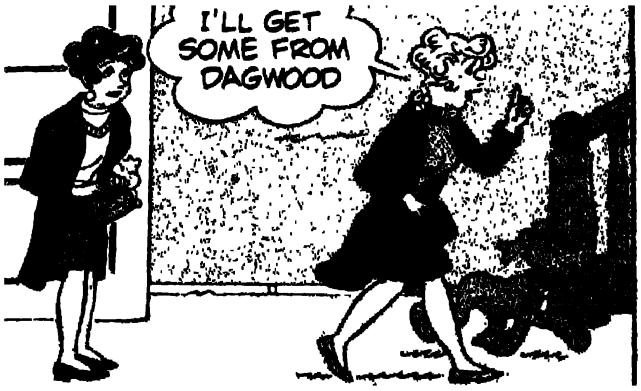
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

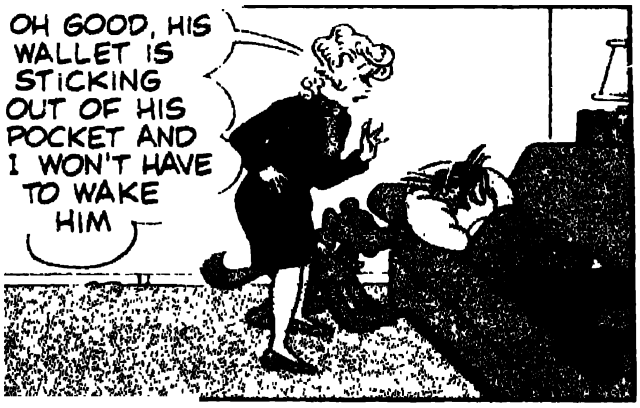


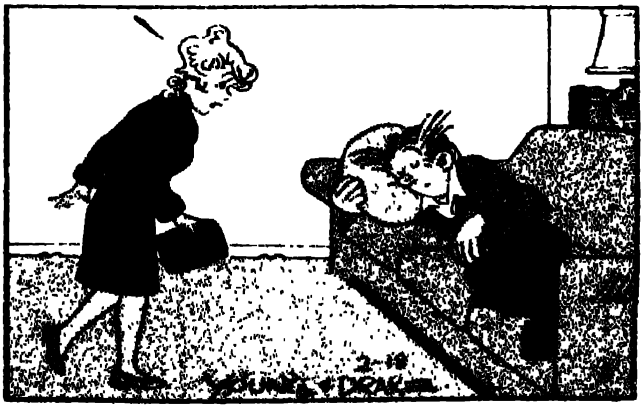












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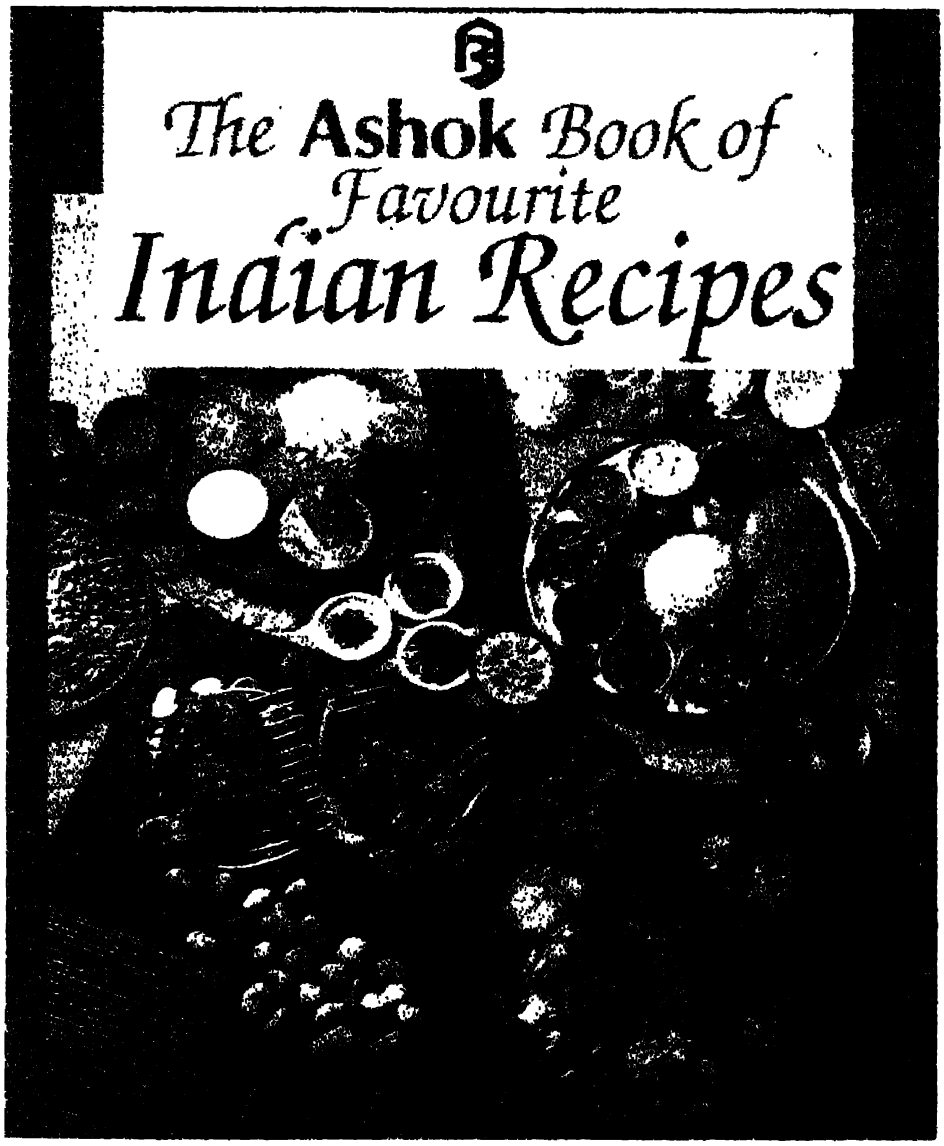
TOO MANY CHEFS

Result in a plethora of cook books. ***Samita Bhatia*** *reports*

There was a time when cookery tips from Balbir Singh and Tarla Dalal were the ultimate for millions of Indian gourmets. While the publications that carried their advice were neither slickly produced, nor especially adventurous, the results in the kitchen weren't too bad. At the end of the day it really didn't matter that there were no exotic pictures to go with the recipes nor the fact that these handful of cookery authors had little competition in the publishing world. The books were very user-friendly, inexpensive and went on to become household names, going into frequent reprints.

The culinary arena threw up some other names as well: Madhur Jaffrey, Pamella Lal and in the early Nineties, Ranjit Rai. While Jaffrey has taken her innumerable followers on culinary journeys across the globe on internationally aired channels, Rai made news in 1990 with his blockbuster *Curry, Curry, Curry* (Penguin 1990), which was reprinted several times over. More recently, his second book *Tandoor* (Viking Rs 750) has proved to be a culmination of his exploration of this method of cooking. *Tandoor* offers more than a simple history of the traditional *tandoor* (Rai had to delve into historical archives), its origins and development down the ages, a series of recipes that extract the maximum flavour from this method.



The market for gourmet cooking is obviously booming, which is manifest even in the fact that what were considered exotic ingredients (button mushrooms, broccoli, baby corn) are available today in your neighbourhood Mother Dairy vegetable booth. If there were just a handful of authors to consult a few decades ago, many a kitchen – simple or state-of-the-art – has been inundated by a plethora of recipe books, going by the ever-growing mounds in the cookery sections of book stores. As book sales indicate, cook books are today a very important segment for the publisher. According to Ashok Chopra of UBS "After self-help books, cookery comes a close second. UBS does as many as six a year."

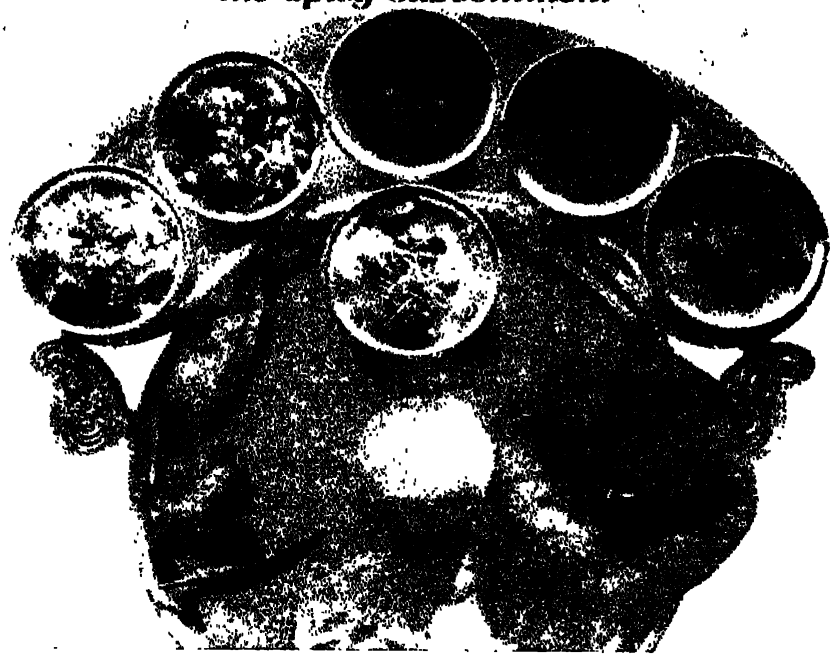
Just a cursory look through the shelves of book stores reveal such titles as *Goan Cook Book*, *Creative Cooking*, *Summer Cookery*, *Cooking with Experts*, *Cooking Without Onions and Garlic*, *The Vegetarian Menu Book*, *Yummy Sweets and Desserts* and among the host of others even *Fun Cooking for Children!* Culinary traditions thus pass on, enriched by 'master cooks' some of whom are often simply housewives, who have perfected their art over several years spent slaving over the gas range.

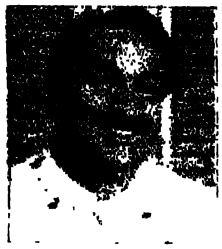
More recently, other magical cooks have joined the bandwagon excutive chefs of luxury hotel chains who have lent a whole lot of colour, glamour and authenticity for good measure. They share a common motif: putting Indian cuisine on the international map. With Indian culinary delights tingling more palates than even Chinese cuisine worldwide, the market for these books has picked up overseas as

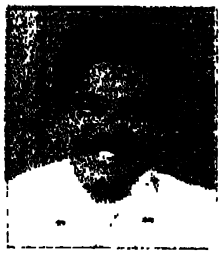
The Oberoi Group

THE FOOD OF INDIA

Authentic Recipes from the Spicy Subcontinent







Authors Brinder Narula, Vijendra Singh, Sanjay Mulkani and Thomas John (top to bottom) of the cook book (above)

well Observes Chopra, "Many Indian cook books find a launch pad at international book fairs Besides every kitchen abroad is stacked with cookery books--hence a huge market is waiting to be tapped Indian homes on the other hand tend to associate hotel books with glamour and authenticity and even love giving away these books as presents

However, some housewives are wary of using expensive ingredients lavishly."

Gev Desai, senior executive chef, Welcomgroup, Maurya Sheraton

From the Oberoi kitchens come *The Food of India* and your step-by step guide to slinging your favourite cocktail Published by Periplus Editions, Singapore, *The Food of India* is part of a series of books on Asian cuisine with chefs from Oberoi hotels from various parts of India having contributed to the collection of recipes. The chefs behind the book view it as 'an effort to capture the variety of Indian cuisine and present it to the world "

The Ashok 'flavour' has been doing the rounds since 93 with *The Ashok Book of Favourite Indian Recipes* while the chefs of Maurya Sheraton and the Taj group have put together some sumptuous dishes from their kitchens all over the country The New Delhi Hilton too has a couple under its belt having published *The Great Indian Cook Book* and *Exotic Recipes* in its avtaar as Holiday Inn

While many housewives have misgivings about how comfortable they would be with recipes that hotel books offer, chefs make a few

Satish Arora, director, food production of the Taj Group (southern and western region)

clarifications. They are emphatic in stating that their books are meant primarily for the lay person. Says Gev Desai, senior executive chef, Welcomgroup Maurya Sheraton Hotel and Towers, "The recipes are not very complicated, the ingredients are all easily available and the procedures are very user-friendly. The books are a means for the chefs to share their vast repertoire of authentic culinary knowledge." The recipes are thoroughly researched and proven, with each being sampled more than five times by chefs and other 'foodies' before they are included in the books. Says Desai, "That demands tremendous work and resources."

Much in keeping with the ITDC philosophy of popularising exotic Indian dishes among Indians as well as foreigners, *The Ashok Book* attempts to create balanced recipes, which will also appeal to the health conscious. Which is perhaps why *The Ashok Book* proved to be so popular that it had to go into reprint in 1995.

The Maurya chefs targetted the gourmet market in the UK and Germany through *The Indian Menu Planner* which proved to be a huge success. The bottomline of *The Indian Menu Planner*, explains Chef Desai, was, "To acknowledge all the chefs who work tirelessly at the chain's hotels behind the scenes. They are neither educated nor do they have the wherewithal to contribute to a publishing house. The book is actually a tribute to them (the credits carry the names of 12 chefs), and to see that their recipes actually reach out to people throughout the world." How would the chefs gauge the success of their efforts in the published format? They concur that of the hundred people who try the recipe if 95 recreate them successfully, the recipes are a success. The hotel books are meant for housewives, and not professionals or institutions.

The chefs try to get as personalised and creative as they can get. So don't be surprised when you come across 'Lobster Kika', an exotic dish which is named after Chef Satish Arora's daughter. Chef Arora, director, food production, western and southern region with the Taj Group, is proud of the oft-beat combinations that he along with Arvind Saraswat, director, food production, northern region, Taj group, have included in their hot selling book *Best of Indian Cuisines*. The book is a wealth of traditional dishes and is liberally sprinkled with 'created' recipes. Says Arora, "More chefs should get involved in writing recipe books for these are far more authentic than those written by housewives. Besides, chefs can explore and experiment with regional cuisines and come up with brand new recipes."

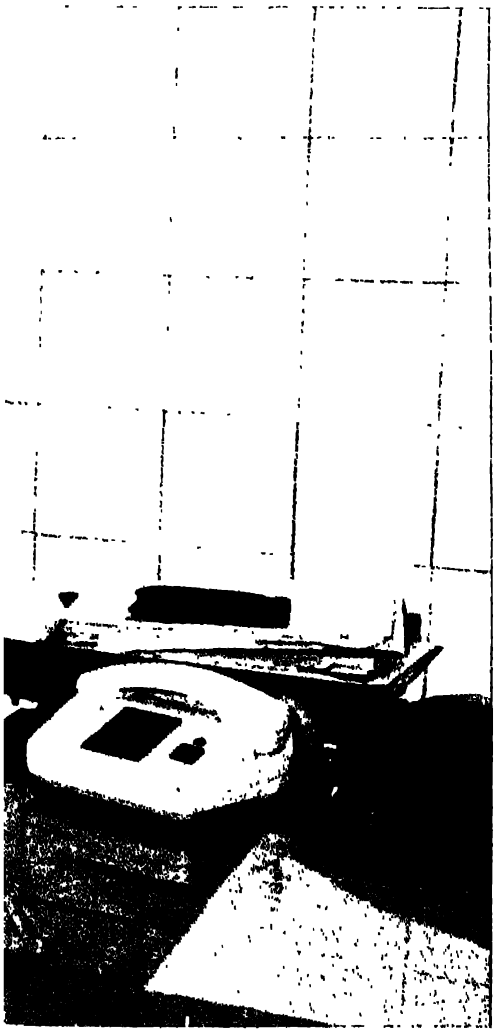
While the dominant opinion rules that hotel recipes cannot be recreated at home—what with a wealth of material resources the hotel infrastructure affords, special *handis* and burners at the chefs disposal etc — the chefs have another point of view. They concur that though they cannot give the exact recipe that they are wont to employ in their own state-of-the-art kitchens at their restaurants, they have tailored the procedures to cater to the needs of the average household.

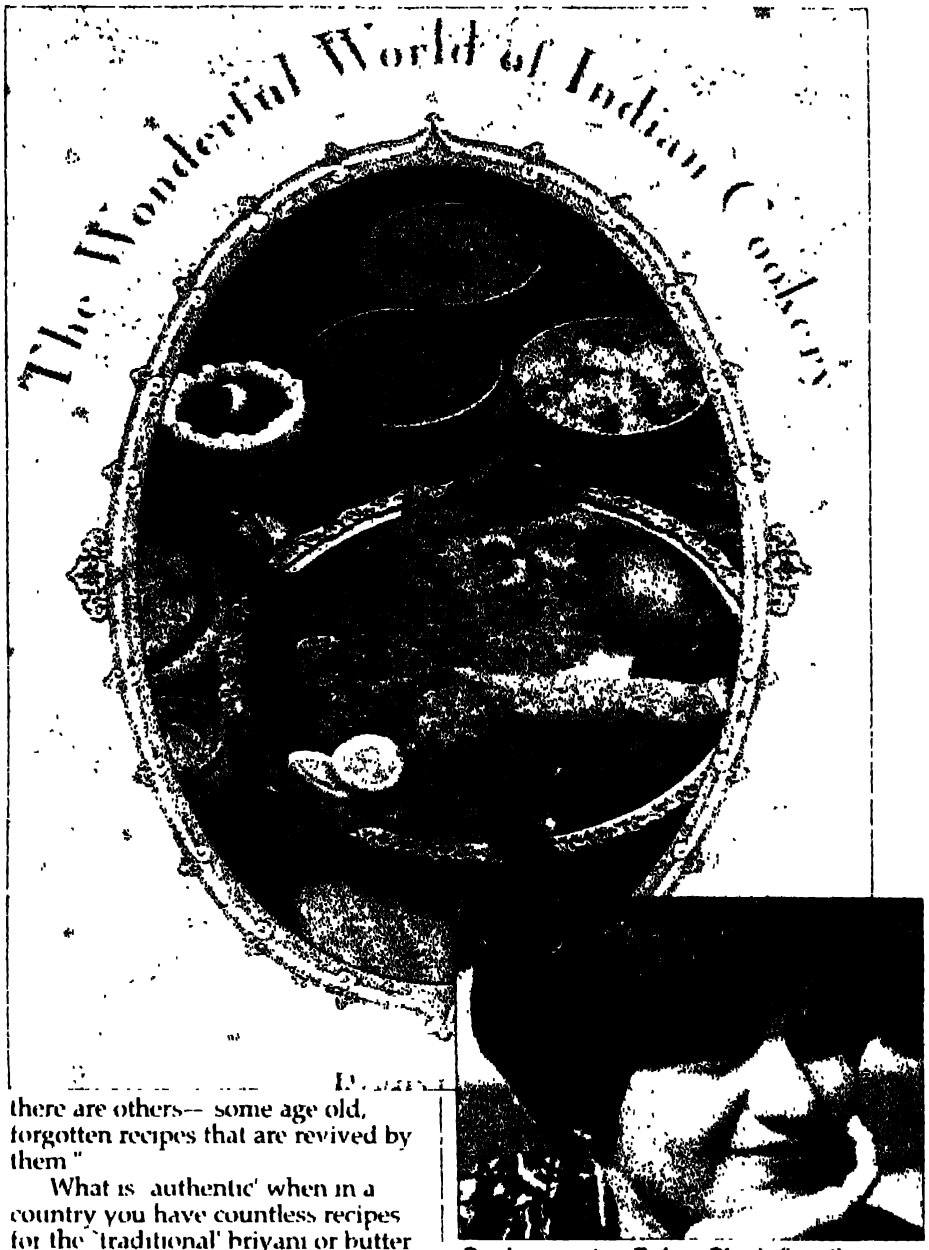
Says Desai, "When we think of putting the recipe into the book I question myself whether my wife or mother would be able to make use of it with reasonable degree of success, whether all the materials would be available to them as easily and if at all our formula is user-friendly." So there's no procedure that says 'turn burner to the G mark'. "Our user is

J.M. Choudhury, senior executive chef, Ashok Hotel

primarily Indian, thus, we must use Indian terms Measurements like 115 gms wouldn't perhaps work, as not more than 20 per cent Indian kitchens would have weighing scales. We've taken care to replace precise measurements with terms like—a cup, a tablespoon or level teaspoon etc."

A cookery book writer herself, Rohini Singh, too, is quite open to trying what the chefs prescribe. According to her, hotel books represent what hotels have to offer in their restaurants Thus there's a whole lot of different regional cuisines that you can take tips for. Says Singh, "As a cookery author myself I find the books quite useable and interesting And of the lot, if even two recipes turn out well, for me the book is a huge success. Another major advantage of books authored by hotel chefs is that most of the recipes are valuable and some of a kind that only hotels can experiment with and in turn offer to to us in a simplistic manner Then





Cookery writer, Rohini Singh (inset)

there are others— some age old, forgotten recipes that are revived by them "

What is 'authentic' when in a country you have countless recipes for the 'traditional' briyani or butter chicken, asks Gev Desai "Cuisine is changing so fast that to find just one authentic recipe is not possible " Senior executive chef, J.M Choudhary of Ashok Hotel has another point of view, "Ninety-nine per cent of the recipes of the same dish have the same base, only the name differs," he adds.

Coffee table recipe books may lend the kitchen shelf a certain profile but chef Desai brushes them aside as 60 per cent recipe and 40 per cent jargon These books have very little to do with cooking and more to do with beautiful presentation, a great finish and an overdose of history, he says. Hotel books—veritable recipe banks—on the other hand are 95 per cent recipe and five per cent jargon. Critical about glossy coffee table books he notes that while these books actually go into the streets of India they seldom has much to do with cooking

The repertoire from the chefs is the bottomless pit from which many more delicacies will continue to touch down at your kitchen counter Currently Choudhury is planning another glossy *Royal Recipe* book which will encompass all the dishes that the ITDC chefs have conjured up for royal banquets for state guests and other top international dignitaries Also slated for release is Rohini Singh's *The Foolproof Cook Book for Beginners, Bachelors and Those Who Hate Cooking* But why anyone who hates cooking would invest in a cook book, however, remains a abiding mystery. ■

FIRST PERSON

***PRATHIBHA PRAHLAD**, a Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi exponent, is counted among the top 10 dancers in the country. She made a debut as an actress in a dance tele-serial Sruti and is now the managing trustee of Prasiddha Foundation, organising dance and music festivals. Recently she caused a flutter in the dancing community when she accused her Gurus of seeking sexual favours.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To love and to be loved
What is your greatest fear?
I might miss a step while performing or the musicians may go wrong.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
Dance.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My broad backside

What do you dislike most in others?
Hypocrisy and double standards.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My short temper.
What is your most precious possession?
Dance.
What objects do you always carry?
My smile and wits.
What makes you most depressed?
Bad performance and bad reviews.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My broad backside.
What is your favourite word?
Love.

What objects do you always carry?

My smile and wits

What is your favourite journey?
Art.
What is your favourite dream?
At present, to have the best performing arts complex in Bangalore.

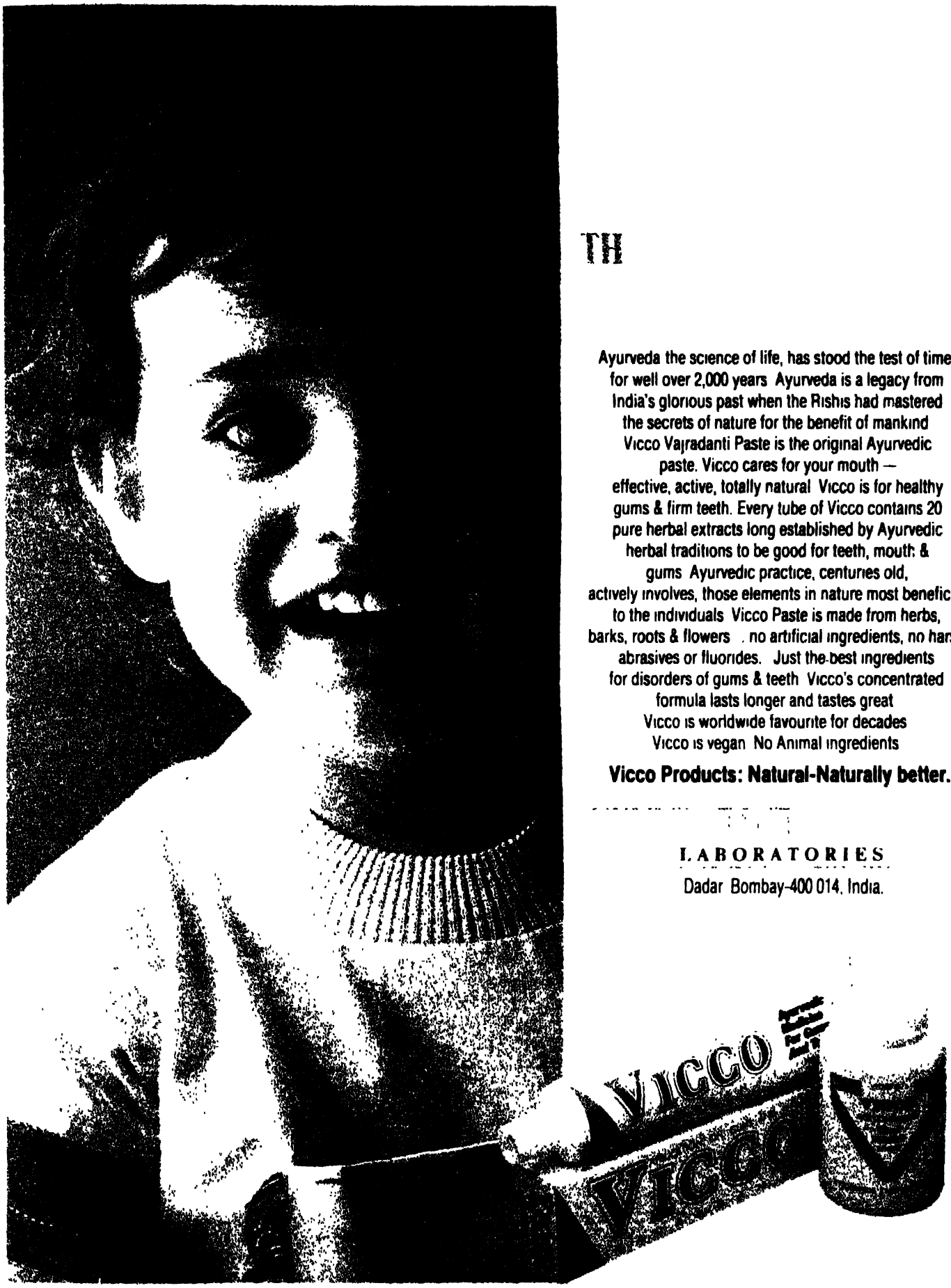
What is your nightmare?
I might meet with an accident and lose a leg.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Dance.
What is your source of sustenance?
My friends, family and fans.
On what occasions do you lie?
Only to journalists.
What is your greatest regret?
Not having married... sorry, cannot name him.
What has been your happiest moment?
When I recently got the railway minister to increase the travel concession for artistes from 50 per cent to 75 per cent and also a 50 per cent concession in first class.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Mushy movies and perfect art.
How do you relax?
Play golf, party and go for long drives
What do you envy most in others?
Their complacency.

On what occasions do you lie?

Only to journalists

How would you like to be remembered?
As one of the greatest dancers and a fantastic person.

How would you like to die?
While dancing on the stage.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Ayurveda the science of life, has stood the test of time for well over 2,000 years Ayurveda is a legacy from India's glorious past when the Rishis had mastered the secrets of nature for the benefit of mankind Vicco Vajradanti Paste is the original Ayurvedic paste. Vicco cares for your mouth — effective, active, totally natural Vicco is for healthy gums & firm teeth. Every tube of Vicco contains 20 pure herbal extracts long established by Ayurvedic herbal traditions to be good for teeth, mouth & gums Ayurvedic practice, centuries old, actively involves, those elements in nature most beneficial to the individuals Vicco Paste is made from herbs, barks, roots & flowers . no artificial ingredients, no harsh abrasives or fluorides. Just the best ingredients for disorders of gums & teeth Vicco's concentrated formula lasts longer and tastes great
Vicco is worldwide favourite for decades
Vicco is vegan No Animal ingredients
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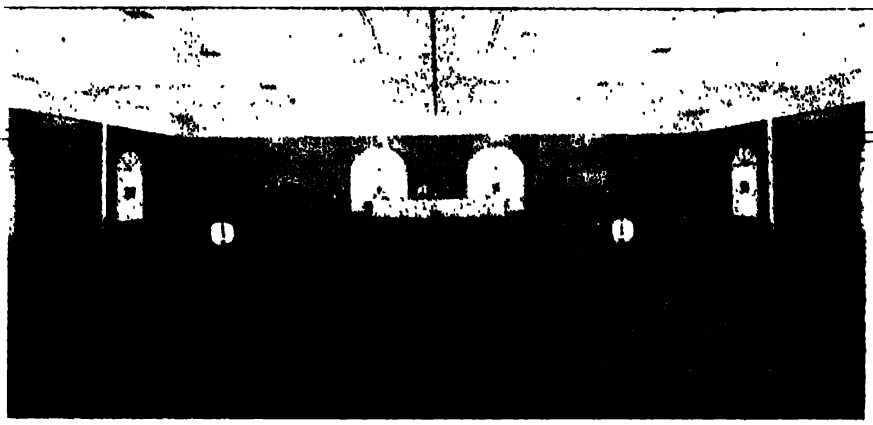

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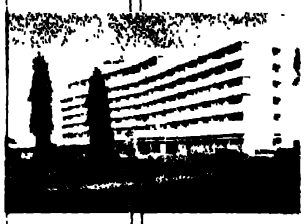

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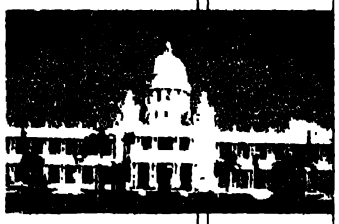
- A choice of Regional, Indian and Continental cuisine



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Madhyam ITDC 4445/A/96

The Telegraph

9 JUNE 1996

POST MORTEM

In Search of Power

■ Amar Singh is a fine instance of what determination and dedication can achieve ('Power Centre', April 21). From Calcutta to Delhi was a long and intriguing journey for this ex-Xaverian. But as they say if there is a will there is a way, Singh also proved that with the right contacts he could become a name to reckon with in the capital's power circuit.
Santosh Chowdhury,
Calcutta

■ Thank you for the wonderful cover story profiling the 'irresistible rise' of Calcutta's Amar Singh. It is incredible how this lesser-known politician developed such powerful contacts in the political circles of Delhi within such a short span of time.
T.R. Anand,
Sarangabad, 24-Parganas (W.B.)

■ I was overwhelmed reading the cover story on Amar Singh. From Chittaranjan Avenue to Delhi and his association with big names like Amitabh Bachchan, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Chandra Shekhar, Subrata Mukherjee, read like a fairy tale. His ambition paid him rich dividends. Yet he is so humble and never forgets his modest beginning.

As a Calcutta boy who loves his old city, I request him to do something for the street children of Calcutta. He has the resources and the necessary contacts. The destitute children need a home and a better life.
P.C. Dasgupta,
Calcutta

Michael Jackson: New look face with plastic surgery

■ The Magazine is eulogising a man who is a rank opportunist and a middleman bereft of any ideological conviction. Do you want the young generation to emulate him? The Jains (of hawala fame) also had incredible contacts with people who mattered.
M.S. Quraishy,
Calcutta

■ Who is Amar Singh and what has he done for Calcutta? The story says he has not forgotten his roots; in that case, what has been his contribution to the city?

On the contrary, as a Calcutta boy Mithun Chakraborty has done much for his old city. He is always there to help anyone who is in trouble. He has participated in umpteen Calcutta-based social works taking time off from his shootings and business. He is actively involved in works for thalassemia patients. Don't you think he deserves to be featured on the cover?
Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta

Wonder Surgery

■ The article, 'On the Cutting Edge' (May 5) was very interesting. Plastic surgery can really work wonders and doctors can achieve miraculous results: a flat nose can get a pert look, sagging face muscles can receive a lift, excess fat can be scooped away.

It is unbelievable how Michael Jackson has transformed himself from his original looks. The altered nose, lips, colour have given him a totally different look.

Thanks to modern surgery we need no longer peer into the mirror and feel depressed at our bad features making us look ugly. A good surgeon can take care of that.
Pinaki Roy,
Dakshin Dinajpur (W.B.)

INSIDE

Her crowning glory

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AN EXCLUSIVE on hair care and styling. Also, a visit to some of the best beauty parlours for tips from beauticians.

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PROFILING KAMALAHASAN, the actor-producer.

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COVER STORY

LET YOUR HAIR DOWN...

Or put it up, or even cut it short with The Telegraph *'s guide to the best hair styling*

Silhouette, Calcutta: Running full most of the time

WE'VE ALL HEARD THE CLICHE THAT HAIR IS A woman's crowning glory. Yet, rare is the woman who is satisfied with her own hair. If she has straight hair, she wants it curly; if it's fizzy, she'd rather it was dead straight; if it's black, she wants it red; and if it's dark brown, she broods as to why it isn't jet black.

We don't know if the grass is always greener on the other side, but there is no disputing the fact that the hair on your neighbour's head always looks more attractive. And that no matter how hard you try, yours never seems to attain that level of perfection.

And there's no denying that Indian women are trying increasingly harder to get their coiffeur just

right. Even ten years ago, it was hard to find an Indian middle-class woman who visited the hair-dresser regularly. Most of them were content to tie their hair in a plait or put it up in a bun. And when they were feeling particularly self-indulgent, or there was an important family function to attend, they would visit the neighbourhood beauty parlour and come back with an elaborate hair-do

Most of them also steered clear of short hair, preferring to grow their locks no matter how abysmal the quality of their hair. Sometimes it was because the in-laws would disapprove, sometimes they themselves were uncomfortable with the idea of short hair. But whatever the reason, short hair was restricted to school and college kids; once you married and settled down, then long hair was a sign of respectability

No longer. Today, Indian women are becoming more and more conscious of the need to look after their hair, and are getting more adventurous as well. Beauty parlours report that an increasing number of women arrive at their doors, asking for short, smart hair-cuts, or even just a blow-dry so that they can look good for an evening out. And several professional women think nothing of visiting the hair-dresser twice a week to ensure that they always looks impeccably

Gina: Sharing a personal relationship with her clients

Our mothers may have dyed their hair in the privacy of their own bathrooms, but women these days drop a couple of hundred bucks to get this done professionally. And more often than not, they insist on foreign hair rinses and dyes, which result in more natural colours than their Indian counterparts.

One reason for this, of course, is that more women are today earning their own money, and thus feel less guilty about treating themselves to an oil massage, followed by a cut and blow dry at the most expensive salon in town.

And then, there is the fact that the Trophy Wife has appeared on Indian shores. Married to a rich businessman or successful executive, all that she is expected to do is look good at all those interminable, boring parties she has to attend with her husband. So, she feels completely justified in spending a couple of hours in the beauty parlour every day, primping and preening herself to maintain that salon-perfect look.

But where should the hair-care neophyte go, when she wants to look well-groomed? For her benefit, *The Telegraph* has compiled a list of hair-dressers and salons in the three major metros, where she could have anything from a hair extension to a simple perm.

CALCUTTA

Silhouette

Situated at the Oberoi Grand, this is Calcutta's premier salon. And the prices here are in keeping with the five-star ambience. So, be prepared to spend around Rs 100 for a shampoo/blow dry. And if you think that's a little steep, remember that at the Delhi Silhouette you would have to spend more than double the amount for the same service.

The manager of the Calcutta Silhouette, Ritika Singh, concedes that the salon could seem expensive to first-time customers. But then, she adds, the use of imported shampoos, bleaches, and perming solution tends to push up the price anyway. Says Mrs Singh, "There are enough people who are willing to pay for the services rendered, provided they meet their expectations. And contrary to popular opinion, we are full most of the time."

At Silhouette, you could get your hair washed either with Pantene or with Biotique products. And a new

Polly, the manager of Taj Beauty Salon, Calcutta, attends to customers

Swedish shampoo, called Oriflame, is also proving to be quite popular here. But if clients wish to bring in their own shampoos, either foreign or Indian, they are quite welcome to do so.

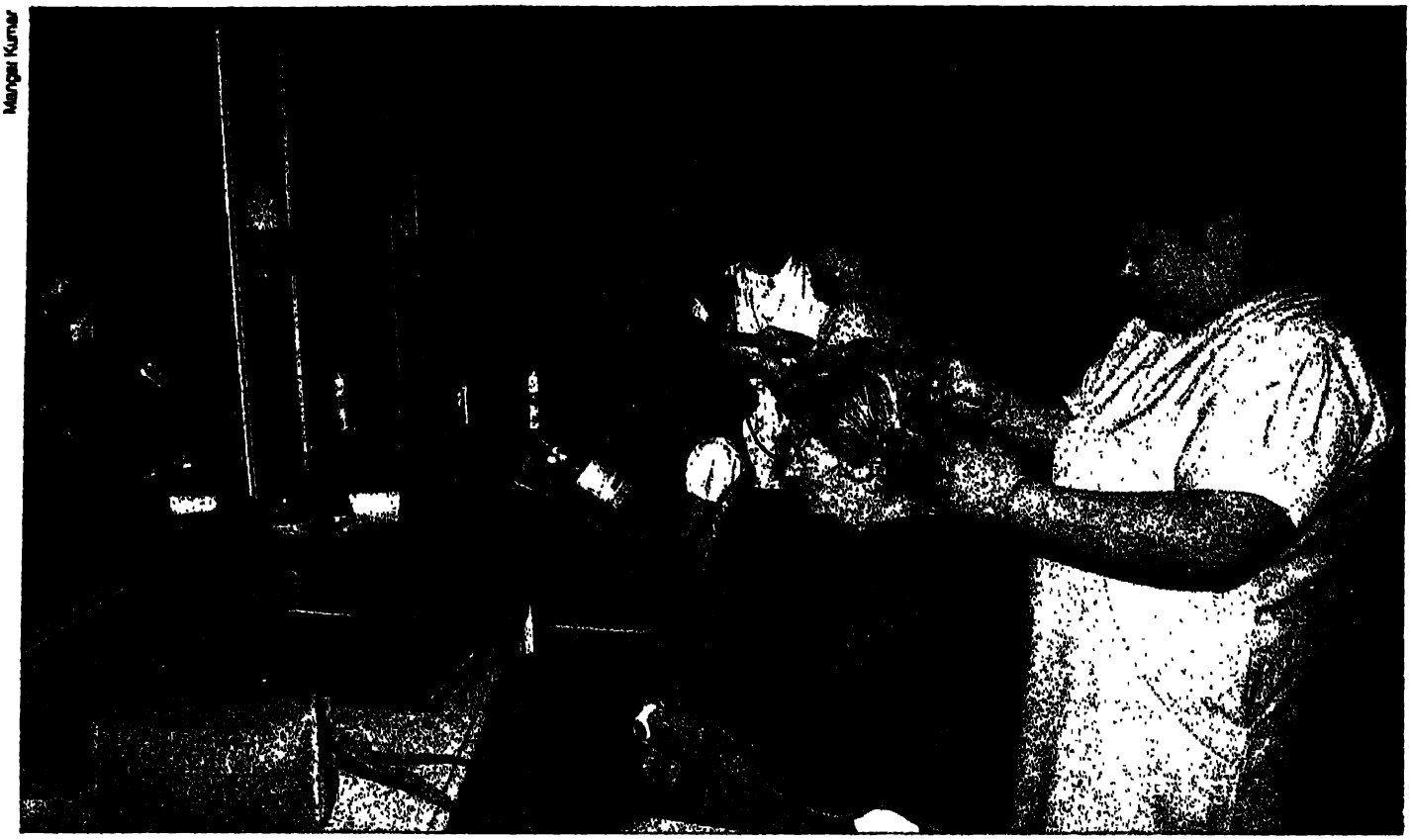
There are two hairdressers in residence at Silhouette: Jenny and Linda. Both of them have been at work with the scissors and comb for years, and are adept at styling hair to suit their customers' faces. In fact, such is their expertise that most clients prefer to go to them, rather than to the foreign hairstylist that the Oberoi imports every winter: Martin Kneller.

While opinion is divided on Martin's skills as a hairstylist — some clients feel that the Chinese girls better understand the demands of an Indian lifestyle — there is no doubting Kneller's expertise at colouring and highlighting hair. He brings his own products — Wella and L'Oreal — with him, and can offer you several colouring and highlighting options.

But with Martin, you can't just walk into the salon and come out with a head of brilliantly-coloured hair. He will first insist on taking a small cutting from your hair, which he will test overnight with the product he intends to use. Only once he is satisfied with the results, will he proceed to work on your hair.

On the whole, Kneller recommends short and simple styles that are easy to maintain in the humidity and pollution of Calcutta. "Lacquered and moussed hair here begins to look limp after a day or two," he says.

Mangal Kumar



Silhouette, Delhi: One of the oldest salons in the capital

The Taj Beauty Salon

Situated at Taj Bengal, this salon has a hairstylist, Polly, presiding as the manager. She also doubles as the most popular hairdresser in residence, with most clients insisting on having their hair cut by her.

Polly, who is an international diploma holder in beauty care and treatment from a Canadian university, maintains that her clients have shed their conservatism over the years and have begun experiments with novel ideas in styling their hair. "With the innumerable channels on television these days, the enormous increase in fashion and film magazines, and women travelling all over the globe, their consciousness is bound to increase," she says.

But Polly is not too happy with the quality of shampoos available in the Indian market; they can't, she says, cope with the climate and pollution of Calcutta. According to her, shampoo-cum-conditioners are a strict no-no, so she recommends the use of gel shampoos to all her clients. And, says Polly, there's no such thing as washing your hair too often. Instead, shampooing your hair every alternate day will keep it both healthy and clean.

The Taj beauty salon manufactures its own shampoos, so that more specialised care can be taken of all kinds of hair. But most of their clients prefer to use imported shampoos, Wella being the most in demand.

Polly's advice to all her clients is not to follow fashion blindly, but to cut their hair keeping in mind the shape of their face, their height and their lifestyle. And she doesn't abide by the current trend of importing foreigners in to cut hair. "Foreigners," she says, "will not be aware of the current trends and fashion here, so it is of no practical use."

The beauty parlour at the Taj, Delhi: Trying out new hair styles

Mangal Kumar

Sudha's Beauty Parlour

Even though this is situated in Hotel Hindustan International, the ambience at this salon is far from five-star. The parlour is small, even slightly cramped with three chairs, two beds and a sofa.

Run by Sudha Bibra, a qualified beauty consultant and therapist, for the past 20 years, the salon is popular with everyone from society ladies to college students. And Bibra herself is eminently placed to comment on the changes in the Indian beauty scene "In the past few years," she says, "there has come about a complete metamorphosis in the women of this city. No longer are they satisfied with the sedate look and the stereotypical image. They want to try out the latest styles and go wild "

Bibra, however, doesn't agree with the conventional wisdom that short hair is easy to maintain. On the contrary, she says, it requires regular trimming and incessant brushing to keep it in place Long hair, on the other hand, can be tied in either a plait, or a topknot, making for a 'cooler' look

Sudha doesn't think that there is much to choose between the various hair products in the market And as a beauty therapist who treats such hair problems as dandruff, split ends, premature greying and hair loss, Bibra makes her own remedies They range from hair packs and conditioners to dozens of special oils Her cupboard is full of such herbal products as neem, *reetha*, *brahmi*, *amla* and even flowers like *jabakusum* .

Despite being a trained hairstylist, Bibra doesn't cut hair herself. Instead, she decides on the cut a particular client should have, and restricts herself to playing the doctor to diseased hair Most of the clients swear by her hair packs and conditioners, the contents of which remain a closely-guarded secret

Avinash Pasricha

Habib advising a customer

Gina

She first began cutting hair at the age of 13, when she worked at Eve's beauty parlour in Calcutta After that, Gina graduated to working with A.N John, before going on to work at Silhouette But a 'misunderstanding' with the management led to her walking out and setting up a salon in her house

Of course, all her clients followed her as well, and Gina was in business. Today, she runs her salon with the help of her two nieces and one other female employee, and is always inundated with customers, with most of whom she has a personal relationship. "I have always had a friendly relationship with all my clients," she says proudly "They even supply me with cosmetics and shampoos when they travel abroad."

But Gina doesn't agree with the view that women have started taking a greater interest in their hair these days "In the old days," she says wistfully, "women were so fastidious They used to go to balls and the race., and they would come to me to make them look more beautiful But youngsters today are so busy that they just want a short hair cut, or a perm which is so much in fashion these days '

Toppers

Though this salon lacks the five-star touch, it is very popular with college students and housewives on a tight budget, and has a fairly large client base. Angela Chu, the leading hairstylist here, however finds the work a little boring Chu, who began her career in Bombay, finds her customers in Calcutta a little lacking in the proper spirit of adventure. They are unwilling to experiment with novel styles, preferring the more conservative cuts.

But while wild and whacky styles are out, perming seems the order of the day at Toppers, with most customers preferring the frizzy look.

As for hair products, only Indian ones are on offer at Toppers And that's how it should be, insists Angela, because "Indian shampoos are as good as foreign ones, and sometimes even better "

DELHI

Silhouette

Regulars swear by this salon, situated at the Oberoi in Delhi Silhouette, which is one of the oldest salons in existence in Delhi today, is placed at the top end of the market, but it's pricing policy is competitive compared to some of the more recent entrants in the field

And even though some women

HAIR CARE

Tips to ensure the good health of your crowning glory

☛ Always ensure that your hair is clean. All those stories about the damage too much washing can do to the hair are just that: stories. Your hair will come to no harm if you wash it every alternate day, or even every morning as long as you use a good quality shampoo, and oil your hair regularly.

☛ Never use a shampoo-cum-conditioner. A shampoo and conditioner perform entirely different functions and can never be combined in the same product. So, beware of any product that says that it can do the work of both at the same time. Even if you end up spending a little extra, always buy a separate shampoo and conditioner.

☛ Go easy on the henna. It is a popular misconception that henna is a good conditioner. On the contrary, it can have quite a drying effect on the hair, and should be used only rarely and in conjunction with something oily like yoghurt.

There are some hairdressers who would advise you to give up on henna completely. According to them, henna forms a coating around your hair and prevents it from 'breathing'. And the lack of fresh air can damage hair all too easily.

☛ Trim your hair at least once every six weeks. This will ensure that you maintain the style that you

Mangal Kumar

The beaded look

may baulk at paying their prices, the salon does provide value for money. Silhouette, for instance, is probably the only beauty parlour in the city that uses sterilised combs and brushes

Says Mrs Prem Mehra, the proprietor of the Silhouette chain of beauty salons, "In the current scenario where the AIDS scare rules the roost, we can't be too careful. Besides our clients feel more secure in the knowledge that our equipment is safe."

Silhouette also offers a membership option to all its clients, who can then avail of a 10 per cent discount at all Silhouette salons (in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta) And since the bills here can amount to quite a tidy sum, even this measly 10 per cent seems worth it.

Club Olympus

Dubbed as the most expensive salon in the city, Club Olympus is situated at the Hyatt Regency Hotel But despite the steep prices, the salon is always crowded with clients asking for anything from a simple hair-cut to a complete makeover. So, you'd be best advised you go, or prepare to be disappointed

Because a major proportion of the clientele is foreign — some of whom are hotel guests — the salon uses a number of foreign products And as far as hair care is concerned, the most popular brand name is Wella, while those who swear by herbal products stick to Shahnaz Husain The procedure that most women seem to opt for is streaking and highlighting hair even though it can set them back by Rs 1,100 — and that doesn't include the 10 per cent tax that is added on to the bill.

But even if you just want to get your hair styled, Club Olympus is not a bad bet. The hairdressers are competent, and sufficiently clued in to give you a cut that is both trendy and suits your face, figure and lifstyle.

A new style from Habib's

Avinash Pasricha

Profile

This salon has a very soothing interior, done up as it is in soft pastel colours. The aquamarine blue, green and grey greet the client who enters, looking for a new look for herself. But even though every treatment under the sun is on offer here, what Profile, situated at New Delhi's Hilton, is most popular for is the wide variety of perms that it offers If you want the frizzy look, then you can choose between the

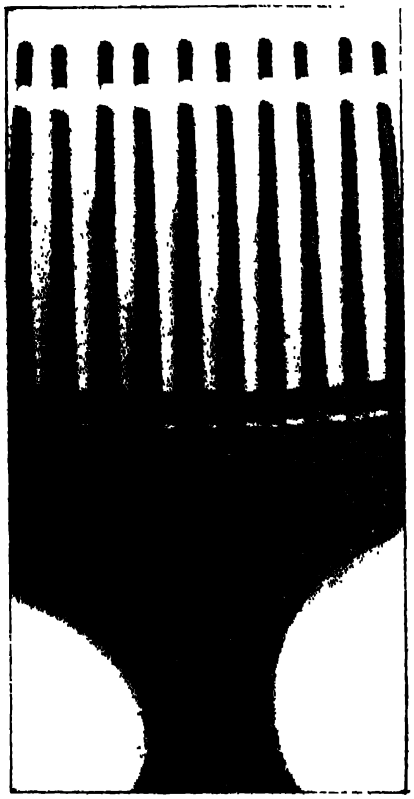
have gone in for, and also take care of split ends.

☛Give yourself an oil massage once a week and steam your hair thereafter to ensure that the oil goes down to the roots. Then, shampoo it clean, but never ever brush your hair when it is wet; that will only increase breakages. Use a wide-toothed comb to detangle it, and let it dry before you use a brush.

☛Avoid blow drying your hair too often as it can have a drying effect on your hair, and even weaken it at the roots. If your cut requires a blow dry occasionally then half dry your hair before beginning to style it as this will reduce the heat that your hair has to endure.

☛Change the hair products—both shampoos and conditioners—that you use every couple of months or so. Hair tends to develop a resistance to products if you use them too often, and their efficacy fades after a while. Also, it is necessary to change your shampoo once in a while if you want to avoid build-up, that is, the depositing of various ingredients (of the shampoo) on your hair over a period of time.

☛If you use herbal products, check them to make sure that no chemicals have been added to them. And remember what you put on hair isn't half as important as what you put inside your body. So, eat lots of green leafy vegetables and fruits, and drink lots of water if you want your hair to be your crowning glory.



Styling comb

Others who don't want such a drastic change in their appearance can content themselves with just putting highlights in their hair, as there are a good range of tones available here.

Among the celebrity clients who frequents the salon is the film actress Madhuri Dixit, on her trips to Delhi.

La Bella

The Meridien's beauty parlour is exceedingly popular with all Delhi ladies who spend a lot of time, attention and money on their hair. Located on the fourth floor of the hotel, La Bella is the only salon that can boast of natural light, and sprawls over one entire floor.

This salon, which is very popular with the age groups between 18-35, specialises in herbal oil treatments. There is also a special section which deals with such problems as dry hair and dandruff. But if you are satisfied with the quality of your hair and just want a good cut, then the best international styles are on offer here as well.

Rolf Lucke, a specialist from Wella Corp. has visited the salon to a tremen-

Ramesh Choudhury

ry was completely full for the eight days that he worked at the salon, as Delhi ladies poured into the salon to avail themselves of his services.

Bindiya

This is possibly the only beauty parlour in the city which gives you such a good view, in this case, the swimming pool of the Maurya Sheraton, where it is situated. The salon, which sports a completely new look these days, offers both state-of-the-art equipment and such imported products as Wella.

Bindiya also offers hair treatment with the help of Climazon, a machine where the heat is regulated through a computerised system. And according to the salon, once internal causes for hair loss have been controlled, the treatment for falling hair—carried out over five sessions—is gauranteed to completely control hair loss.

According to several doctors, one of causes of spondylitis in women, is the use of incorrect basins used for washing hair in salons. At Bindiya, however, you would use a hydraulic wash basin, which any orthopaedic surgeon would approve of. A narrow indentation in the basin supports the neck and prevents any incorrect stretching of the neck muscles.

The Taj Mahal Hotel

The beauty parlour at this hotel was closed for several months for renovation, but has now re-opened with a

Yasmeen at Touch of Joy

completely new look Now, in addition to the usual hair-cuts and cut-and-blow dry regimen, it also offers scalp consultancy, which can help you deal with such irritants as overall hair loss, loss of hair in patches, greying and split ends Among the products used are Wella, Pantene, Revlon and Astrol hair conditioner

The specialists at the salon go to the root of problem, asking you questions about your lifestyle, diet etc. And they also keep a proper record of every client, and what kind of treatment she has undergone, so that you can always go back even a couple of years later confident in the knowledge that your history will be on the files

At the Taj, you can also go in for temporary or party streaking: a semi-permanent colour that comes off after the first wash The salon also specialises in hair extensions, and is the first to offer hair weaving, which provides one with an alternative to wearing a wig For an Afro style, you would be advised to go in for bead weaving

Poonam, who manages the salon, also gives her clients recipes and encourages them to treat themselves at home rather than go through sessions and sittings at the salon, even though that would make the parlour less money But, as she explains, "We believe in building an image for ourselves, not just revenues"

Shahnaz Husain

Shahnaz salons specialise in hair care with herbal packs that include floral extracts and henna Scalp treatments are also available for dandruff and alopecia Also popular are hair packs, comprising a hair conditioner vegetables And then, there are the usual options of perming, crimping, streaking, tinting, natural hair streaking, hair art and hair extensions Shahnaz Husain also offers turban therapy, that has caught on of late

Natural hair streaking is among the more popular procedures because no chemicals are required for this treatment, and the hair can be highlighted with streaks of colour And if you want to increase the length of your hair, you can opt for hair extensions, going from shoulder-length to waist length in the space of an hour

Regulars at the salon include Vyjanthimala Bali, the Maharani of Jaipur, Padmini Devi, and television newsreader, Salma Sultan And a growing number of ambassadors' wives are beginning to patronise Shahnaz Husain

Hairstylists

Habib Ahmed was the man who was responsible for revolutionising the concept of hair care and styling in this country way back in the 70s His father, Nazir Ahmed, was the personal hair stylist to Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Habib himself picked up the nuances of hair styling from the Vidal Sassoon Institute and the Morris School of Hair Dressing. Today, he is armed with as many as 17 international diplomas and is also the recipient of the India International Gold Award 1995

These days, Habib's three sons, Jawed, Parvez and Amjad, work at his salon at the ITDC-run Lodhi Hotel or at Habib's Salon and Hair Academy in South Extension Habib's is not known for any kind of hair treatment, but many people frequent it because of its reputation Says Jawed, "We are known as stylists and people come to us expecting to be told what will look good on them People trust us explicitly"

In East of Kailash, a south Delhi colony, is a cosy corner occupied by maverick hair stylist, Sylvie The ambience is more friendly and home-like than five-star, and the hairdresser has a easy, friendly relationship with his clients, even sending them cards and flowers on their birthdays Not everyone professes themselves satisfied by the feather cuts and perms that Sylvie excells in, but he has his faithful list of clients

Among the other hair stylists who are much in demand in the city are Nancy, who runs The Salon at the Park Hotel And in the less expensive

bracket are Andre in the Defence Colony Market, and Barbara, which is run by a lady of the same name

BOMBAY

Silhouette

This is the Bombay branch of the chain, and is as popular as its counterparts in Calcutta and Delhi It is not quite as posh as the Delhi branch, though better equipped than its Calcutta equivalent, but its clients swear by it. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that everybody who is anybody in Bombay goes to Silhouette for all kinds of beauty treatment right from oil massages to facials

But it's hair which is the salon's special strength, and most clients swear by the stylists who work here, preferring to use their services rather than those of such visiting hairdressers as Martin

Men too can have more than a haircut

Touch Of Joy

Situated behind the Taj Mahal Hotel, this has its own list of regulars, most of whom swear by the skills of Yasmeen, the hairdresser in residence Yasmeen has her own ideas about hair care and the perfect style, though she often has to give in to the wishes of her clients who walk in and say that they would like to look exactly like Felicia Forrester in *The Bold and the Beautiful* or like Dimple Kapadia

According to Yasmeen, the style of the day is a shag cut which is cut long behind and short in front But she would advise everyone who has problem hair to go in for a short hair cut "But," she says, "if someone has lovely, thick hair that does not need too much maintenance, they would do well to wear it long " That, according to Yasmeen, is really a matter of individual preference than a question of following the trend.

At Touch of Joy, foreign products are much in evidence, because Yasmeen is not confident of the quality of Indian shampoos and the like She also finds the concept of a shampoo-cum-conditioner completely ridiculous, though most people in India tend to use it.

Nalini and Yasmin

Situated in the Bombay suburb of Bandra, this is very popular with film and television actresses and fashion models. Says Nalini, one of the two women who runs it, "When we started out in 1972, it was so difficult to get people to actually take an interest in their hair Most simply asked for a standard cut It took us ages to convince them that there were other styles that would also look wonderful on them. We would also have to tell a woman with curly hair that she could not, for instance, carry off a hair cut like the kind that Madhuri Dixit sports "

In fact, Nalini was even interviewed by Channel Four for a serial on Indian women because of the short hair cut that she gave Navneet Nishan who plays the lead role in the tele-serial, *Tara* Says Nalini today, "When Navneet came to me, she had long hair in three different colours I convinced her to cut it short and see how popular it has become. Amrita Singh too had long hair and it is only now that she has cut it, and see how well it works for her Even Madhu Sapre and Mehr Jesia sport short hair now and have become role models for Indian women."

Nalini doesn't like to use Indian products on the whole, but says that new brands like Pantene which have come on the market are good for the hair And she does her best to convince her clients that they should use shampoo, not soap, on their hair

Manya Kumar

Bead wearing at the Taj Mahal, Bombay

Reports from Anusuya Mandal in Calcutta; Samita Bhatia in Delhi and Vaishali Honawar in Bombay

Cover Photograph: Som Subhra Sarkar

EXTRACT

Paper TIGER

Keith Townsend creates waves as he takes over the family paper. Extracts from **Jeffrey Archer**'s *latest novel,* The Fourth Estate

Extracted from** The Fourth Estate **by Jeffrey Archer. Published by HarperCollins. Price £2.50

Townsend was back at the *Gazette* by seven the following morning. He took the lift to the second floor, and walked around the empty desks of the advertising and small ads department. Even with nobody around, he could sense the floor was inefficiently run. Papers were strewn all over desks, files had been left open, and several lights had obviously been burning all through the night. He began to realise just how long his father must have been away from the office.

The first employee strolled in at ten past nine.

"Who are you?" asked Townsend as she walked across the room.

"Ruth," she said. "And who are you?"

"I'm Keith Townsend."

"Oh, yes. Sir Graham's son," she said flatly, and walked over to her desk.

"Who runs this department?" asked Townsend.

"Mr Harris," she replied, sitting down and taking a compact out of her bag.

"And when can I expect to see him?"

"Oh, he usually gets in around nine-thirty, ten."

"Does he?" said Townsend. "And which is his office?" The young woman pointed across the floor to the far corner of the room.

Mr Harris appeared in his office at nine forty-seven, by which time Townsend had been through most of his files. "What the hell do you think you're doing?" were Harris's first words when he found Townsend sitting behind his desk, studying a sheaf of papers.

"Waiting for you," said Townsend. "I don't expect my advertising manager to be strolling in just before ten o'clock."

"Nobody who works for a newspaper starts work much before ten. Even the tea boy knows that," said Harris.

"When I was the tea boy on the *Daily Express*, Lord Beaverbrook was sitting at his desk by eight o'clock every morning."

"But I rarely get away before six in the evening," Harris protested.

"A decent journalist rarely gets home before eight, and the back bench staff should consider themselves lucky if they're away much before midnight. Starting

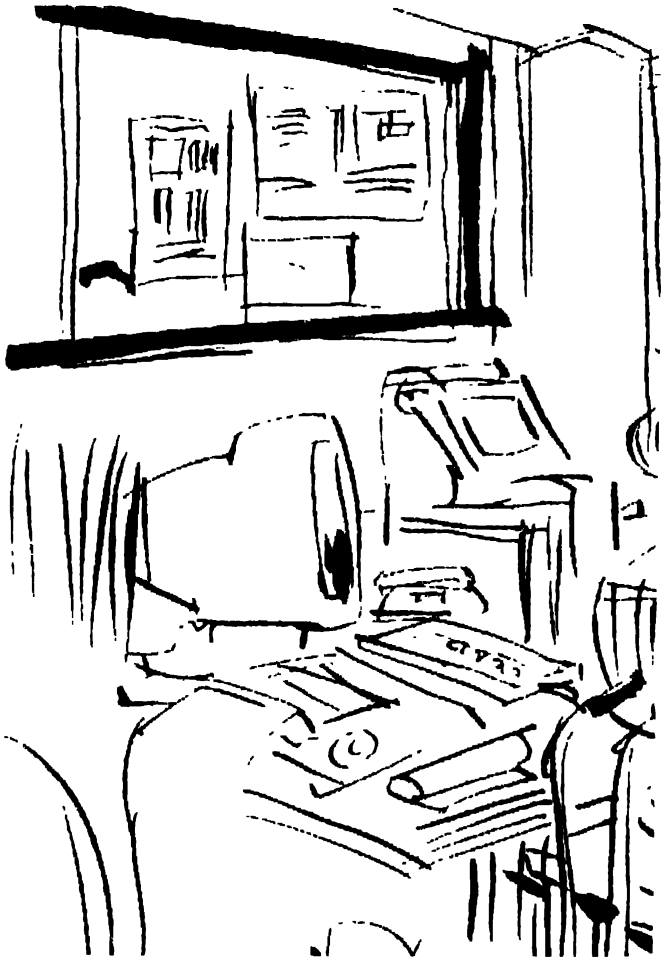


Illustration: Sucharita Gangopadhyay

tomorrow, you and I will meet in my office every morning at eight thirty, and the rest of your staff will be at their desk by nine. If anyone can't manage that, they can start studying the Situations Vacant column on the back page of the paper. Do I make myself clear?"

Harris pursed his lips and nodded.

"Good. The first thing I want from you is a budget for the next three months, with a clear breakdown of how our line prices compare with the *Messenger*. I want it on my desk by the time I come in tomorrow." He rose from Harris's chair.

"It may not be possible to have all those figures ready for you by this time tomorrow," protested Harris.

"In that case, you can start studying the Situations Vacant column as well," said Townsend. "But not in my time."

He strode out, leaving Harris shaking, and took the lift up one floor to the circulation department, where he wasn't surprised to encounter exactly the same *laissez faire* attitude. An hour later he left that department with more than one of them shaking, though he had to admit that a young man from Brisbane called Mel Carter, who had recently been appointed as the department's deputy manager, had impressed him.

Frank Bailey was surprised to see "young Keith" back in the office so soon, and even more surprised when he returned to his place on the window ledge for the morning conference. Bailey was relieved that Townsend didn't offer any opinions, but couldn't help noticing that he was continuously taking notes.

By the time Townsend reached his own office, it was eleven o'clock. He immediately set about going through his mail with Miss Bunting. She had laid it all out on his desk and in separate files with different-coloured markers, the purpose of which, she explained, was to make sure that he dealt with the real priorities when he was running short of time.

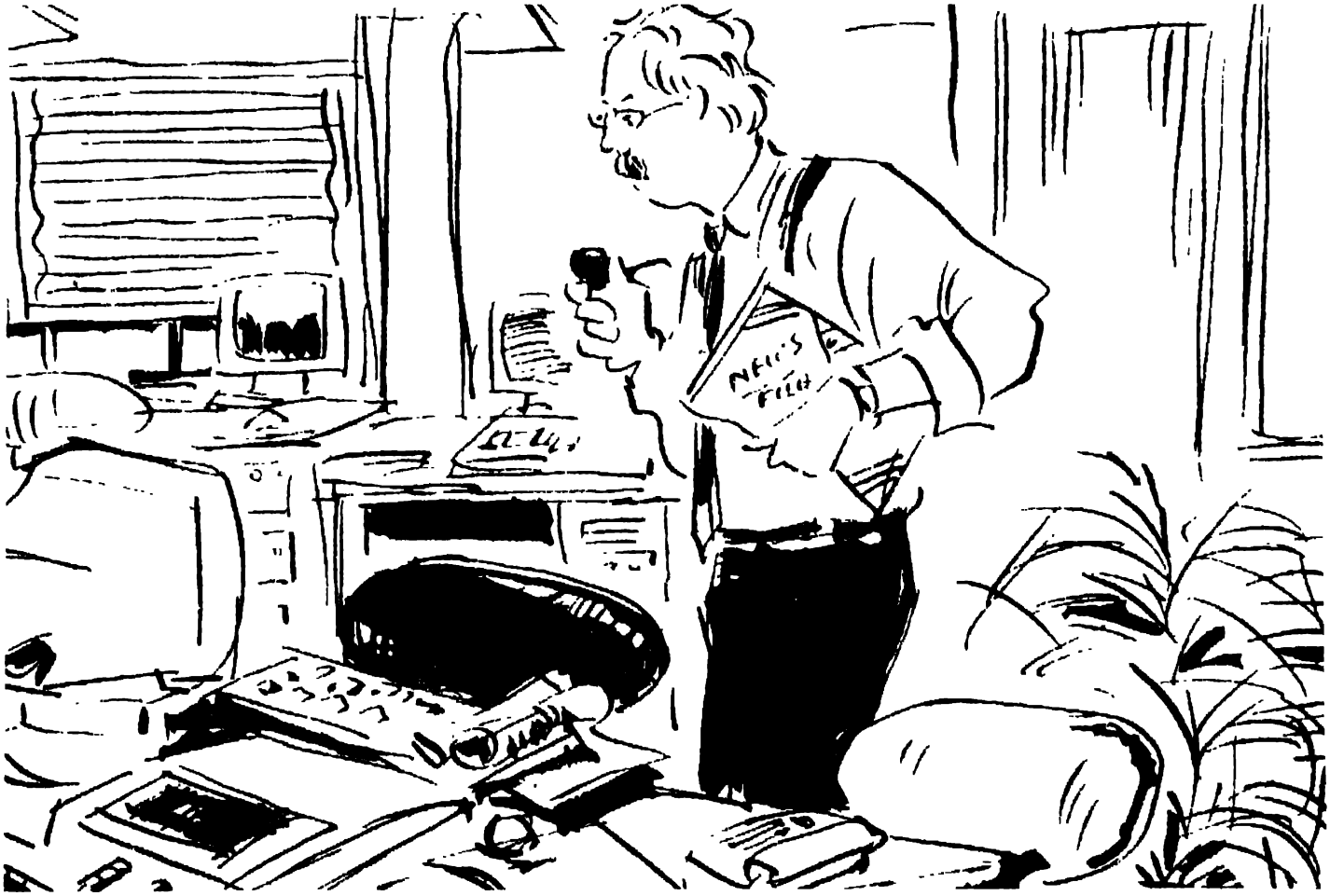
Two hours later, Townsend realised why his father had held 'Bunty' in such high regard, and was wondering not when he would replace her, but just how long she would be willing to stay on.

"I've left the most important matter until last," said Bunty. "The latest offer from the *Messenger*. Sir Colin Grant called earlier this morning to welcome you home and to make sure that you had received his letter."

"Did he?" said Townsend with a smile, as he flicked open the file marked 'Confidential' and skimmed through a letter from Jervis, Smith & Thomas, the lawyers who had represented the *Messenger* for as long as he could remember. He stopped when he came across the figure £150,000, and frowned. He then read the minutes of the previous month's board meeting, which clearly showed the director's complacent attitude to the bid. But that meeting had taken place before his mother had given him a ninety-day stay of execution.

"Dear Sir," dictated Townsend, as Bunty flicked over the next page of her shorthand pad. "I have received your letter of the twelfth inst. New paragraph. In order not to waste any more of your time, let me make it clear that the *Gazette* is not for sale, and never will be. Yours faithfully."

Townsend leaned back in his chair and recalled the last time he had met the chairman of the *Messenger*. Like many failed politicians, Sir Colin was pompous



and opinionated, particularly with the young. "The seen-and-not-heard brigade", was how he described children, if Townsend remembered correctly. He wondered how long it would be before he heard or saw him again.

Two days later, Townsend was studying Harris's advertising report when Bunty popped her head round the door to say that Sir Colin Grant was on the line. Townsend nodded and picked up the phone.

"Keith, my boy. Welcome home," the old man began. "I've just read your letter, and wondered if you were aware that I had a verbal agreement with your mother concerning the sale of the *Gazette*."

"My mother told you, Sir Colin, that she would be giving your offer her serious consideration. She made no verbal commitment, and anyone who suggests otherwise is..."

"Now, hold on, young fellow," interrupted Sir Colin. "I'm only acting in good faith. As you well know, your father and I were close friends."

"But my father is no longer with us, Sir Colin, so in future you will have to deal with me. And we are not close friends."

"Well, if that's your attitude, there seems no point in mentioning that I was going to increase my offer to £170,000."

"No point at all, Sir Colin, because I still wouldn't consider it."

"You will in time," barked the older man, "because, within six months, I'll run you off the streets, and then you'll be only too happy to take £50,000 for whatever remains of the bits and pieces." Sir Colin paused. "Feel free to call me when you change your mind."

Townsend put the phone down and asked Bunty to tell the editor that he wanted to see him immediately.

Mrs. Bunting hesitated.

"Is there some problem, Bunty?"

"Only that your father used to go down and see the editor in his office."

"Did he really?" said Townsend, remaining seated.

"I'll ask him to come up straight away."

Townsend turned to the back page, and studied the Flats to Rent column while he waited. He had already decided that the journey to Melbourne every weekend stole too many precious hours of his time. He wondered how long he'd be able to hold off telling his mother.

Frank Bailey stormed into his office a few minutes later, but Townsend couldn't see the expression on his face, his head remained down as he pretended to be absorbed in the back page. He circled a box, looked up at the editor and passed him a piece of paper. "I want you to print this letter from Jervis, Smith & Thomas on the front page tomorrow, Frank, and I'll have 300 words ready for the leader within the hour."

"But..," said Frank.

"And dig out the worst picture you can find of Sir Colin Grant and put it alongside the letter."

"But I'd planned to lead on the Taylor trial tomorrow," said the editor. "He's innocent, and we're known as a campaigning paper."

"We're also known as a paper that's losing money," said Townsend. "In any case, the Taylor trial was yesterday's news. You can devote as much space to him as you like, but tomorrow it won't be on the front page."

"Anything else?" asked Frank sarcastically.

"Yes," said Townsend calmly. "I expect to see the page one layout on my desk before I leave this evening."

Frank strode angrily out of the office, without uttering another word.

"Next I want to see the advertising manager," Townsend told Bunty when she reappeared. He opened the file Harris had delivered a day late, and stared down at the carelessly compiled figures. That meeting turned out to be even shorter than Frank's, and while Harris was clearing his desk,

Illustration: Sucrata Gargopadhyay

Townsend called for the deputy circulation manager, Mel Carter.

When the young man entered the room, the look on his face indicated that he too was expecting to be told that his desk should be cleared by the end of the morning.

"Have a seat, Mel," said Townsend. He looked down at his file. "I see you've recently joined us on a three month trial. Let me make it clear from the outset that I'm only interested in results. You've got 90 days, starting today, to prove yourself as advertising manager."

The young man looked surprised but relieved.

"So tell me," said Townsend, "if you could change one thing about the *Gazette*, what would it be?"

"The back page," said Mel without hesitation. "I'd move the small ads to an inside page."

"Why?" asked Townsend. "It's the page which generates our largest income, a little over £3,000 a day, if I remember correctly."

"I realise that," said Mel. "But the *Messenger* has recently put sport on the back page and taken another 10,000 readers away from us. They've worked out that you can put the small ads on any page, because people are far more interested in circulation figures than they are in positioning when they decide where to place an advertisement. I could give you a more detailed breakdown of the figures by six o'clock tonight if that would help convince you."

"It certainly would," said Townsend. "And if you have any other bright ideas, Mel, don't hesitate to share them with me. You'll find my door is always open."

It was a change for Townsend to see someone leaving his office with a smile on his face. He checked his watch as Bunty walked in.

"Time for you to be leaving for your lunch with the circulation manager of the *Messenger*."

"I wonder if I can afford it," said Townsend, checking his watch.

"Oh yes," she said. "Your father always thought the Caxton Grill very reasonable. It's Pilligrim's he considered extravagant, and he only ever took your mother there."

"It's not the price of the meal I'm worried about, Bunty. It's how much he'll demand if he agrees to leave the *Messenger* and join us."

Townsend waited for a week before he called for Frank Bailey and told him that the small ads would no longer be appearing on the back page.

"But the small ads have been on the back page for over 70 years," was the editor's first reaction.

"If that's true, I can't think of a better argument for moving them," said Townsend.

"But our readers don't like change."

"And the *Messenger*'s do?" said Townsend. "That's one of the many reasons they're selling far more copies than we are."

"Are you willing to sacrifice our long tradition simply to gain a few more readers?"

"I can see you've got the message at last," said Townsend, not blinking.

"But your mother assured me that..."

"My mother is not in charge of the day-to-day running of this paper. She gave me that responsibility," he didn't add, but only for 90 days.

The editor held his breath for a moment before he said calmly, "Are you hoping I'll resign?"

"Certainly not," said Townsend firmly. "But I am hoping you'll help me run a profitable newspaper."

He was surprised by the editor's next question.

"Can you hold the decision off for another two weeks?"

"Why?" asked Townsend.

"Because my sports editor isn't expected back from holiday until the end of the month."

"A sports editor who takes three weeks off in the middle of the cricket season probably wouldn't even notice if his desk had been replaced when he came back," snapped Townsend.

The sports editor handed in his resignation on the day he returned, which deprived Townsend of the pleasure of sacking him. Within hours he had appointed the 25-year-old cricket correspondent to take his place.

Frank Bailey came charging up to Townsend's room a few moments after he heard the news. "It's the editor's job to make appointments," he began, even before he had closed the door to Townsend's office.

"Not any longer, it isn't," said Townsend.

The two men stared at each other for some time before Frank tried again. "In any case, he's far too young to take on such a responsibility."

"He's three years older than I am," said Townsend.

Frank bit his lip. "May I remind you," he said, "that when you visited my office for the first time only four weeks ago, you assured me, and I quote, that 'I don't intend to be the sort of publisher who interferes with editorial decisions?'"

Townsend looked up from his desk and rediended slightly.

"I'm sorry, Frank," he said. "I lied." ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	0845	1 3
			IC 742	1010	4 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC 744	1205	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	1610	[illegible] 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	1555	2 6
AHMEDABAD					
MD [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 [illegible]	MD 143/306	2235	1 2 3 4 5 6
AIZAWL					
PF [illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 [illegible]	PF 302	1555	2 4 5
			PF 302	1630	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-732	[illegible]	1 3 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	1	IC 732	1530	4 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 [illegible]	IC 131	1000	1 2 3 4 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 161	1430	6
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	1145	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 512	2150	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 3 4 5 [illegible]	MD 440/302	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	1630	1
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	1025	3 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	52 025	0610	1 2 3 4 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0820	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0925	1
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 [illegible] 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	1935	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2040	daily
			[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 6	[illegible]	1630	1 2 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 3
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1625	2 4 6
DIMAPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 207	1530	4 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DS-405/30	[illegible]	[illegible] 4 5
GOA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
GUWAHATI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	DS 602	2015	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 204	1020	2 6
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 704	1805	[illegible] 2 5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 512	1110	daily
			PF 302	1500	[illegible] 5
			IC [illegible]	1310	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1635	2 4 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 7	[illegible]	1635	1 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD [illegible]	1610	3 [illegible] 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MD 323	1610	1 4
HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	2115	3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	4 6	[illegible]	2120	2 4 6
VF 106	1240	1	VF 105	1700	1
9W-511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 256	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
JAIPUR					
52 026/027	0850	1 2 4 5	52 028/005	2005	1 2 4 5 7
JORHAT					
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC-257	1550	4 7
KHARAGPUR					
PF 301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
52 026/[illegible]	0650	1 2 3 4 5	52 01[illegible]/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5 7
MADRAS					
IC-402	0530	1	DS 401	1630	[illegible]
IC-542	1015	[illegible] 4 5 6	IC-541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
IC 544	1115	3 7	IC 543	1035	[illegible] 7
DS 172	1640	daily	DS 173	[illegible]	5
			DS 174	1155	1 2 3 4 5 7
IC 765	1730	daily	IC 766	[illegible]	daily
MUMBAI					
IC 676	0730	daily	IC 675	0930	daily
9W 292	0715	1 3 [illegible] 6 7	9W-291	0920	1 3 [illegible] 5 6
DS 102	0630	daily	DS 103	0650	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	IC 108	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 212	1940	daily	[illegible]	1905	daily
A 109	[illegible]	6	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
MD 305	0640	1 2 3 4 6	MD 306	[illegible]	1 2 3 [illegible] 6
MD 307	1700	daily	MD 308	[illegible]	daily
D2 104	2005	daily	D2-103	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	[illegible]	2 4 6
PATNA					
DS-406	1330	2 5	DS 405	[illegible]	4 5
IC-812	1625	1 3 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
IC 249	1445	2 6	IC 248	1820	6
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0640	1 3 5	IC 286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC-249	1445	[illegible]	IC-240	1800	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 256	0915	[illegible] 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 253	0700	2 4 6	IC 254	0940	2 4 5
MD 325	1240	1 4	MD 326	1610	1 4
MD-323	1230	6	MD 323	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
DS 406	1330	3	DS 405	1835	3
MD 304,111	0850	daily	MD 112/301	1935	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
DS 402	0700	4	DS 401	1640	3

FLIGHTS

AMMAN					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	FJ 164	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	7	[illegible]	0130	7
BANGKOK					
KB 105	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB-106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0655	2 5	TG 313	1240	1 3 6
IC 731	1105	1 3	IC 732	1730	1 3
IC 955	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4 7
TG-314	1355	1 3 6	IC 732	1505	2 5
AI 306	1410	5	AI 305	1825	6
BRUNEI					
RO 076	2130	5 7	RO 075	1100	5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DHAKA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DOHA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DUBAI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
LONDON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MOSCOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PARO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toolan Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Lal Quila Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express via SRC Loop	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
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[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
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[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

ENQUIRIES. For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains: 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations) Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 – April 20

Ganesha says focus on the homefront: renovation, decoration, parents, inlaws, painting, refurbishing and a home away from home. Paradoxically, you have the energy and the talent for a tremendous burst of creativity, thanks to the sun Venus conjunction on June 10. You could well be a roving ambassador of goodwill.

Taurus
April 21 – May 20

Buying, selling and shopping makes this a hectic week for you. Those in business and profession will go all out for profit and gains. Property, pleasure, comfort, luxuries, family value, loans, funding, investing and taking care of strictly personal relationships such as marriage and friendship are the other facets this week.

Gemini
May 21 – June 20

As your planetary symbol Mercury conjuncts Mars giving you the power of a thousand suns. Now is the time to wish with all you have and remember the next week is even better. Good humour and family should figure prominently this week. Parties, picnics, get together, compacts, ties, short, give and take.

Cancer
June 21 – July 20

You will be in the limelight of publicity and events, wedding bell could peal, marriage is not ruled out, overwhelming ambition could blind you to the [illegible] would so try to be considerate to others [illegible] keep all that [illegible] jump for [illegible] and an undercurrent of [illegible] possible.

Leo
July 21 – August 21

Nothing less than a resurgence of spirit and an attempt at understanding the spiritual are the issues for you. A job switch, bonus, perks, promotion, a new high in status and position are the probabilities for Leons. Now is the time for contacts, love and laughter. Time also to join the social whirligig.

Virgo
August 22 – September 22

Your troubles will burst like bubbles, you move at laser speed, your shackles burst free, your imagination flares art and invention and your heart beats to a distant drum. In your work, be it business or profession, you do score well. Now is the time to push ahead with confidence and courage and make your mark.

Libra
September 23 – October 22

You will taste and delight in the fruit of life, be it romance, friendship, cosy comforts of the home, renovation and decoration, travel, tours, collaborations and ceremonies. It would be a very good idea to travel for favours this week and the next. Ganesha also says travel and communication will be fruitful.

Scorpio
October 23 – November 22

A crash course, research, concentration, meditation, loans, funds and investments are what the week is all about. The next six months also favour an official engagement or a marriage. Overseas connections will be exceptionally strong. Financial hassles and sight ill health are more than likely. Travel tours in the cards.

Sagittarius
November 23 – December 20

Legal issues and hassles are likely now, but these should end on a happy note and that's what really matters. Plenty of action to keep you mighty busy as people will either love or hate you and it could tell upon your health. The home and office frontiers will be fully activated and that means burning the candle at both ends.

Capricorn
December 21 – January 19

A lot of effort and organisation will go into making a better, more efficient, human and considerate you. It is maturity time, because Mercury will be connecting superbly with your main planet, Saturn on June 19. Saturn solidifies, consolidates, makes whole and permanent that which needs fixing.

Aquarius
January 20 – February 18

Matters to do with job hops, loaning, funding, borrowing, hiring or firing of staff, working overtime and looking after children, parents, inlaws, taking a journey with a stopover are the extensive areas you will now cover. It is a quantum leap forward. The fact is, you will still have the time for relax and have fun.

Pisces
February 19 – March 20

Children, pregnancy, adoption, hobbies, governmental connections, a home away from home, property, renovation, decoration, possible house or office move, are the matters with which you will be involved this week. Obviously, you will hardly have a moment to yourself, therefore treasure your leisure.

BIRTHDAYS

June 9: Moon trine Pluto makes you willing and capable of taking important decisions as well as big risks. It is payoff time and you should do well in business.

June 10: Sun conjunction Venus is an excellent conjunction for writers, teachers, astrologers, salesmen, tailors, hairdressers, journalists and film and TV folks.

June 11: Mercury trine Neptune means you will have the inspiration and the quick sense so necessary to find your way among obstacles. Don't push too hard.

June 12: Moon trine Jupiter is a good trine for lawyers, spiritual leaders, politicians, public figures and industrialists. But expenses could be heavy. Marriage is on the cards for the eligible.

June 13: Moon trine Neptune is an excellent combination for those who are very creative and inspirational. It favours moneymaking and a comfortable life for artists and researchers.

June 14: Mercury Mars opposition Pluto means all may not be as happy and wonderful as it sounds. Be practical. You will have the energy to go ahead.

June 15: Mercury conjunction Mars shows that it is a winning situation for those who live by the intellect. Given this fact, it is up to you to make the most of it.

JUNIOR WHIRL

FIND TWINS! Two of these fair damsels look enough alike to be twins. Which two? Study details carefully to decide.

SAY WHAT! There's a 13-letter word expressing little point or purpose that contains the same consonant (S) six times, another consonant (N) twice, another (L) once, and the same vowel (E) four times. What word?

Usable word: nonsensicalness

PAIR GAME! Many words sound alike but are spelled differently. Examples: Hey/hay, soar/sore; wear/where, etc. Let's see how quickly you can supply missing letters in the diagram at right to soundalike words for the following:

1		O	N	
2	F	A		R
3	H	E		R
4	W	A		S	T
5		R	I	T	

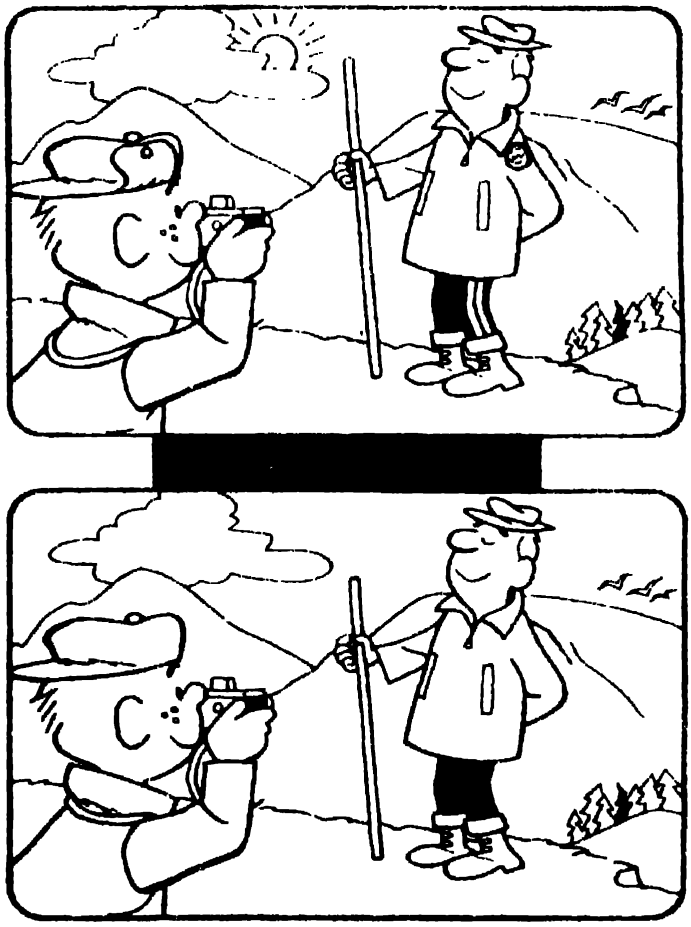
1. One 2. Fare 3. Here 4. Waste 5. Right (or rite).

It shouldn't take more than 30 seconds.

Just for fun, see if you can list 10 more soundalike words.

Example: Ian, Ihere, Ivaste, Write

HOCUS-FOCUS



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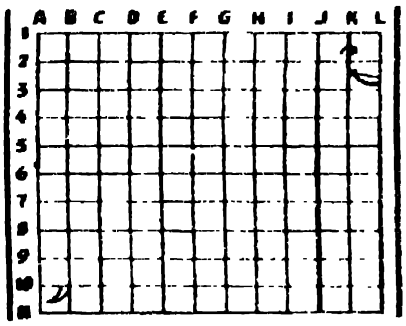
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Sun is missing. 2. Ear flap is missing. 3. Camera cord is shorter. 4. Stick is shorter. 5. Arm patch is missing. 6. Stripe is missing.



SPRING INKLING DRAWING CARD

LET'S hear it for spring from a venerable creature whose outline is concealed in the drawing card shown at left.

To bring this figure into view, simply draw lines in accord with the following letter-number coordinates. A sharp pencil will be of help!

Begin at A-10, draw to C-5, F-4, I-4, E-8, B-10, A-10.

Begin again, this time at B-10, draw to C-11, D-11, C-10, F-11, F-11, D-9, F-8, H-10, I-10, G-8, H-6, J-8, J-9, K-9, K-8, I-5, K-3, L-3, L-1, J-1, J-2, H-4.

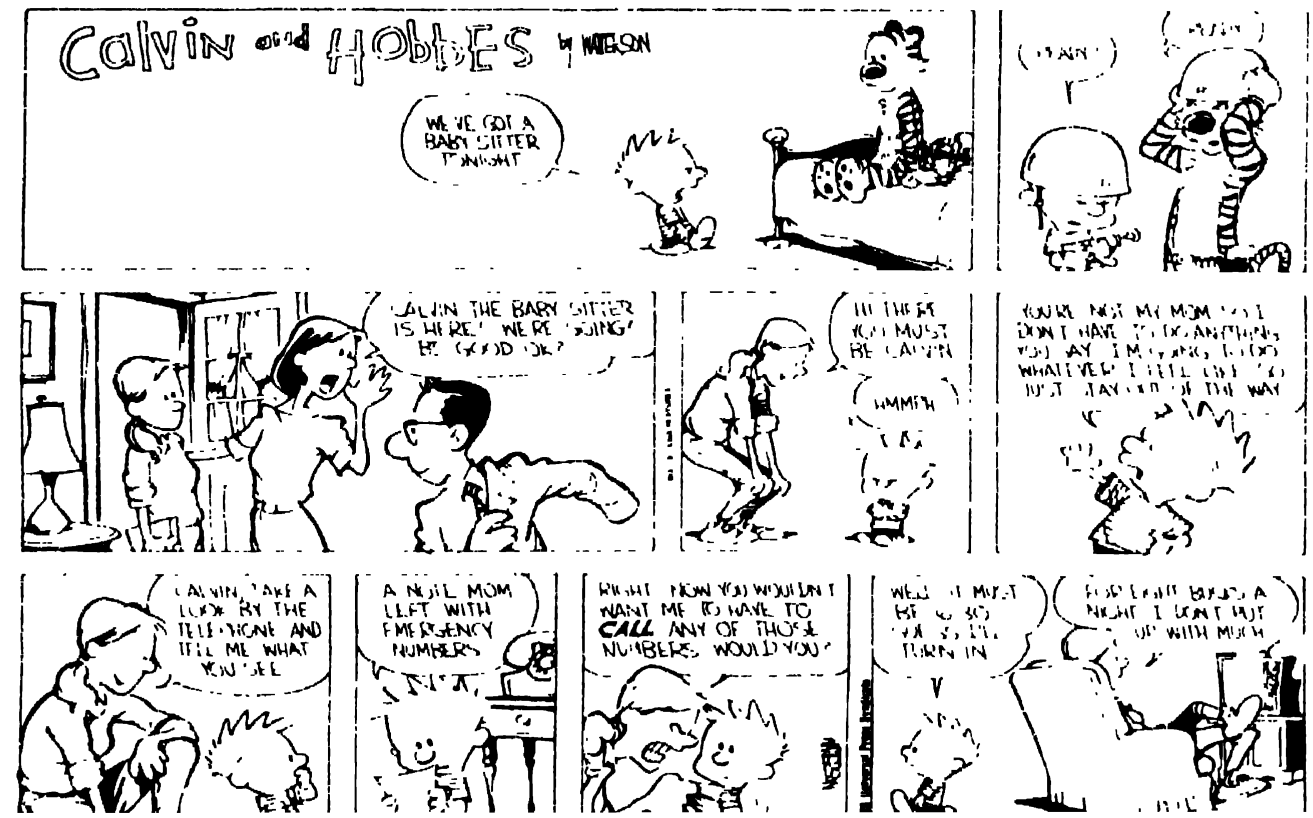
What is it you've drawn?

"Tis a creature whose voice is heard in the land."

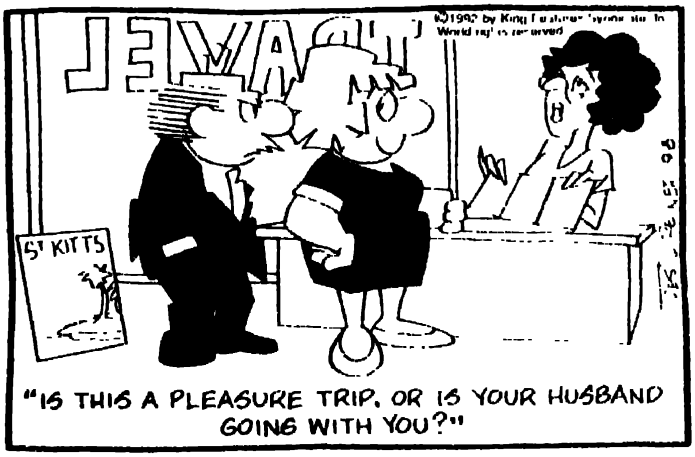
Spring

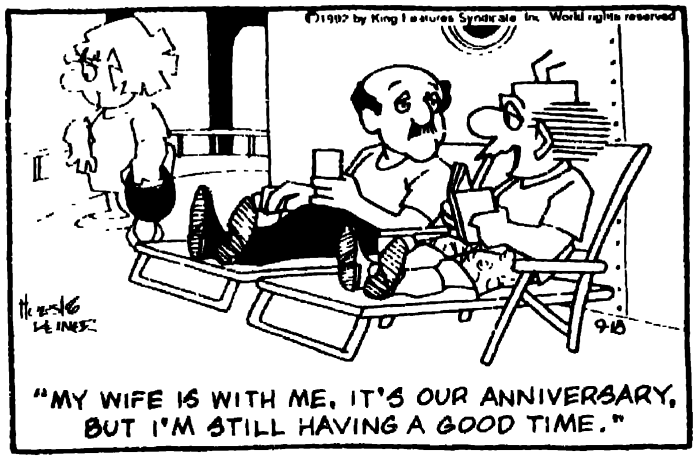
ARCHIE

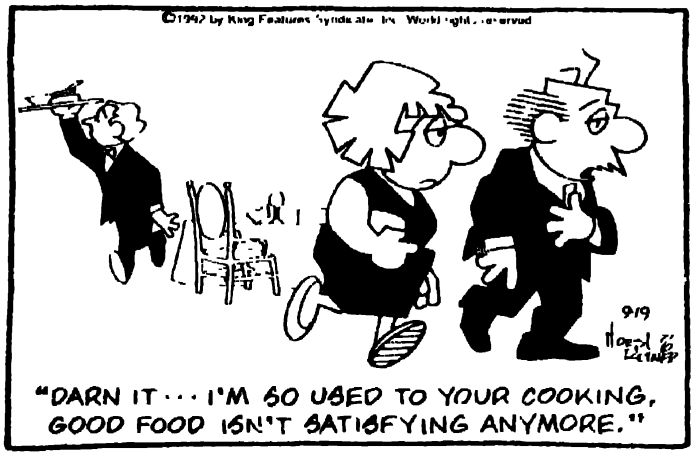
HENRY SCARPELLI CRAIG BOLDMAN
Archie
THAT GIRL HOLLY SEEMS PRETTY GREAT!
FORGET IT! SHE'S NOT YOUR TYPE!
WHAT TYPE IS THAT?
THE TYPE THAT WOULD GIVE YOU A SECOND GLANCE!
WHAT? YOU HAVEN'T APPROACHED HOLLY YET?
I HEAR SHE'S GOT A HANG UP ABOUT FRECKLES!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA USE THIS STUFF?!
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR MONEY BACK! "MUST BE GOOD SLOP!"
CASHIER
Le Blanc FADE CREAM
DON'T USE TOO MUCH! YOUR HEAD MIGHT VANISH!
IT TINGLES!
THE SPOT REMOVER WORKED!
YEAH YOU'VE GOT AN EVEN BLANKER EXPRESSION THAN USUAL!
I ADMIT, MY THING ABOUT FRECKLES IS SILLY! I ONLY GO FOR GUYS WHO HAVE LOTS OF THEM.
CRACKPOT LETTER?
WANTS A REFUND BECAUSE THE PRODUCT WORKS TOO WELL!
Le Blanc Inc
HENRY SCARPELLI CRAIG BOLDMAN
6-2


Calvin and Hobbes by WATTERSON
WE'VE GOT A BABY SITTER TONIGHT
CALVIN THE BABY SITTER IS HERE! WE'RE GOING! BE GOOD OK?
HI THERE YOU MUST BE CALVIN
HMMPH
YOU'RE NOT MY MOM SO I DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING YOU SAY. I'M GOING TO DO WHATEVER I FEEL LIKE. SO JUST STAY OUT OF THE WAY
CALVIN, TAKE A LOOK BY THE TELEPHONE AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE
A NOTE MOM LEFT WITH EMERGENCY NUMBERS
RIGHT NOW YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO HAVE TO CALL ANY OF THOSE NUMBERS WOULD YOU?
WELL IT MUST BE 6:30 SO I'LL TURN IN
FOR EIGHT BUCKS A NIGHT I DON'T PUT UP WITH MUCH

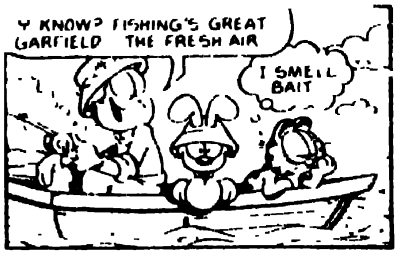
THE LOCKHORNS

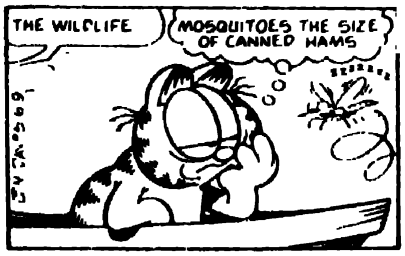


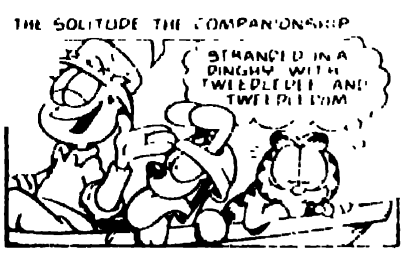


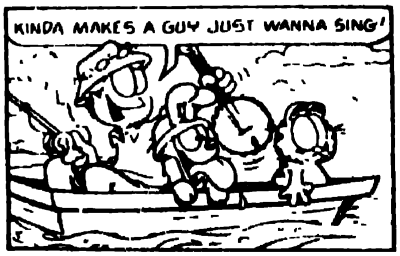


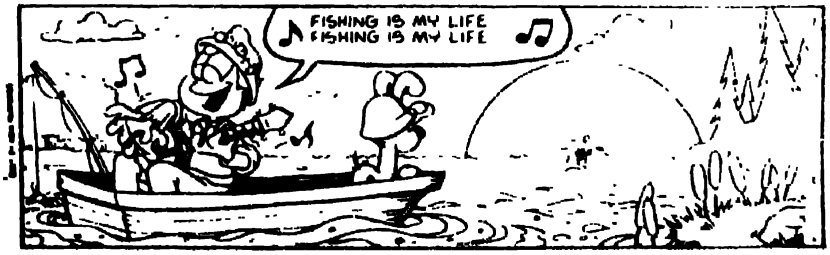
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



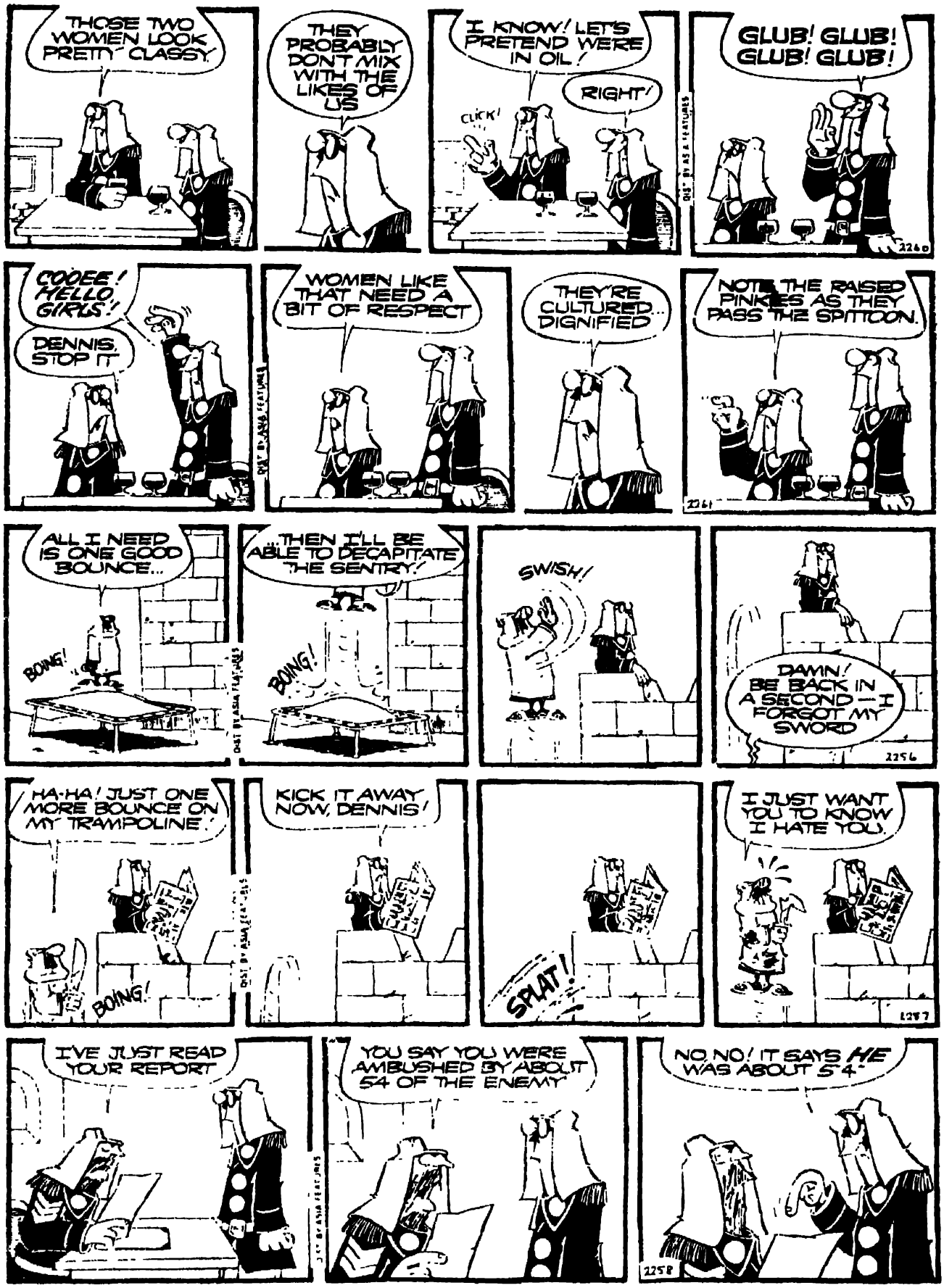


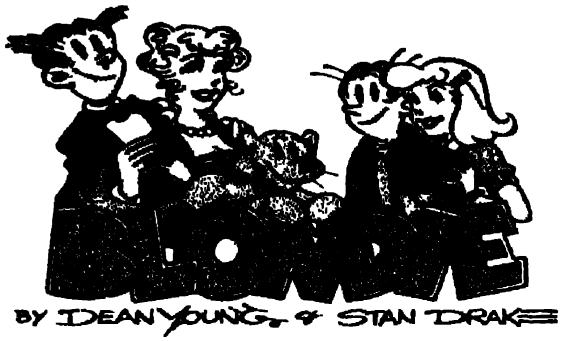




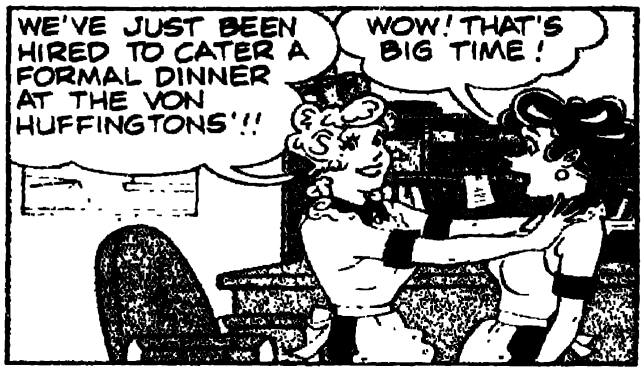


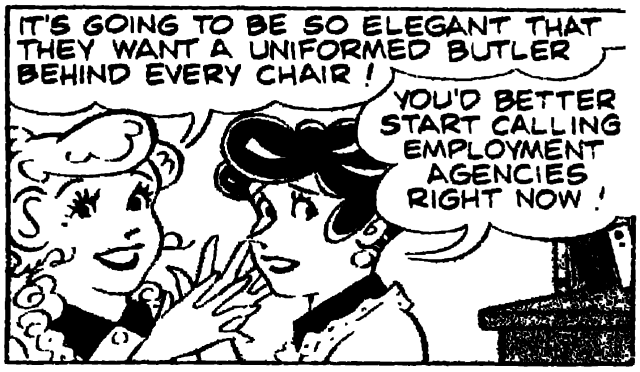
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

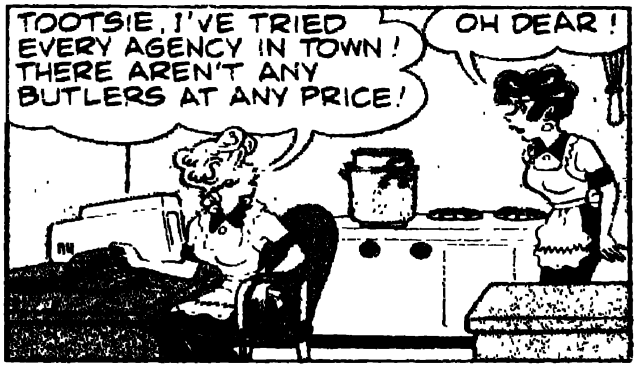



BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

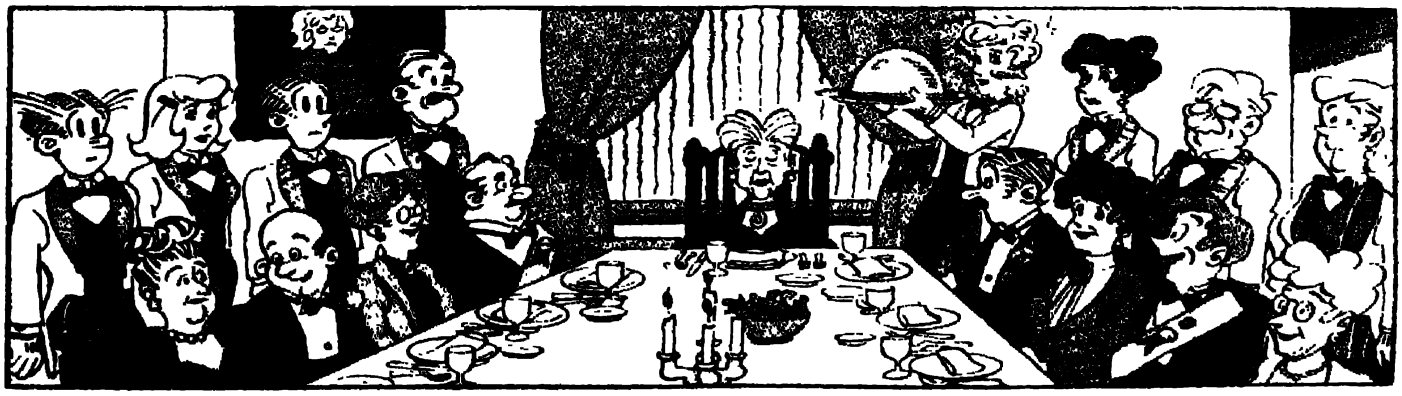
TOOTSIE! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE IT!!
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WHAT?


WE'VE JUST BEEN HIRED TO CATER A FORMAL DINNER AT THE VON HUFFINGTONS'!!
WOW! THAT'S BIG TIME!


IT'S GOING TO BE SO ELEGANT THAT THEY WANT A UNIFORMED BUTLER BEHIND EVERY CHAIR!
YOU'D BETTER START CALLING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES RIGHT NOW!


TOOTSIE, I'VE TRIED EVERY AGENCY IN TOWN! THERE AREN'T ANY BUTLERS AT ANY PRICE!
OH DEAR!

DON'T WORRY BLONDIE, WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! I KNOW WE WILL!
2-25
YOUNG & DRAKE



Kamalahasan as an old man in *Indian*

THE OTHER KAMALAHASAN

We all know him as an actor, but he's enjoyed some success as a producer as well. ***Sudha G. Tilak*** *profiles the man behind* Indian

For Hindi film audiences, Kamalahasan will always be the young south Indian lover who captured Rati Agnihotri's heart in *Ek Duje Ke Liye*. Others may remember him as the dwarf in *Apoorva Sahodharigal*. And yet others may see in him shades of the underworld don, Vardarajan Mudaliar, whom he portrayed with such conviction in *Nayakan*.

But there is another persona of Kamalahasan's that not too many people are familiar with: that of producer. Not that you can blame them. Kamal's stint as producer hasn't exactly been unblemished.

The first film to be produced under the Rajkamal banner was *Kajaparvai*, in 1989. This was followed by *Vikram*, a racy James Bond-style caper which bombed at the box-office despite having a good storyline and Bollywood glamour in the shape of Dimple Kapadia. After that, the Rajkamal banner produced 11 movies, all of which did indifferent business.

But those who had written off Kamal as a producer had to think again when three of his films, *Magalir Mattum*, *Sadhi Leelavathi* and *Kurudhi Punal* broke a long-standing jinx at the box-office. All three ran for over 100 days, no mean feat in an industry that's facing massive losses. And now, of course, there is *Indian*, to buttress Kamal's reputation both as an actor and producer.

Both *Magalir Mattum* (Ladies' Special, an Indianised version of *Nine to Five*) and *Sadhi Leelavathi* (again a take-off on *She Devil*) are comic capers with a message which struck a chord with the audiences with their unusual characters and racy storylines. *Kurudhi Punal* was a serious psycho drama that won critical acclaim despite doing only moderate business.

Says Rohini, who acted in *Magalir Mattum*, "Acting in such meaningful movies comes as a contrast from the run of the mill flicks that are dime a dozen".

C. Mohan, script writer and theatre person who worked in all

these movies, is all praise for Kamalahasan. "Kamal as a producer is concerned about everything in the script," he says "His zeal for perfection has contributed for the success for these films"

With all the three films Kamal has also proved a point That in film land you don't have to make big-budget movies and throw in a half-a-dozen song-and-dance sequences to rake in the booty A good storyline, a shoe-string budget and oodles of talent and acting can also result in an overflowing coffer

Sitting pretty in his office, Kamal deals with his success in the most low-key of manners "I don't feel like flaunting my success," he says soberly, "but each production is dealt with fear"

That is perhaps one reason why his magnum opus, the Rs 5 crore-plus project *Marudhanayakam*, a period film of the 10th century, has been on hold for the last five years. In addition to like minded friends, Kamal has "borrowed" yet another teammate for his production house wife Sarika, who has been looking after his costumes as well as the sound recording "I would rather that she take care of my growing daughters," says Kamalahasan, "but I'm selfish so I borrow her talent for my production too"

But then, Sarika has always played a major part in every project of Kamal's Cinematographer and director P C Sriram had roped in Sarika as his assistant director for *Kurudhi Punal* And she also pitches in with gathering research material for Kamal's films

Kamalahasan has come a long way from the time when he used to skip high school to take lessons in Bharatanatyam and music. A lawyer's son from conservative Srirangam in Tamil Nadu, Kamal was quite the young rebel, doing all the things that his family most hated

And while the rest of the family turned to such respectable professions as the law, Kamal became proficient in Kathak and Kuchipudi, and began touring with his own dance troupe.

His first initiation into films was as a dance director to the hip-swinging starlets of yester-year. This was followed by a stint behind the camera as assistant director Says Kamal today, "I became a star by accident I really wanted to be a film

BEHIND THE MASK

Will the real Kamalahasan please stand up?

Nobody gave Kamalahasan a second look when he entered the crowded hotel. But then, who could blame them? The actor looked nothing like himself, in his ageing make-up and a dhoti-kurta rather than the natty casuals he usually sports. Kamalahasan's disguise as and in *Indian* had fooled everyone.

That, at least, is the story circulating in film circles in Madras But once you've watched Kamal's transformation in the movie, it is easy to believe that this is not just promo talk The actor has, in fact, been transformed beyond recognition with make-up. And, as R Sundara Murthy, a senior make-up artiste, says, "Make-up can carry an entire movie on its shoulders and this effort calls for appreciation "

For someone who looks as good as Kamalahasan does, he sure spends a lot of time and effort trying to look ugly. But the actor doesn't agree "Not really," he says "I just want to look as ugly or as good as the average person on the street "

But in an effort to look all of 70 years old in *Indian*, Kamal took four hours to get his make-up done

What's more, he imported American make-up expert, Michael Wessmore, to give him a creased forehead, wrinkled throat, puckered mouth and aged skin. But now that the applause is rolling in, Kamalahasan feels that the crick in the neck was worth it

In fact, so fascinated is Kamal by make-up tricks and disguise that he makes it a point to pick up make-up techniques and tips each time he holidays abroad with his family. He has to peep into a Hollywood studio to steal a few ideas. And back home he has founded his make-up laboratory, Dravidian Cosmetics, and came up with prosthetic make-up which makes blood look real and skin look wrinkled This is what helped give him a jelly belly, pug nose, hairy ears and buck teeth in *Indran Chandran*, a bald patch in *Nayakan*, a sooty face with a double head in *Guna*, and to cut himself down to size in *Apoorva Sahodhargal*, a trick he still keeps his lips sealed about A star, says Kamal, "must break the monotony of playing his own self in every other movie". And disguise and make-up give Kamal, as well as the audience, a break from his own looks.

Kamalahasan in *Kurudhi Punal*: The much acclaimed psycho drama

maker."

Acting in K. Balachander's movies changed all that, and slowly Kamal the actor began to take shape. And today, two national awards and a large number of Filmfare trophies adorn his display racks, bearing testimony to his undeniable talent.

Kamalahasan's greatest asset as an actor is, perhaps, the fact that he prefers iconoclasm to type-casting. Thus, even when he was in his early twenties— when good looks are the most important consideration for a hero—Kamal turned into a dribbling, lisping cripple in *Padinaaru Vayadhinile*, which was later remade in Hindi. He played a blood-thirsty and crude psychopath in *Sigappu Rojakkal*, which was remade in Hindi as *Red Rose*. And despite being part of an industry where loud theatrics and song and dance rigmaroles are the order of the day, Kamal tempted fate by making *Pushpak*, a silent film.

That's not the only way in which Kamalahasan is extraordinary. Even though in Tamil Nadu politics is the next stop after stardom, Kamal has steered clear of this arena. He may present a congratulatory bouquet to Tamil Nadu chief minister, M Karunanidhi, but that's as far as it goes

Beyond that, Kamal shuns politics, and keeps his political views, such as they are—to himself. Quite a contrast to Rajanikanth, who was instrumental in bringing the Jayalalitha government down

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Reviewing Indian, *in which Kamalahasan plays both father and son*

Manisha Koirala with Kamalahasan in *Indian*

In the final analysis, Indian is the story of one man's struggle against corruption. As Senathypathy, Kamalahasan is an active participant in the freedom struggle, joining Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army (INA) to fight for his country. He returns home to marry a woman who was also intensely involved in the freedom movement.

But time does not treat either Senathypathy or his country well. As the Nineties dawn, he finds his

Kamal has his share of detractors, though. Directors who have worked with him complain that he interferes too much "One wonders who is calling the shots with him around," cribs one young director, who had Kamal for his hero in one film. And many south Indian actresses who have worked with him have grumbled about his "overbearing attitude during scenes".

Kamalahasan with Shekhar Kapur and Shankar, director of *Indian*, celebrating his third success as a producer

While it is true that Kamalahasan often gets so involved with his movies that he rubs people up the wrong way, there is no denying that most actors and actresses would give an arm and a leg to work with him Says Manisha Koirala, his co-star in *Indian*, "I've been a fan of his since childhood, and couldn't refuse acting with him." Urmila Matondkar agrees, "Working with him is learning things anew"

But whatever the idiosyncrasies of his personal style, everybody agrees that Kamal works bloody hard on his movies. Such is his attention to detail that he even computerises his scripts during the planning stage of a project. He

honest self an anachronism in a society in which bribery and corruption was endemic. The stress and the anguish of this pushes Senathypathy over the edge, and he begins stalking a hoard of government officials from collectors to district officers to 'weed' them out.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Senathypathy's corrupt son, Chandra Bose, who works as a brake inspector at the government traffic office, and spends his free time flirting with the two nubile nymphets played by Manisha Koirala and Urmila Matondkar.

Both these characters are played by Kamal, and the tension between the two makes for some fine moments in the movie.

Histrionics apart, *Indian* is especially commendable for its technical virtuosity. Kamalahasan even manages to do a *Forrest Gump* in the sequence in which he is shown shaking hands with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose (just as Tom Hanks did with Jack Kennedy), with the help of some computer imaging.

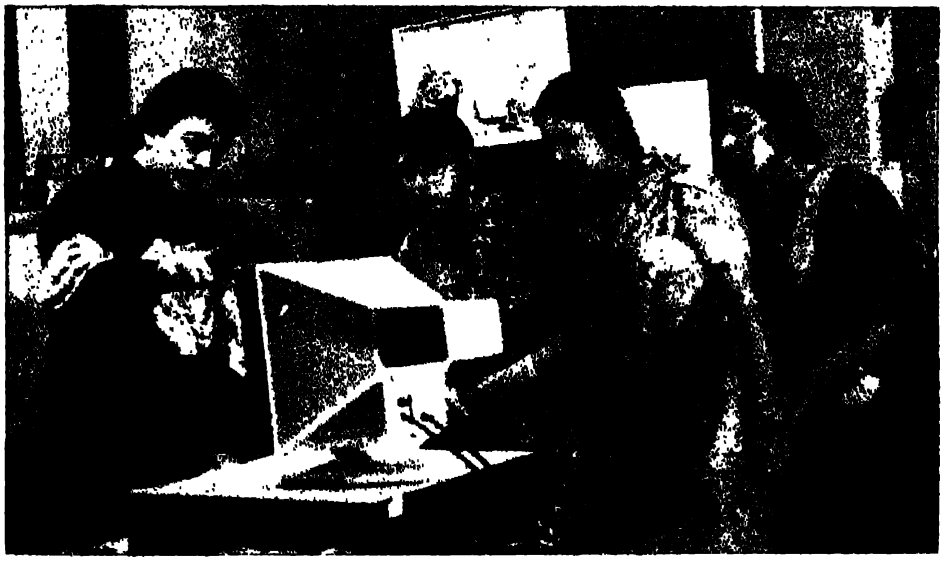
Within the framework of a commercial potboiler, director Shankar has managed to weave in a powerful social theme, and much computer wizardry to keep the front-bencher happy. For the most discerning viewer, of course, there is Kamalahasan's brilliant performance as both freedom fighter and worthless son.

Kamalahasan in *Guna:* Playing a schizophrenic character

decides on his actors and actresses well in time, and refuses to settle for second-best even if he has "to wait for a certain heroine's dates because she is right for the role."

For the future, Kamal has a period film in the works, as well as two other projects in collaboration with ad film maker Shantanu Sheorey and Singitham Sreenivasa Rao respectively. Despite his success in Hindi movies, Kamalahasan has decided to steer clear of them and concentrate on regional Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu cinema, where he gets to experiment more.

With Revathi. Urvashi and Rohini in *Magalir Mattum*



"Bombay is cosmopolitan but it has lost its enthnicity," he says when asked to explain his decision "This will reflect in most films". According to Kamal, every film needs to be rooted in a certain milieu to have meaning. That's why, he says "I can see *Pather Panchali* a film made many years ago and still clearly understand its meaning".

His production successes don't mean that acting has taken a backseat."I won't throw away potential stardom in favour of the other skills I know", says Kamal And with more movies on the floor and production ideas in the offing the star from the south is all set to reach for success, but only on his own terms. ■

FIRST PERSON

AJEET CAUR, acclaimed as one of the finest short story writers of Punjabi literature in post-independence India, this Sahitya Akademi awardee has published several short story collections and novelettes which include Gulbano, Mehak di Maut, *and* Post Mortem. *She has been editing a monthly journal,* Rupee Trade, *for the past 31 years. Besides the Sahitya Akademi, she has also received Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad and the International Iata award among many others. Last year, she set up the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature in Delhi. But what she is most proud of is her well known daughter, artist Arpana Caur.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

'Perfect Happiness' is an illusion. The whole world is in pursuit of this illusive mirage.

What is your greatest fear?

Pain, physical or mental, of the person I love most: my daughter Arpana.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

I was not fortunate enough to have any 'influence' because then life becomes easy, you get ready-made role models. I learnt it all the hard way, travelling on my own bare feet.

What do you dislike most in others?

Deceit, because I am a very trusting person. Also, lies and lack of integrity.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

Whenever I inadvertently or unknowingly hurt anyone.

What is your most precious possession?

My daughter Arpana, a creative genius, a saintly person. Sometimes, I look into her large, deep, brown, mellow eyes and wonder, " I must have done something really nice to have deserved this miracle!'

What objects do you always carry?

My glasses, a small rosary, four-five pens, and my Press card. For long journeys and holidays a bagful of books, a lot of fresh pens and crisp nice-smelling sheets of paper.

What makes you most depressed?

My daughter's tears. Her physical pain.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

I don't exactly dislike them. But at times the footsteps of time on my

face and body depress me because I let so much of precious time go waste.

What is your favourite word?

'Love', 'Compassion' and 'Total Integrity'.

What is your favourite journey?

Our yearly travel (me, my daughter Arpana, her husband Harinder and our little Pekinese) to some remote little village where no newspaper ever arrives, where no telephone ever tinkles. And a deserted guest house, perched in the lap of lush foliage, thick forests and high mountains around covered with snow.

What is your favourite dream?

Which one? The one that you weave in your half-working hours? Or the nightmares you pass through in your half-sleep?

What is your nightmare?

My daughter's unhappiness and illness.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

My daughter Arpana.

What is your source of sustenance?

Myself, and Arpana.

On what occasions do you lie?

When I am having a terrible headache or feeling exhausted, I request the servant to tell the caller that I am not at home, feeling guilty all the time. Never, for anything else do I lie. I hate untruths, half-truths.

What is your greatest regret?

Having wasted 13 precious years of my life trying to tread the traditional path chalked out by my mother's mother and all their grandmothers. Being lost in my own pain and anguish, I must have caused great deprivations in Arpana's childhood

What has been your happiest moment?

Any new painting by Arpana, a new book of mine ! Or, when I sail against the wind and hold my ideologies sacred.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Memories of all the people who left and went their way: my younger daughter Candy, my mother, my father. And, undeserved kindness from life from friends.

How do you relax?

With books, films.

What do you envy most in others?

Basically, I never feel any envy. But I do wonder at times when I find Arpana working throughout the day, or my fellow writers churning out profound books at such speed. Then my own laziness and shortcomings make me feel uneasy.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a brave woman who fought her own battles and was more concerned about the integrity with which she fought them.

How would you like to die?

Quickly, peacefully, painlessly, without troubling others.

What is your source of sustenance?

Myself, and Arpana

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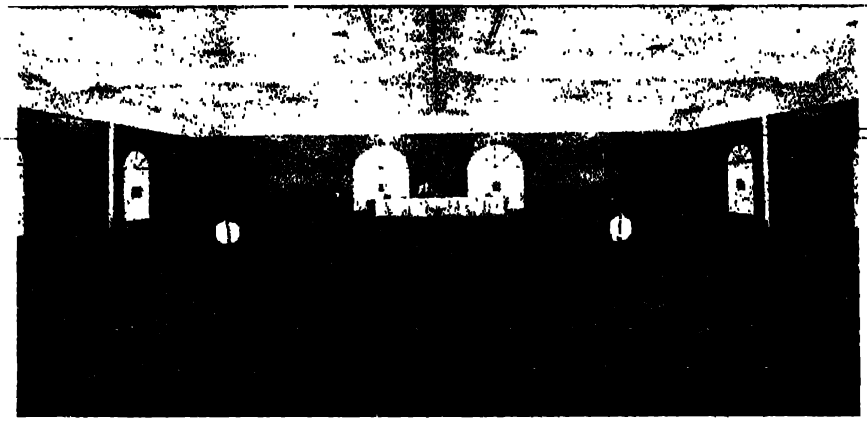

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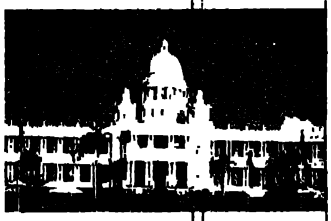

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The Telegraph

16 JUNE 1998

POST MORTEM

The New Stars

■ 'The Changing Profile of the Film Stars' (April 28) was interesting. The film industry, like any other industry, is becoming professional and it should not come as a surprise if boys and girls from affluent, prestigious backgrounds decide to make a career in films.

I agree with Taran Adarsh that it is a healthy sign that actors and actresses from good families are entering films giving this profession a social legitimacy; because films were always shunned by the middle class and only those who were really needy dared to enter the studios.

But times have changed. Avinash Wadhawan (who has starred in films like *Meera Ka Mohan* and *Balma*) had come to Bombay to collect his MBA degree and landed up dancing and singing in films.

Being educated, of course, does not mean that present-day actors and actresses are better performers than their peers. How qualified was Raj Kapoor, one of Indian cinema's greatest actors?

Yet, he went on to portray some of the most moving characters on celluloid.

Piyali Bishnu,
Ichapur (W.B.)

Mamta Kulkarni: *Desi mem, desi bhasha*

■ Speaking in English is no big deal. Look at world cinema: how many actors and actresses converse in English? They all speak in their mother tongues and are quite proud of that fact. It's only Indians who consider speaking in English a requirement for smartness.

Mamta Kulkarni is after all acting in Hindi films where she has to utter dialogues in Hindi and it little matters whether she knows the Queen's language or not. It is mean on the part of her co-stars to make fun of her because she cannot talk in English. And may I ask how many of these so-called convent educated starlets ever going to act in English films?

S. Das,
Cuttack

■ Education always helps. At least it makes one very confident of oneself. Look at Amitabh Bachchan. He is a brilliant actor, has impeccable good looks, a towering height and he is also educated and well read. It was for nothing that he became a screen god. The confidence with which he spoke and acted made the characters he enacted look real and convincing.

Somnath Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ There was a time when parents wanted their sons to be either doctors or engineers; professions which spelled prestige and respectability.

But nowadays if the child has interest in films and acting he/she is not discouraged. Parents think more progressively. Monetarily also, it is a very fulfilling profession.

Santosh Dey,
Calcutta

INSIDE

ler Sharma

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KARAN THAPAR gained fame as the "juvenile delinquent" who harassed government ministers in *Khula Manch*. Today, a quieter, more mature Thapar, is head of Home TV's programming, and a major power in the world of television.

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PROFILING HARIHARAN whose album, *Colonial Cousins*, is doing great business.

Karan Thapar

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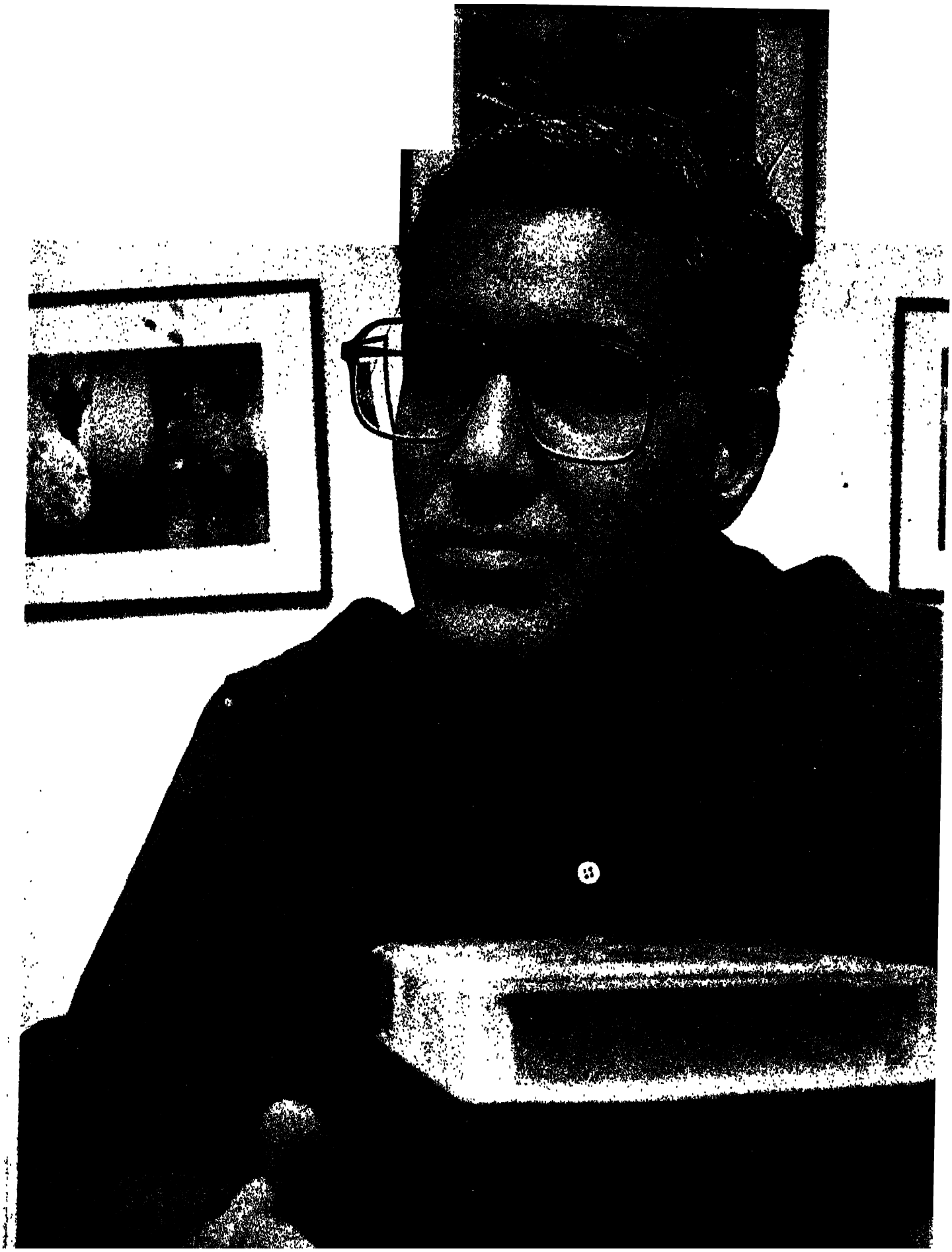
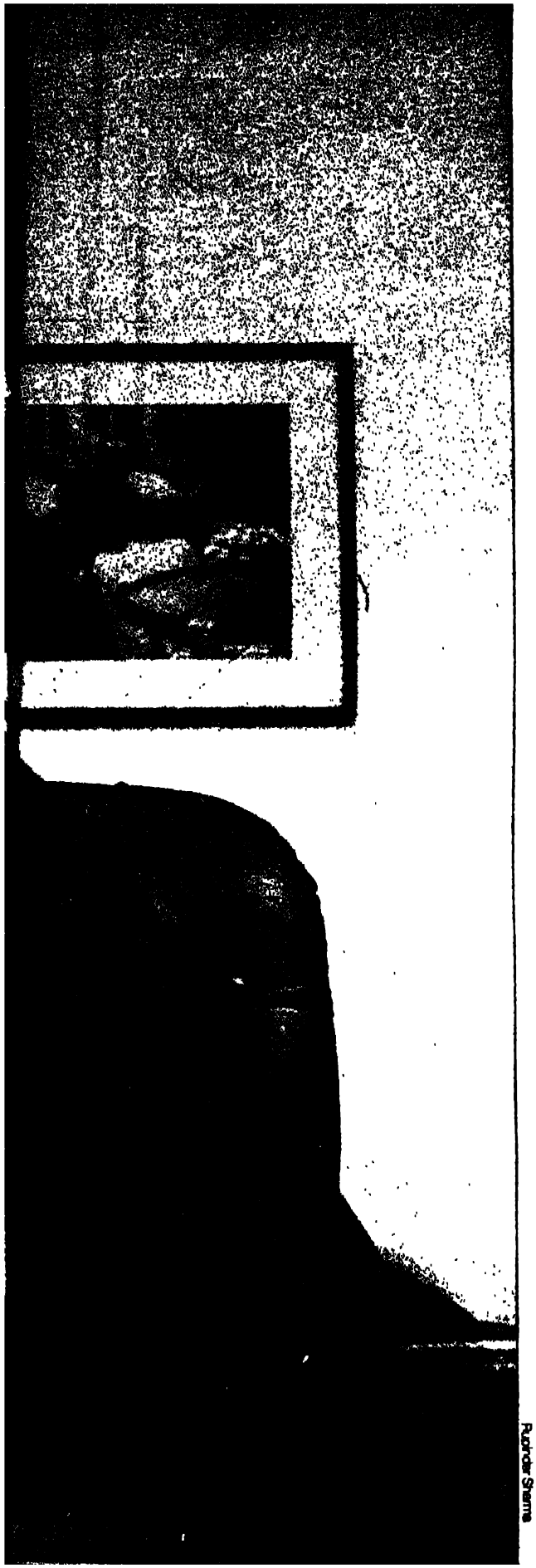




Rupinder Sharma

COVER STORY

The Greying of Karan Thapar

The bad boy of Indian television grows up.
***Seema Goswami** reports*

THE FIRST THING THAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT KARAN THapar is how much thinner he looks in real life. Dwarfed by the large desk behind which he sits, Thapar resembles nothing more than a one-size-too-small version of his television self.

The tight polo shirt outlines a concave stomach, thin arms protrude from half sleeves, and the taut jawline proclaims a person who has never had a problem sticking to a diet (in Karan's case, it consists of starving himself during the day, and then pigging out at

Karan Thapar on the *EyeWitness* show

A special Hindi broadcast of the BBC News,produced for the first time in South Asia; on Home TV

dinner). Which is just as well if you remember the adage that a television camera adds ten pounds to your frame.

Level your gaze higher and you notice the grey. These days, Thapar favours a Marine-style crew cut, but even then it is difficult to miss the fact that Karan's hair is more white than black. And that it, coupled with the wire-rimmed glasses that he sports, gives him the gravitas that goes well with his new role as chief of programming of the Home TV channel.

But what stays with you is Thapar's stillness Sitting ramrod straight in his chair, he only moves to answer the telephone, or to jot down little notes to himself. Presumably, these have to do with the Home TV programmes running on the television screen in front of him, with the sound turned down.

Other than that, however, what characterises Karan most is lack of movement. It's almost as if he is preserving all his nervous energy for better things than just another interview; even if he is on the other side of the media fence, as it were.

This is a very different Thapar from the one we are used to seeing on our television screens. On TV, Karan comes across as both excitable and exciting, as he persists with a line of questioning which his subjects clearly find uncomfortable. His eyes gleam behind his spectacles as his interviewees squirm awkwardly, and he fairly chortles with glee as he pins them down with that immortal line: "But, you're not saying no!"

But this new Karan Thapar is very different. He answers all queries in a quiet monotone, makes his point with the minimum fuss, and even provocative questions don't irk him. You can't help feeling that if he was any more laid-back, he'd keel right over.

Ask him about the change in his persona, and Thapar merely says, "Yes, I have become a little smoother, that initial gawkishness has disappeared. But then, I am older, more confident, and more at ease with myself "

It is hard to believe that this is the man who was once described as a "juvenile delinquent" by veteran politician George Fernandes. The year was 1990, the programme was *Khula Manch*, and at issue was Thapar's persistent style of questioning, which was completely alien to the ethos of Indian television, as it was then defined.

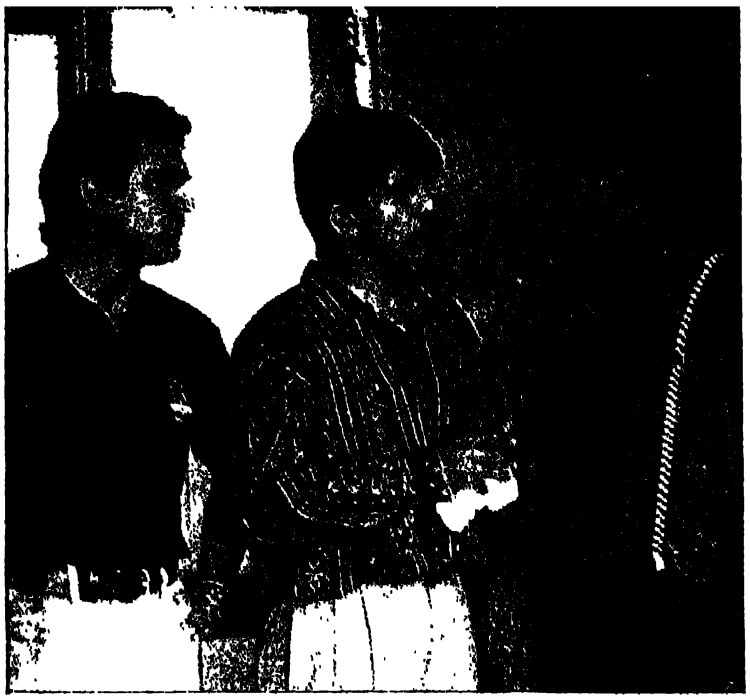
Certainly, nobody expected that a young, foreign-educated television journalist could go on Doordarshan, a government-controlled channel, and give ministers and senior parliamentarians a hard time. When Karan did just that, the protests came loud and clear. And before Thapar knew what was happening, his reputation as the enfant terrible of Indian TV had been established.

Not that Karan has any regrets on the score. Ask him how he reacted to Fernandes' now-famous put-down, and he smiles benignly. "I didn't mind at all," he says. "After all, that one phrase made me both notorious and famous. So, I'm quite grateful to George for that."

But how did it feel meeting Fernandes after he'd made this statement? "Oh, I meet him all the time," says Thapar. "There's no problem at all. In fact, just the other day I was telling him that I was now a 'senile delinquent!'", he adds, laughing.

But Thapar dismisses the suggestion that he set out to provoke, or try something new on Indian television with a view to making a name for himself. "This was not a deliberate ploy," he says. "It's just that I am a persistent sort of person, so I kept at people until they answered my question. And the strong reaction I provoked merely convinced me that people in India were not used to this style of questioning. But things have changed substantially since then."

And Thapar has played a major role in bringing about this change, with his performances on both *The Chat Show* and *EyeWitness*. It was Thapar who taught us that it was okay to pin down an interviewee even if you ended up making him look foolish on nation-wide television; or even if you ended up looking boorish yourself. That being kind was not an interviewer's skill; being incisive was. And that keeping a subject off-balance was as important as putting him at



A scene from *Safar*, produced by Home TV

Grilling Manmohan Singh on the *EyeWitness* show

ease.

That's not to say that Thapar always got the balance right. One famous interview with the then Prime Minister, Chandra Shekhar, earned him a lot of flak even though Karan himself was not conducting it; a reporter on the *EyeWitness* team was.

Carried away, perhaps, by the momentuousness of the occasion, the young man burst out: "Mr Prime Minister, why don't you comb your hair?"

Chandra Shekhar froze on camera, a look of absolute fury on his face. And then, curtly informing his interviewer that this was not the kind of question to ask a Prime Minister, he stalked off camera.

Most people agreed with Chandra Shekhar. And criticism of the *EyeWitness* interview mounted, as people expressed their horror at this cavalier treatment of the head of government. And even though Thapar was not directly responsible for what was seen as a world-class gaffe, some of the flak was directed at him as well.

But like a veteran journalist, even several years after the event, Karan stands by his story. "At the time, it was a legitimate question, even though many others thought it was impertinent," he says. "If you believe in the dignity of a particular office and you feel that the incumbent is not upholding it, then you have the right to ask such questions."

So, if he were interviewing A.B. Vajpayee or H.D. Deve Gowda today, would he ask him such a question? Thapar thinks for a moment. "No," he says finally, "I wouldn't."

Karan Thapar was born to a life of privilege and good fortune on November 5, 1955. And like most upper-class boys of his background — his father went on to become the Army Chief of Staff — Karan was sent off to boarding school once he was out of short pants. In his case, it was Doon School, where Thapar spent six years (from 1966 to 1971).

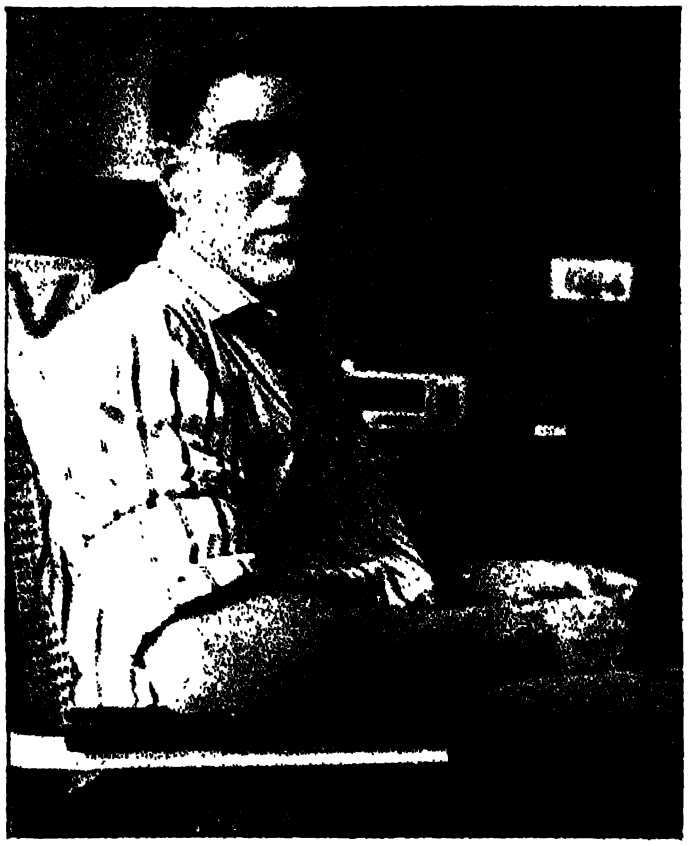
That was the extent of Karan's education in India. In 1972, he was enrolled in one of the most prestigious public schools in England, Stowe, where he remained till 1974. Then, it was on to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where Thapar studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics for his degree. In 1977, Karan moved to Oxford where he did his post-graduate degree in International Relations.

This was a great time for Thapar. Not only did he shine academically in his Oxbridge years, he was also elected the President of the Cambridge Union (a debating society); his counterpart at Oxford at the time was the young Benazir Bhutto.

Eventually, though, Karan had to leave the world of academia behind and begin looking for a job. With his qualifications, it wasn't difficult to find, and Thapar began working for the *London Times* as its West Africa correspondent. He moved to Nigeria in 1980 and remained there for two years, doing a series of articles on the inefficiency of the local government. Not surprisingly, the authorities expelled him from the country in 1982.

So, it was back to England, where Karan began working on the features desk of the *Times*. But the print media couldn't hold his attention for ever, and Thapar soon joined London Weekend Television as

In fact, it often seems that there are two Karan Thapars on television. First, there is the stern figure clad in a Jermyn Street shirt who will brook no nonsense from politicians and ministers. And then, there is the easy-going, smiling chap in a polo shirt, who laughs only too readily



Karan Thapar

Fernandes once described Thapar as a 'juvenile delinquent'

"correspondent, producer, editor".

Here, he worked on such current affairs programmes as *Eastern Eye*, *Weekend World*, *The World This Weekend* and *Whitehall*. And he ended up interviewing such first-division subjects as Rajiv Gandhi, General Zia-ul-Huq, General Ershad, such British ministers as Michael Heseltine, and his old friend, Benazir Bhutto

But just when things were going swimmingly for Thapar, everything went terribly wrong. Karan's wife, Nisha, who had a very successful career in the City working for such organisations as Merril Lynch and Morgan Stanley, and was then executive director of National Westminster Bank, was diagnosed with encephalitis Flown back to London, she went into coma in 24 hours, from which she never recovered

Devastated by her loss, Karan tried hard to put his life together again. "My wife and I had decided to come back to India when we had children," he says today. "After she died, I had to decide what I wanted to do now that I was on my own. The choice was between returning to India within a year or staying on in England for good."

In 1990, the decision was made easier for him when Rajiv Gandhi -- who was keen that Thapar return to India — introduced him to Shobhana Bhartia, editorial director of *The Hindustan Times*, who intended to diversify into television soon.

So, Karan came back to India for a trial run, during which he spent some time working with Doordarshan. At the end of a three-month period, he decided to come back home for good, set up HTV and forge a career for himself in Indian television.

It was Thapar who taught us that it was okay to pin down an interviewee even if you ended up making him look foolish on nation-wide television; or even if you ended up looking boorish yourself. That being kind was not an interviewer's skill; being incisive was

In retrospect, it was a wise move. Today, Thapar is one of the most respected interviewers on Indian TV, and is numbered among the most personable anchors. His handling of news stories on *EyeWitness* has shored up his journalistic credentials, and on *The Chat Show* he has proved that he is just as good at the lighter side of life

In fact, it often seems that there are two Karan Thapars on television. First, there is the stern figure clad in a Jermyn Street shirt who will brook no nonsense from politicians and ministers. And then, there is the easy-going, smiling chap in a polo shirt, who laughs only too readily.

So, which is the real Karan Thapar? The man will not entertain any such questions. "How can you compartmentalise people like that?" he asks "Both these personas are part of me. A man is made of many parts: wit, repartee, intelligence are all combined in the same person."

Despite his success — or perhaps because of it — Karan has his share of critics. According to them, Thapar's advantages — his upper-class background, his foreign education — are, in fact, his biggest disadvantages. They say that Karan is too up-market

Karan Thapar at work: Too up-market for Indian television viewers?

tor Indian television audiences to identify with or even be comfortable with him. And that, he often doesn't understand what an Indian audience wants to see on the small screen

Thapar, however, has little patience with such talk "I don't think that my persona is a handicap," he says forcefully "Audiences don't respond in terms of content, but of style They respond emotionally and intuitively The theatre and drama of television is what people see So, I don't think that there is any problem of my being perceived as too up-market "

Karan does admit to one handicap, though his inability to speak Hindi in a formal interview-style situation But that isn't as much of a problem as it is made out to be, he says "There is a large audience for English language current affairs programmes," says Thapar, "though people still prefer entertainment in their own languages And don't forget, there are a large number of satellite households, whose members aspire to speak English, and will watch programmes in that language "

Thapar s own programme on Home TV, *In Focus*, is conducted in Hinglish, a mixture of Hindi and English that works surprisingly well. His first subject was Sunjay Dutt, who spoke movingly of his experiences in jail, his drug addiction, and his struggle to come to terms with both

Clearly, Thapar is trying to correct the impression that he is yet another Brown Sahib and a misfit in a world where Zee TV rules the roost And he couldn't have chosen a better vehicle than Home TV in that effort

Marketed as a "family oriented fun channel", or as they call it in Hindi, the "*mazedaar* channel, Home TV is targeted at the Hindi-speaking audience The only English programming is on offer after 11 pm, when an English drama is telecast for on hour (in the first week, Home TV telecast *Edward and Mrs Simpson*, a series on the British king who gave up his throne to marry an American divorcee) Other than that, it's Hindi all the way

And that's not going to change in the future either, because as Thapar explains, "that would diffuse the market focus" But Home TV does intend to carry out regular surveys to find out what their viewers would like to see, and commission programmes accordingly

As the man who decides what gets on to Home TV, Karan has his plate full His workday --- which extends from 9.30 am to 8 30 pm -- is devoted to watching pilots and reading scripts that have been submitted for his approval. And then, of course, he has to keep an eagle eye on that TV set in his room, which is forever tuned to Home TV

Even at home, Thapar spends a lot of time in front of the television set, keeping abreast of his competition His favourite programmes he says, include *Junoon Imtihan*, *Tara*, *Banegi Apni Baat* and *Dekh Bhai Dekh* He also enjoys watching *Superhit Muqabla*, and the news on both Doordarshan I and II.

But since watching TV is also another kind of work, how does Thapar relax?

"Well, I play squash every weekend And I like reading when I have the time," he says His taste in books extends from fiction to biographies and autobiographies And he's just finished reading *Primary Colours* the novel about the Clinton candidacy, written by an anonymous author, who was apparently an important figure in the Clinton campaign team

Thapar lives alone in Delhi, taking time off every week to visit his mother who stays in her farmhouse in Chhatarpur But no he says, he is not lonely, he's got used to being on his own after his wife died And anyway, how can you be lonely when the TV set is forever on, and the phone follows you wherever you go? ■

EXTRACT

Death Becomes HIM

Extracts from Silent Whispers, *the first murder mystery written by an Indian woman*

Aga slowly kept the phone down and ·ored at the wall opposite him. He d not see the tawdry M F Husain print nor the cheaper oil painting an impossibly convoluted horse What his man from Delhi had just told him was disturbing In fact, it was bloody funny and he had to think out what this could mean Jetley had to be told about it and that too soon enough But what the hell did it MEAN? It surely was not a coincidence and if it was not then there was something bloody screwy going on He would have to think this over very carefully

Vinit casually threw his coat down on the armchair and went to the corner mahogany bar to open a cola for himself from the mini fridge

What will you have Dad?"

Nothing, you go ahead " Jetley quietly looked at his son--in these last years the last vestiges of the vulnerable youth had vanished His son his 26-year-old son was instead a handsome man, considered to be, he knew, as one of the most eligible bachelors in Bombay He also knew that he was much in demand as a painter, with socialites vying for each and every one of his canvasses. He stared for a long time at that beloved face, once so warm and loving and now full of strength, yes, but also hard, unkind almost Vinit had insisted that he did not want to join the family business, and Jetley had let him Vinit had been determined to live seperately-- in quite a pokey terrace flat in Malabar Hill whose only plus seemed to be that it had a fantastic sea-view and a glorious amount of light And Jetley had given in on that too, never asked why he couldn't stay with his father in the huge mansion that was Ramvilas

'So, you were going to discuss something about Devina, weren't you?" Vinit seemed impatient, restless, looking like a bird captive in a cage

'She wants to marry, Vinit "

Sharply Vinit turned, She has told you that?"

"No but she will soon, I know "

'I see," Vinit nodded ironically, a tinge of contempt in the tone as he coldly looked at his father

Extracted from *Silent Whispers* ***by Sujata Sabnis. Published by Alka Paperbacks.***

"Information courtesy Aga of course But maybe Aga is wrong, maybe Devu is just having a nice fling --girls do that you know"

"Not Devina, Vinit, you know that"

He casually loped in the sofa in front of his father, a picture of relaxed disinterest, only the nerve ticking in his left jaw and his slightly clenched fist gave him away

"So who is the man this time?"

"A Delhi boy Sameer Minocha"

"Any good? I'm sure you, dogs must have found out all about him by now"

Jetley ignored the thinly veiled insult and just said, "He seems to be"

"And so are you going to give them your blessings? Maybe it won't come to that Suppose something happens to poor Sameer, just the way it happened to Suneel and Govind?" It was said softly, very softly, yet it chilled Jetley frightened him

"No" he said harshly "Nothing is going to happen this time, did you hear nothing No one is going to harm Sameer in any way I am going to see

Sujata Sabnis: Plotting murder

to it"

"Ah yes, just the way you saw with the poor ex-boyfriends of Devina?"

"That was different, I I was not prepared But this time I am, and let me tell you that I have already put two men onto Minocha to protect him"

Vinit stared at his father for a long time before turning away, a careful look on his face

"But you also have to think about what will happen if Devina gets married to this guy Suppose it makes her in some way remember things she has forgotten? Have you thought of that?"

Tiredly Jetley rubbed his forehead, "You think I haven't? But she has a right to be happy too, she has had a bloody shitty life Maybe she won't remember anything ever but if she does I'll tell you one thing" Once again he gave a hard stare to his son, "I'll see to it that no one and I mean no one - harms her I'll take care of her I'll protect her"

Softly said his son, "That could put you in a kind of a danger too, have you thought about that?"

Jetley stared at the opposite wall where a picture of his brother and Manorama hung right above the

Illustration Subrata Gangopadhyay

mantlepiece and then faced Vinit

"If it does, I'm prepared for that too. For too long I have been afraid, afraid all the time. Now I am going to think only about Devu's happiness. Nothing else. No one else."

He looked at his son's tense face, saw him gulp down the coke. After a moment Vinit said, "So why have you called me here?"

"Devu wants her family to meet Sameer. Which means you and me."

"You, of course. But why me?"

"You are her cousin, Vinit. She loves you."

"Yeah, but only till she doesn't remember, right?"

Amar didn't bother to answer, looked quietly at the tight, sarcastic face of his son. After a moment, Vinit looked away, shrugged, picked up his coat. "Oh well, alright, I will be there. I suppose I am interested in meeting this Sameer."

He smiled thinly and with a curt nod walked away. All of a sudden, Jetley felt tired, very tired. Secrets, so many secrets, hidden from his son from Devina, from the world.

Secrets which he couldn't allow to come out—they would destroy everything he loved, everything he had built up. But secrets also were a dead weight, they sapped your soul, made it feel impossible to carry on. He sighed and laying his head back, closed his eyes. No matter what the cost, he would see to it that this secret would remain where it should be—in the deepest, darkest corner of his heart. No one would know about it ever, not ever.

"Well, Aga, what have you found out? It sounds urgent. What is it?"

"You know Mr Jetley that my man had gone to Delhi to dig out more stuff about Sameer Minocha. Well, he found out a curious fact."

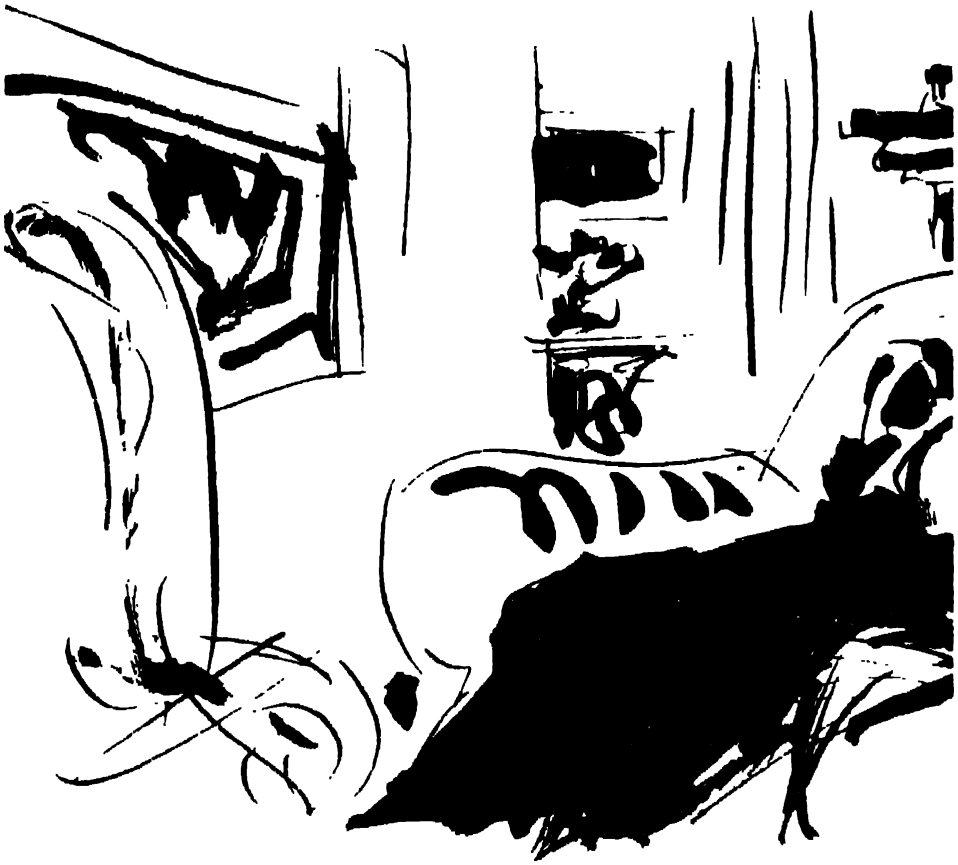
A hesitant pause stretched too long made Jetley impatient. "Okay, what was this fact. Let's hear it."

Aga shrugged and worriedly said, "My man talked to Sameer's friends—you know, just fishing around. And he discovered that well. Sameer had a best friend who is now missing for the last few months."

"Who?"

Softly Aga intoned, "Govind Ankalesaria—Devina's boyfriend who disappeared."

"Govind's best friend? Sameer is Govind's best friend?" stunned, Jetley felt as if his feet was standing on shifting sands. "I don't believe it!



This doesn't sound right to me, Aga. But could it be a coincidence?"

Stoically Aga shook his head, "I don't think so Mr Jetley and nor do you. But my job is to get information for you. It's your headache to infer it any way you want. All I can tell you is that Sameer and Govind were not just friends, but real thick ones—you know right from the school days upto college kinds, more like brothers." He hesitated for a moment and pointed out, "Look, maybe before jumping to conclusions, you should check out with Devina. Who knows he may have mentioned it to her and she didn't bother to tell you about it."

Mutely Jetley nodded, "I'll go to her flat immediately. I must get to the bottom of this. I'll call you back later."

Jetley slowly kept the phone down and briefly ordered for his car on the intercom. But before that he must phone up someone and tell this new development. He briefly talked on the phone, and looking at his watch, walked out of the room. Within minutes he was whizzing past the imposing gates of Ramvilas towards Marine Drive. He hoped Devina would be there at home—and alone.

He quietly looked at Devina sitting like a kitten on the sofa, dressed up in a simple cotton salwar kameez and looking very pretty.

"Devina. I want you to tell me something. Did you ever tell Sameer about Govind?"

In a hesitant soft tone she said, "You mean the fact that I was going steady with him?"

"Yes. Did you tell him?"

"Yes, I did, in fact, I told him as soon as I thought that he was getting serious about me. And he told me about his past affairs. Why do you ask?"

He insisted, "You told him Govind's full name—Govind Ankalesaria?"

Now she seemed to be really puzzled, "Yes I did, in fact, I even asked him whether he had met Govind in Delhi. Govind did his BA from St Stephens. Sameer is also from the same college, you see."

"And what did he say?"

"Sameer said that he couldn't really remember any such student, though of course he may have seen him around the campus."

Jetley clenched his hand and with an abrupt nod said, "I think I must tell you something which I found out today. A—a friend of mine came from Delhi and it seems he knows the Minocha family very

Illustration: Subrata Gangopadhyay

well. He was just telling me about them when he mentioned that Sameer's best friend was a boy called Govind Ankalesaria." Amar Jetley paused heavily and then blurted out, "and that this boy is missing for the past few months."

She gasped and turned white and for a long time was silent. Then, with an obvious effort she said, "Are you telling me that Sameer not only knew Govind but that he was also his best friend?"

"Yes."

Desperately she argued, "Are you sure about this? Maybe this friend of yours was mistaken, maybe he was talking about some other Govind— there must be many in Delhi."

"Devu, how many Govind Ankalesaria there will be who stay in Ashok Vihar and study in the department of psychology at the University campus? I checked, you know."

She was bewildered now, bewildered and worried. "But then why didn't Sameer mention it to me?"

"I don't know, Devina, you tell me— why didn't he?"

"I just don't understand this. I, I even showed him a photo of Govind and he didn't say a word."

"Which means you have to find out why not, and find out pretty fast. You have to know what this boy really wants from you. Why he lied to you about Govinda. Devina, it may hurt, but you have to think that his motives were suspect."

Tears had started welling in the big brown eyes as she hugged herself tight as if to protect herself from an emotional pain.

"I can't believe that, I won't believe it. There must be some other explanation— there has to be. I'll ask him today, right now. I'll go talk to him right now."

Stubbornly she shook her head. "I can take care of it myself, I'm a big girl now."

Jetley hesitated for a minute and then nodded. "After all there would be Aga's man behind her all the time — they would see her safe back home."

Sameer Minocha was tall and truly handsome, with the frankest of smiles which had won him friends throughout his young life. He was not smiling just now, though. Instead as he sat down with a slump near his computer desk, he thought of the terrible half-an-hour he had just spent. It had been difficult to answer Devina, it had been even more difficult to explain. And what could he explain? Could he have told Devina about Govind's last letter to him in which he had told Sameer certain unbelievable things? Could he have told Devina about Govind's suspicions? And what could he have said about his own when Govind had vanished so mysteriously? Govind... Once again that name evoked in his mind like a pain — nagging, troublesome, hurting pain. Govind, his best friend of so many years. Govind with his mischievous grins and clever pranks. Govind who thought he was much smarter than most others and sometimes proved it too. Govind who had loved to pry into other people's affairs, loved to ferret out secrets, had always talked grandly about information being power.

In these three months, he had tried so hard to find out what it was that Govind had discovered. He thought he knew now, or at least he was half way there. The rest the police could find out perhaps. He would go to them tomorrow. But it had been terrible to face Devina. Terrible. She had been so hurt. He had felt like a bloody heel. But she would understand. He would make her understand. It would be for her own good too. There were many

things which she didn't know. Which she should know. He was afraid but he would tell her.

The kitchen was almost in total darkness, the dim light of a small low powered bulb throwing a shadowy light on a dark figure. The face was a study of concentration, blank of all expressions, and only the eyes, gleaming strangely, gave an indication of a mind not quite sane. The hands were busy sharpening a huge steel butcher knife, pushing the knife back and forth on the sharpener with cold efficiency. Carefully the figure picked up the knife and touched it's edge. It was sharp, smooth, beautiful, real beautiful! An excited grin spread on the smooth planes of the face. It was going to be fun. Wonderful fun. To push this into the cheating, lying double dealing body of dear Sameer. Oh yes, it would be lovely to see the fear in Sameer's eyes, to hear his scream, to feel his pain. Today, today it will be. It was difficult to wait, so very difficult when the trembling hands were literally itching to do what had to be done. Softly whistling a tune, the figure looked outside at the pelting rain, wore a dark-brown raincoat and walked out of the door. The butcher knife was safely lying in the pockets, ready and willing to bleed, to maim, to kill. Before the door whined shut, a soft giggle reverberated round the room.

Sameer was restless, on an edge, some deep foreboding twisting his innards. He was almost sure that he had found out the truth, but he didn't really want to face it: no, to be honest, he was afraid. And not because he was a coward, he was not, and he could face just about anything, but not madness. No, he was scared of a mind which had quietly, unknown to most, become stark, staring mad. The mind of a ruthless, pitiless killer, albeit a hidden one. And there was something else that he suspected but that was so bizarre, so unbelievable that he didn't want to even think about it. So what else was there to do? He had watched cable, he had tried to read a book, nothing worked. He had triednot to think of Devina and the hurt in her eyes as she had confronted him about Govind and that hadn't worked too. It was best to have an early dinner, early for him that is, and go off to sleep. A Calmpose would help.

He swallowed his Calmpose with a gulp and shut off the TV: the cable was airing the old Hitchcockian classic *Psycho* and on the screen the image of an unknown hand slaughtering the girl in the shower was as terrifying as ever. Normally, he would have loved to watch it, this was one of his all time favourites after all, but today the image of the long, butcher knife, the frenzy and the primeval scream of the girl sickened him. Probably Govind was also killed in a similar way. He shuddered and on an impulse he picked up the phone and dialled STD. He had thought of calling his elder sister in Delhi tomorrow morning, but something, some instinct made it imperative

Illustration: Subrata Gangopadhyay

that he called her today, just this minute After a long ring, Umesh, Soniya's husband, picked it up, said in a sleepy irritated voice, ``Yes, hullo?"

``Sorry to disturb you Umesh so late but I wanted to talk to Soniya Can you call her on the line? It's rather urgent

Umesh sounded concerned, ``Any problems?"

``No, none, but it's something I must talk to her about Will you call her? Is she sleeping?"

`No she is here "

Sameer heard static on the line and then a soft voice spoke on the phone, affectionate concern making her sweet voice sharp

``Sameer, hi, how are you, what's up?"

``It's something very important Soniya I had to tell you about it Didn't want to tell anyone else , not right now '

What is it, you sound funny. Are you sick of something? Are you in some kind of trouble tell me immediately Sameer "

He could hear her voice rising with anxiety and hesitantly told her, ` We...you know why I had come to Bombay, didn't you?"

``Yes, to hunt out Govind "

``Sonu, I think I know what has happened to him I'm almost sure I am near the truth. I found it just two days back .and. and I can tell you this it's horrible horrible and scary."

``What do you mean, scary? What have you found out? Tell me right now; what the hell have you got into?"

``Govind was murdered, Sonu," he said in a frightened whisper, the horror in her brother's voice chilling her a thousand miles away

`Murdered? What nonsense Who murdered him, why should they murder him, what are you talking about?"

``Why? because he found out a secret belonging to the Jetley family, you know those big industrialists?

``You mean the family of Devina Jetley whom you are going around with? This is melodrama, Sameer, I don't believe it Jetley family's secret? And Govind knew it? What seret?"

` Soniya, it goes 10 years back, and it's something sickening, something crazy, mad I suppose I can tell you though you will find it difficult to believe. You see Sonu Oh shit, wait a minute, the doorbell is ringing, hold on, will you, I'll just go and see who it is "

He pressed the bell again, his hands twitching on the knife with anticipation God how he hated Sameer, hated him, hated him They were all the same, all out to f__ around, you couldn't trust anyone, not anyone and certainly not a sweet talker like that b__ _ _ _ inside Suneel should have taught him that, Govind should have too, but once again he had been conned. He was too soft and Devina was too soft too, that was the problem She was really much too nice, much too silly -- that's why these f__ ers took advantage But not for long — not once he had wised up to them Suneel and Govind had discovered that no one fooled Devina and got away with it. Not while HE was there to teach them a lesson. Today it was Sameer's turn to discover just that Even now when he thought of his mealy mouthed ways, the sweet lying smiles, the way he had totally dazzled Devina into believing him -- he could puke! And Sameer knew too much, he had found out too much. The b _____, the b __ ____, the b_ _____... with the litany growing in his mind, the fingers gently touched the sharp edge of the knife. Yes, it was sharp enough -- today, it had to be for today was going to be the enactment of The Silence of the Lambs - *only Sameer was no lamb,* more like a *jackal how he would love to hurt him, make him scream, make him beg for mercy, kill him, kill him, kill him.*

The door opened an inch as Sameer peered out of the safety chain This was an important moment, Sameer should not suspect anything, should open the door. He put on his most winning smile and said quietly, ` Hi, Sameer!"

He could see the surprise in Sameer's face as well as bewilderment Uncertainly Sameer said, ` Hullo oh you here? I didn't expect you here!"

He kept on smiling with an effort, It's something important Sameer And it's urgent May I come in?"

``Well I was talking on the phone to Delhi, but . yes, of course, come in Just a minute, I'll open the safety chain

He stepped in with difficulty controlling the spiralling excitement, the fever that gripped his insides He knew his eyes were glowing and he could see Sameer staring at them He could see the instinctive fear in that hated face, the growing uncertainty that something was not right And then slowly, softly to prolong the ecstasy he took out the knife.

He saw Sameer's face growing white, he saw fear in the darkening eyes Still Sameer did not seem to give up hope, he still thought that he could not be harmed. He heard Sameer trying to reason with him, What are you doing, don't do this, come give me the knife "

He heard the words as if in some kind of a dream Oh yes. He would certainly give the knife to Sameer, that's what he had come here for after all Sameer tried to grab his hand But it would be of no use, he knew He was blessed with a manly strength at these times he knew He caught hold of Sameer's hand in an iron lefty grip with his right, plunged in the knife at that softest, most vulnerable spot in the body the stomach

It was sweet, real sweet the way the knife went in, smoothly, and he drew it out loving the red spurt which came out, and then he plunged the knife back and again, and again and again

On the phone nearby some panicky female voice kept on calling — Sameer, Sameer, Sameer " Quietly, keeping the receiver back he chuckled happily Sorry, sweetheart, but Sameer doesn't live here anymore he doesn't live here anymore." ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC-741	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-742	0815	1 3
			IC-[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
IC 743	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 744	[illegible]	daily
M9 327	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 323	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	2 6
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/14[illegible]	0850	[illegible]	M9 141/302	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 6
AIZAWL					
PF 301	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF [illegible]	1655	2 4 [illegible]
			[illegible]	[illegible]	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 721	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
D2 161	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 4 5 7
D2 161	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0600	daily	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W-511	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W-512	[illegible]	daily
M9 305/429	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 402	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC-544	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 769	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VI 106	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DELHI					
IC 203	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
S2 02[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9-[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
M9-304	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
IC-402	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S-805	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
S2 00[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9-302	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC 856	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
			[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
DIBRUGARH					
4S 816	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S 812	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
IC 297	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7
PF 301, 302	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
M9 304/121	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
GUWAHATI					
D5 601	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC 703	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 701	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 3 [illegible]
9W 611	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
PF 301	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	1310	daily
IC 229	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4S-816/811	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 327	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 325	[illegible]	[illegible]	M[illegible]	[illegible]	1 1
HYDERABAD					
IC-777	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 7[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VI 106	1740	1	VI-105	1700	1
9W 511	1400	daily	9W-512	2120	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 256	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5, 7
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 211	1540	2 6
JAIPUR					
S2 026/027	0850	1 2 4 5	S2-028/005	2005	1 2, 4 5 7
JORHAT					
IC 257	1145	4, 7	IC 257	1500	4 7
LILABARI					
PF 301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	1655	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC-811	2100	1 3 5
S2 025/011	0850	1 2 3 4 5	S2 012/005	2005	1 2 3 4 5 7
MADRAS					
D5 400	0700	4, 6	D5 401	1230	3 5
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC-541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
IC 541	1115	3 7	IC 543	1045	3 7
D2 172	1640	daily	D2 173	2100	6
			D2 171	11[illegible]	1 2 3 4 5 7
IC 765	1720	daily	IC 766	[illegible]	daily
MUMBAI					
IC 672	0730	daily	IC 671	0650	daily
9W 202	0715	1 3 4 5 6 7	9W 201	0950	1 3 4 5 6 7
D2 102	0920	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC 773	1945	daily	AI-806	1730	[illegible]
9W 212	1940	daily	9W 211	1905	daily
AI 809	1930	6	IC 274	1850	daily
M9 305	0640	1 2, 3 4 5 6	M9 306	1125	1 2 3 4 5 6
M9 307	1700	daily	M9 308	2335	daily
D2 104	2005	daily	D2 103	1935	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2120	2 4 6
PATNA					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 405	1835	3 5
IC 812	1620	1 3, 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
IC-249	1445	2 6	IC 245	1820	2 6
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0640	1 3, 5	IC-286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 249	1445	2, 6	IC 249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 256	0915	3, 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5, 7
IC 253	0700	2 4, 6	IC 254	0940	2 4 6
M9 325	1220	1, 4	M9 325	1610	1 1
M9 323	1220	2 6	M9 323	1555	2 6
TEZPUR					
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC-211	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
M9 304/111	0850	daily	M9-112/301	1935	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
IC-542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC 541	1030	1, 2 4 5, 6
D5 402	0700	4 6	D5-401	1230	3, 5

FLIGHTS

AMMAN					
RJ 185	1145	1	RJ-184	0705	1
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	[illegible]	2	KL 87[illegible]	[illegible]	
BANGKOK					
KB-105	0550	[illegible]	KB 102	1090	
			KB 106	1240	
IC 731	0855	2 5	TG 313	1240	1 3 6
IC 731	1105	1 3	IC-732	1730	1 3
IC 855	1105	4, 7	IC 856	1730	4 7
TG 314	1355	1 3, 6	IC-732	1505	2 5
AI 306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
[illegible]					
RO-076	2130	5 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC 225	0700	1	IC 226	0920	1
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	
BG-092	1150	1 2, 3, 6, 7	BG 091	1110	1, 2 3 6, 7
IC-723	1300	1 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3, 5 6 7	BG-093	1825	1 2 3 5, 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7 061	1000	3	Q7-060	1230	
[illegible]					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
RA 214	1525	2 6	RA-213	1425	2 6
IC 747	1035	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1350	1 2 4 6

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
RA 142	211		RA 143		3
[illegible]					
SU-538	1755	4	SU 537	1555	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1105	3	KB 105	0810	2 6
KB 106	1325				
[illegible]			[illegible]		
SQ-415	2345		SQ 416	2230	2
BI 108	0830		BI 107	2000	6
[illegible]					
LZ-504	1750		LZ 503	1650	4
[illegible]					
AI 306	1910		AI 309	1620	
[illegible]			[illegible]		
IC 227	1530		IC 228	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** Modiluft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7-35	3006
3003	20 00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13-00	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya-Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	13 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12 50	2306
2307	23-30	**Jodhpur Express**	4-40	2308
2019	6-20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
3073	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sa	11 35	3074
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	17 25	3046
5049	23 00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 30	5050
5047	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
3009	20-[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 [illegible]	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	14 20	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
5659	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10 30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thur, Arr Mon Thurs & Fri		1160
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun, Wed & Sat		
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 30	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express**	20 35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20 00	**Kather Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBC Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5085	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
6003	20-30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	17 40	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	19-25	2859
2021	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20 40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	8033
8030	11 40	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14-05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 05	2842
7003	8 10	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	19 40	7004
6311	22 35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6312
8013	17 40	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8111	6-00	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 25	8112
8005	20-55	**Tilagarh Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21 40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-10	8016
8007	22 15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-30	8008
8409	15 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-25	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	10 25	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 10	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11 35	8018
1030	15 50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16-10	
-	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10-45	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22 15	
	11 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	12 45	6321
-	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	
6316	22 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	22 15	
	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.

FEELING HOT, HOT, HOT

How can one best cope with the summer heat? Some tips from ***Manisha Gulati***

Summer is something of a two-faced season. Consider first the positive side. The hot weather grants permission to wear a completely comfortable wardrobe of bare basic pieces — a bikini that might weigh two ounces soaking wet, shorts with a microscopic inseam, a fluttery wisp of a short dress, casual Allen Solly trousers and doing away with (ugh!) ties. But then there's the nasty side of the season. We want to be inside at every possible moment. The most mundane errand-running afternoon becomes a nightmare. The sun tricks us into uncovering body parts that would really have benefited from some shade and sun-protection moisturisers instead. And the fact that while we're 'enjoying' the sound of the hot winds, we're getting buffeted by a whole range of environmental hazards.

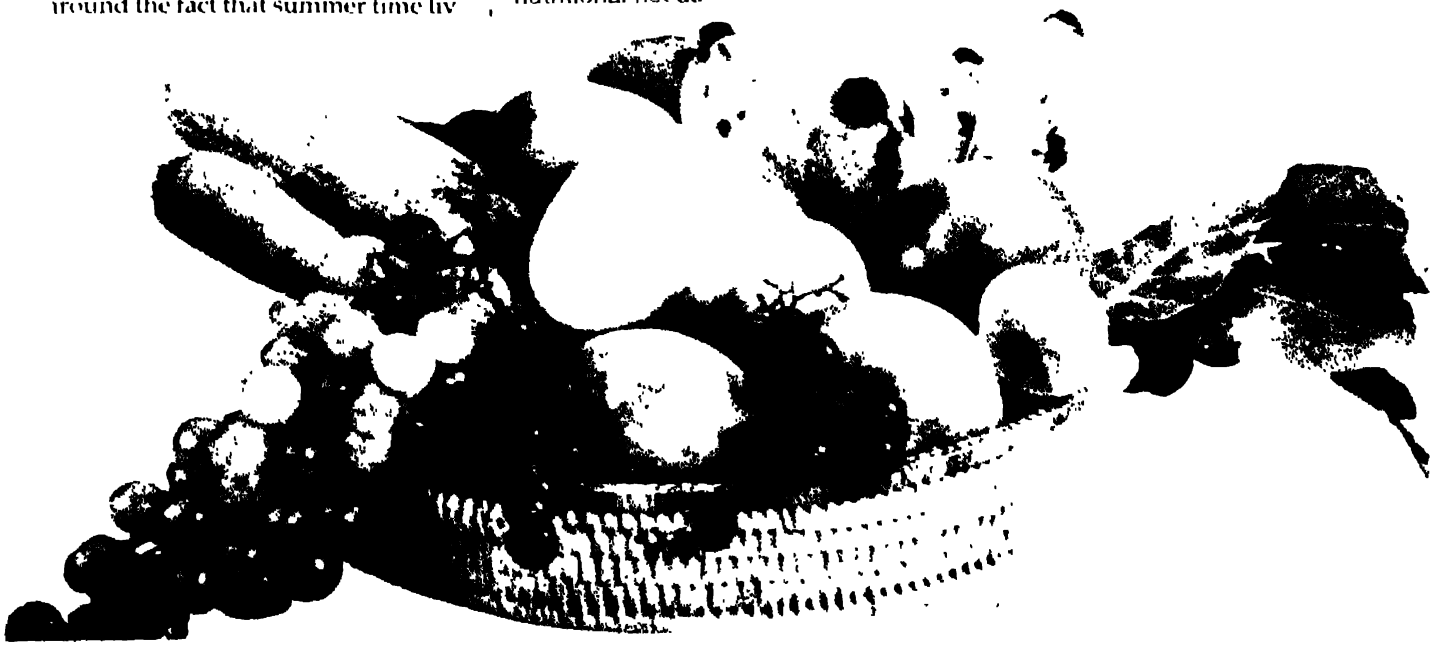
For the more particular, these cause hair changes that would do a neo-punk proud, and put the salons out of business. The challenge is simply to get on to the season's good side with a basic body care routine, cold salads, water sports (in India, read swimming) and an escape route. While advice for a suitable regimen and quick fixes follows, there's no getting around the fact that summer time living isn't as easy as it used to be. Oh, excuse us, the light just went out and writing in the dark isn't one of our stronger points. And please, do excuse the sweat drops. Long gone are the days of chilling out in airconditioned rooms. Where's the electricity? Enter generators and invertors.

Shading the eyes in a pair of glasses

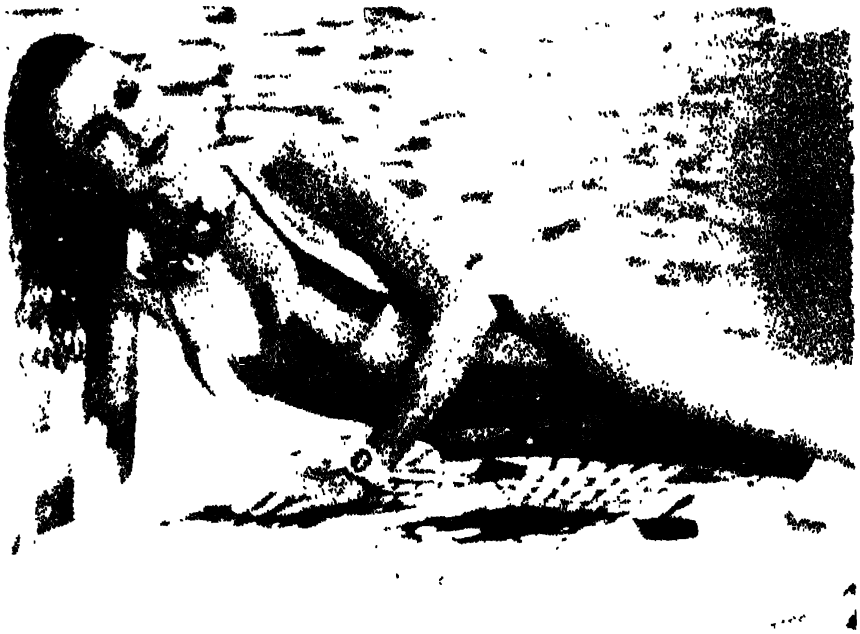
But options now have flowered. More and more people now head for the hills or the more expensive locales of the West to spend a cool and easy summer. Twelve noon at the Mall Shimla you are as likely to bump into your neighbour as at your local grocer. Nainital is an old time favourite with North Indians, and those in the east usually head further east. All to arrive at their perfect second home.

To land owners the second home or the holiday resort really makes sense. It is in a desirable part of the world, where real estate prices should appreciate steadily over the years. Sitting on your asset you could even argue that it's increasing value is effectively giving you free vacations as you look down upon the poor tourists staying in the Oberoi or the Holiday Inns of the country hills. Not for you the 21-day all-inclusive package that the rest of humanity has to endure. Says Mr Pahwa who owns his little hideaway in Nainital, "Once a year I like to get away from the hustle and bustle of Delhi and the power cuts which in Greater Kailash happens everyday. And staying in a hotel is too impersonal so I decided to invest in this house."

The Mathur family of three, on the other hand, prefers the plush portals of a hotel to cater to their needs. Says the wife Kalpana, "I don't want to get away from the work and heat of Delhi only to start looking after another place in the hills even if it's cooler



Fresh fruits. Meeting summer's nutritional needs



Beating the heat

there I let the hotel do the work so I can have a real holiday" And so while others sweat in 14 degrees heat you can sunbathe in 20 degrees and trek, horseride and fish But mind you, you're missing out on the week end binges of the city Saturday night is usually spent at a posh farmhouse party where the revellers are chucked into the pool halfway through, clothes, shoes, food and all No one minds and no one is spared It's a perfect end to a party where everyone is sweating their guts out

Swimming when you're prepared for it also provides a fun alternative With clubs packed to their gills, hotels can afford to charge over Rs 200 for a dip Of course some shun this fun in the sun for very different reasons Model Nidhi Chadha complains, "I can't afford the tan that comes with it Untanned skin provides the perfect canvas for the current ethereal look of make-up. The last thing you want to do is fight the elements" The unstated message here - -less make-up means skin had better be in bare-able condition Which can be hard to pull off as things heat up. oil production shifts into high gear, perspiration increases, pores dilate and become clogged more easily Make-up artist Pradipto Nandi favours a summer palette of toned-down shades. a transparent shrimp tone on the mouth, shell pink blush and eyes swept with cool brown shadow He laughs at womens' paranoia about the sun "Why worry," he says "Don't they know Pigs sweat, men perspire, women glow"

Nainital: The summer retreat

Given the current rage for cropped tops, shirts tied high on the midriff, and low slung shorts, the likelihood of having to bear the proverbial 'pale white underbelly' has climbed even higher of late Men, fortunately for them, are not so pre-occupied and bothered about customizing their colour They'd rather just shade their eyes in a pair of Ray-bans. Even the advertisement for the glasses seems geared toward the Indian summer - - 'Revel in the sun under the protection of Ray-ban sunglasses' Have your day in the sun! Styles in hair also move from long to short as an exposed nape becomes the buzzword of warmed-up social circles

Illustrating the latest chapter in fashion's move toward paring down and loosening up, designers offer a wide array of novel takes on a versatile loved-through-the-decades classic, the white shirt It's not a collection about lines and shapes. It's about attitude And that attitude is thrown-together chic Summer's watchword, simplicity, is more apt than ever this season as jeans and a t-shirt is whittled away to pastels and florals The best hot weather fashion forecast follows a less-is-more strategy, as styles are stripped down to bare, sun-compatible essentials As fashion model Stuti Chandok says, "Fashion should be slap-happy in summer and exposed seams is the stuff of which summer is made up." Speaking of which no one can ignore summer foods

Watermelons, mangoes, litchies, cherries (for the lucky ones), and strawberries (for the Mahabaleshwar returned ones) And for those who can't escape the blitzkreig of soft drinks advertisers, there's also the Pepsi and Coke cans, now launched for the season and freely avaible for Rs 15 Fancy cocktails and Peach Snapps also become favourites of bar-goers as anything cold goes But one bit of dietary advice that gets every nutritionists approval is loading up on as many fresh fruits and vegetables as possible - - they're low caloric, low fat and packed with vitamins, minerals, fibre and water And that's about as easy and appealing a recommendation for summer as one can get ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Time to open out, be it romance or finance, says Ganesha. Many of you will be into travel, trade, commission, job, business change or expansion or even both. Mars, energy, and Uranus, inspiration, both, work to give you creativity, joy, love, travel, contacts and definitely contracts. A time when you will win laurels.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

You will wine and dine, buy and sell, possess and also share, making you warm and lovable. The trick is to diversify, sow seeds of opportunity for yourself and others. Excellent time for making peace with old enemies. Good news awaits you. Healthwise, also, a good and solid week. Take time off from work.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Independence of thought and action helps you to win the game. Mars, now in your sign, according to Western astrology, makes you pushy, bold and assertive, and that's how it was meant to be. Take the initiative, get set to win name and fame and be happy with yourself. This is a grand week to get things done fast and furious.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

You will be reviewing, revising, perfecting techniques, travelling and very definitely be in an introspective, soul searching mood. Progress is certain. If you are prepared to change and adapt, the pace around you will be truly hectic and you might be forced to hurry your strokes and be absolutely ready for any emergency.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

The sweet smell of success and the thrill of enterprise will be yours. This is the right time to lead or even follow a great leader or be devoted to spiritual affairs. You will mix in haloed company. Rather rare in our world. Love and communication enliven your life. This is the time to get set for travel, trade, contacts and contracts.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Pay attention to the written and the spoken word. And also learn to read between the lines. It is absolutely certain that you are heading for victory and fame, nothing will stop you. Be flexible, have the common touch. It is in your work and at your home that you will show maximum efficiency and artistry.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Timing, luck and popularity will ride with you. Journey, ceremony, pilgrimage and publicity should be fulfilling. Favours can be asked and given most happily. You will be ideally suited for research work or any other experiment and data collection. You communicate with people and go places this week.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Like the Librans you too are now ideally suited for research, studying and development, high finances or the alleviation of suffering and pain. Try not to feel morbid or depressed. Call people over, be cheerful, socialise and enlist in a club for this is the phase when you can afford to relax and enjoy yourself.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Any sort of linking or partnership or group activity should be ideal. Hospitals, museums, zoos and prisons could be visited for helping others. A chance meeting, a flirtation could have endless possibilities. You will be asked to cooperate in your community or circle or your friend might ask a favour from you.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

A financial breakthrough, the lifting of a burden, joint bank accounts, legacy and unexpected money are important facets of the week. Other salient features include romance and passion. There could be pleasing changes on the work frontier and you deserve your good fortune. Soon it will be time for shift, move and journey.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Your adventures will elevate your spirit and give you fine material benefits. Cultivate your original flair and humour to maximum leverage. Children and grandchildren give joy. Hobbies, romance and creativity bring out the very best in you. You will be appreciated and applauded for your endeavours.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

While the focus is strong and sweet on the home and property fronts, you will also succeed in making inroads in your job profession and business, therefore, go all out for what you want. Parents, inlaws, your own society and community could very well need your services and sympathetic understanding.

BIRTHDAYS

June16: New moon, according to Ganesha's claims, helps you in an enterprise, finding lost things and making a go of your marriage.

June 17: Moon trine Uranus is an excellent trine for writers, technocrats, inventers, radio and TV talk show hosts. Your life will take new directions.

June 18: Mars trine Uranus signifies energy and ingenuity which will lead to success and glory. Your views will veer towards home and family.

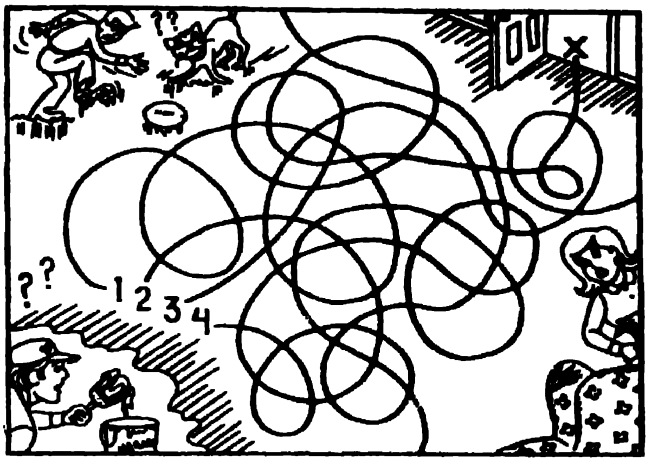
June 19: Mercuty trine Saturn helps entrepreneurs, land and building constructors, salesmen and astrologers. It is time to reach out to people and places in every possible way. Love will also knock on your door.

June 20: Moon sextile Venus placing speaks of love, comfort, property, good things and overall happiness around February, April, 1997.

June 21: Moon sun sextile catapults you to fame, name and glory giving you the impetus to go ahead in life. It will be easier for you to get things done.

June 22: Mars sextile Saturn is ideal for doctors, politicians, leaders, engineers and professors. Yes, it will pitch you in the limelight of publicity. Be daring.

JUNIOR WHIRL ✿ HAL KAUFMAN



CORNER KICK! Our floor-painting pal has worked himself into a corner. Which of four routes leads to the door?

SEVEN-UP! Think of a number — any number. Double it, add 17, take away three, halve the result, and subtract the original amount. Alakazam, answer is always seven.

MATCHUPS! Challenge: You are asked to form six two-syllable words from 12 one-syllable words provided at right. Words in left hand column are to precede words in right-hand column in answers.

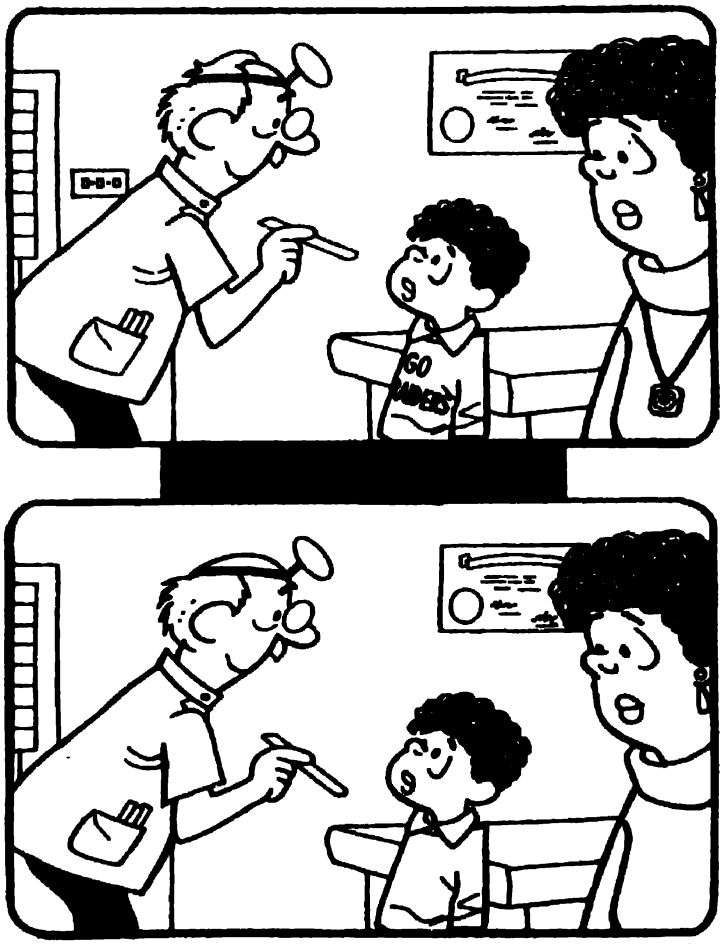
1 OAR	PIPE
2 GAIN	KIN
3 HIGH	SAY
4 POST	WAY
5 BAG	LOCK
6 PUMP	AGE

One way to proceed is to begin with first word at top left, find a compatible word at right and draw a line to it. Move on to second word, etc.

See how quickly you can make the six matchups. Time limit: two minutes.

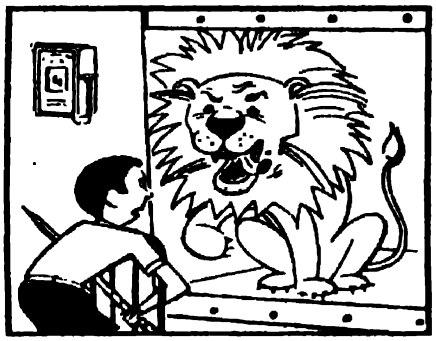
1 Carlock 2 Causeway 3 Highway 4 Postage 5 Bagpipe 6 Pumpkin

HOCUS-FOCUS



FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Switch is missing. 2. Hair is different. 3. Arm is moved. 4. Shirt logo is missing. 5. Diploma is smaller. 6. Locket is missing.



QUICK ON THE DRAW UNDER PRESSURE?

LET'S see if you have your wits about you under a great deal of pressure. Suppose you are the young man at left who hopes to avoid being clawed by an obviously free-to-roam lion.

What can you do with an object at hand — an object in the picture — that will keep the beast in its place?

Think fast, and not too hard.

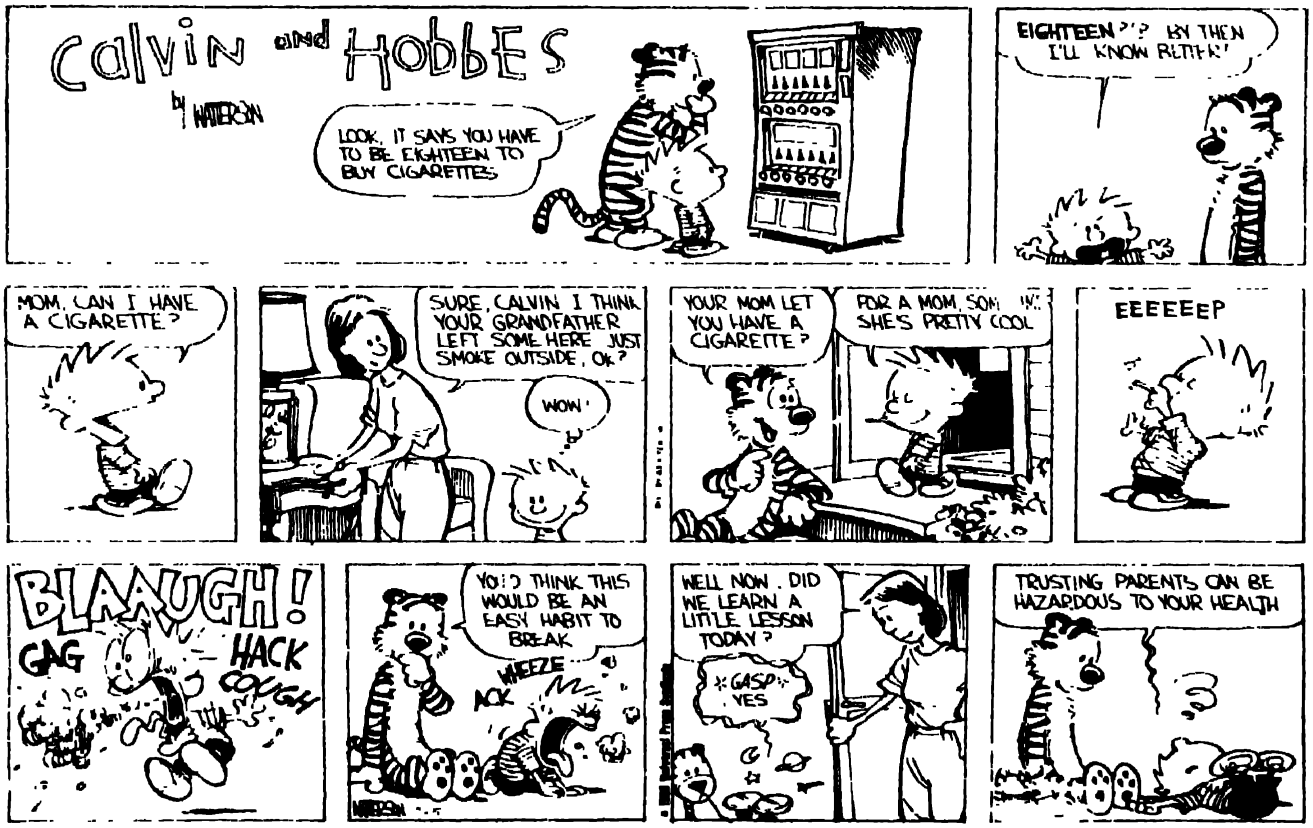
Simply use pencil to draw lines vertically dot to dot to form bars of cage

STRING TRIO! If the sum of three consecutive numbers is 63, what are the numbers?

Numbers are twenty, twenty-one and twenty-two.

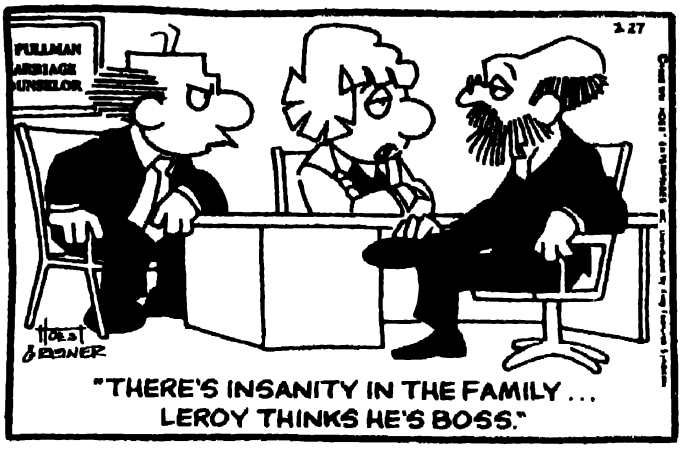
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS

"WHEN LEROY PASSES ON, IT WILL BE TO THAT GREAT BIG SOFA IN THE SKY."

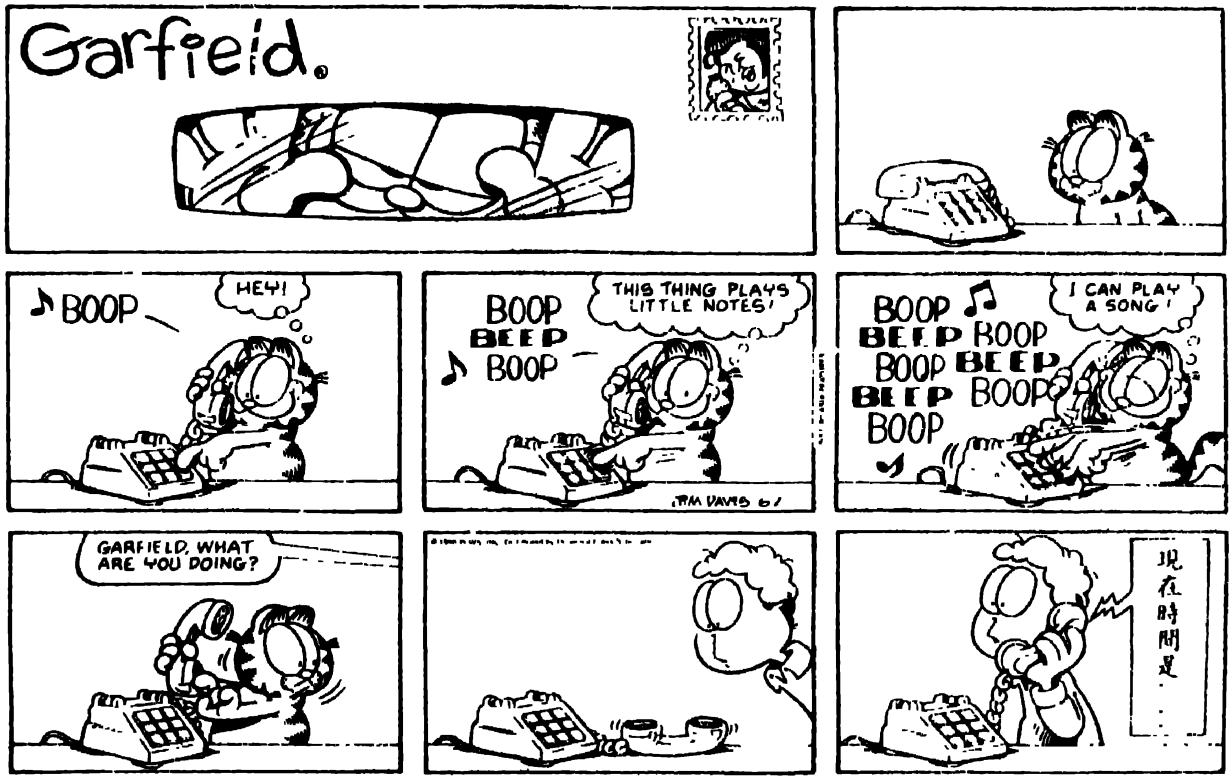


"THERE'S INSANITY IN THE FAMILY ... LEROY THINKS HE'S BOSS."

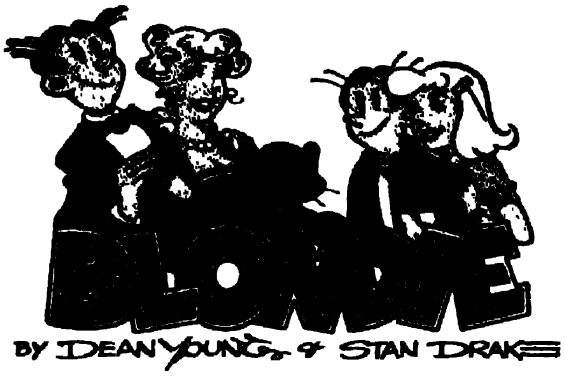
"WELL, THE CANARY DIDN'T DIE, SO I GUESS WE CAN RISK EATING."

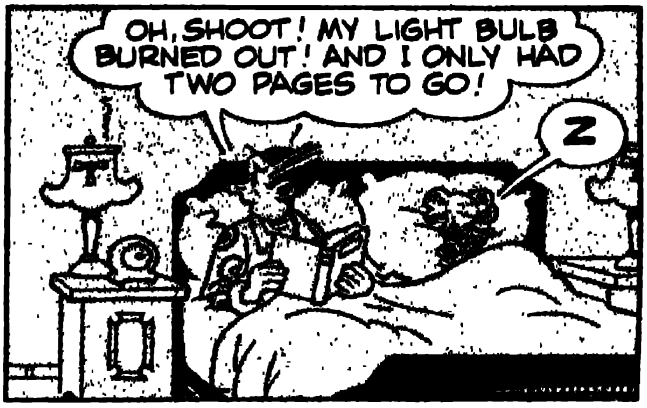
"THE ONLY TIME I OPEN MY MOUTH AROUND LORETTA IS TO YAWN."

GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

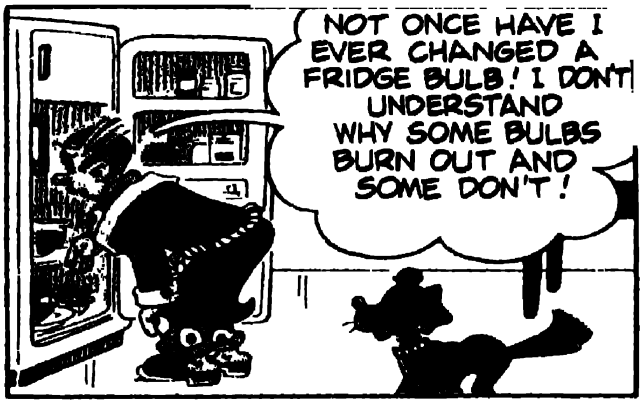


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP





DOGGONE IT! NOW I HAVE TO GO DOWN AND GET ANOTHER BULB OR I WON'T BE ABLE TO FINISH MY BOOK...



BON VOYAGE

***Dipti Dave** visits the ancient port town of Beypore, a ship-building centre since the 14th century*

It all started when Cherraman Perumal went to Mecca in the 14th century. While he was busy embracing Islam, the Arabs fell in love with his *dhow*. The simple yet attractive ship carved out of Nilambur teak at the port town of Beypore near Calicut became every Arab's dream boat. Though Perumal has long been lost in the pages of history books, Beypore is a "must stop" for every sea-loving Arab.

This ancient port has been carving custom-made luxury boats, fishing boats, cargo ships and just about anything on water for the sheikhs from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Katar, Bahrain and Oman who often sail here either to order or repair their ships. Word has also spread as far as Germany, Japan and America.

A former Japanese ship captain and author of a book on 'Similarities of Indian and Japanese culture', Akira Iwata, visited Beypore in 1991 with a unique request. Representing

A partly constructed ship lying at Beyport

BONSAI VERSIONS

Mohammed Bashir makes the most exquisite ships—in miniature

Mohammed Basheer is a busy man. What started off as a hobby in between working hours in a ship-building yard at Beypore, is now a full-time occupation for this carpenter-turned-entrepreneur.

Owner of MKM Toys, which makes model boats, *uru* in bottles, *kottiya*, *hiric*, sambook, including replicas of famous ancient ships, Mohammed caters only to the market in West Asia. With help from local youths, employed in Dubai and Saudi Arabia, his order list is never empty. In fact, merchants visiting Beypore never miss a stop to his workshop and emporium.

Basheer bagged his first contract from a firm in Bahrain in 1986 and since then orders have poured in

Model boat sold by MKM toys

from private trading houses in Saudi Arabia and some tourist firms in West Asia.

With keel lengths from six inches to six feet, the boats cost between Rs 250 and Rs 7,000. The wood comes from waste teakwood used in bigger ships which is bought at scrap value. The smaller models take about a day or two to finish while the more intriguing Sones—miniatures in whiskey bottles—can take about a week. "This involves complex craftsmanship and patience," says Mohammed's brother-in-law, a partner in the business. Hence its price tag is also higher from Rs 200 to Rs 500 a piece.

Reluctant to disclose the procedure of putting a model boat, complete with sails and decorated with beads, strings and cloth, through a bottle neck, Mohammed made in four pieces making it easier to put it through a bottle opening.

MKM Toys does not, however, supply to the government-owned

an association for restoration of the Sumerian ship, he was convinced that the ancient ship was built here about 4,000 years ago and wanted a replica of the ship based on the specifications deciphered from a Mesopotamian tablet excavated some years ago.

According to a proposal placed before Abdul Gaffur, a *dhow* builder and exporter, the Japanese wanted him to build a 120 GUR (252 litre) Sumerian ship thus proving the existence of the "ocean silk road" scientifically with a voyage on the restored ship According to his plan, his voyage was to begin from Calicut and end in Tokyo via Basrah, Karachi, back to Calicut, Singapore and then to Tokyo.

However, he had to reschedule his programme because of rough weather at Basrah and proceeded directly to Tokyo. The ship, built according to specifications in the tablet, which stated that no iron nails were to be used and instead coir threads were stitched to hold the boards together, met with an accident near Osaka. For a whole day, the crew floated in the ocean holding on to the upturned ship. "They were rescued the next day and the ship is now exhibited in one of the islands in Japan," says Gaffur.

A 600-tonne ship costs about Rs 1 crore while small fishing boats work out to about Rs 10 lakh each. The ship builders mainly make the basic structure of the ship, which takes about two years to complete. About 20 to 25 carpenters work on a ship, which was earlier made of Nilambur teak (now extinct). Beypore ships, which are not mass produced, come only with sails and masts and the Arabs later motorise them, including addition of such extras as interior decoration in Dubai.

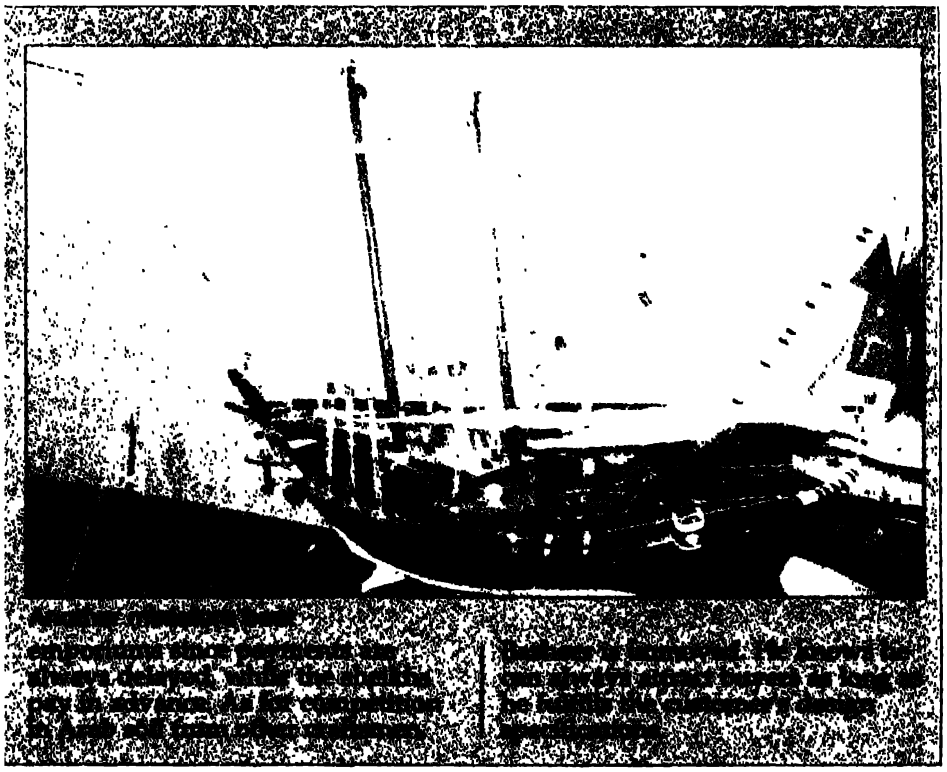
A *dhow* being crafted for a German client

Most of them order luxury vessels for going on a cruise with family and friends during weekends. "In fact," says Gaffur, showing an advertisement in a local Malyalam newspaper, "a resort in Cochin is planning to offer cruises in one of the ships which we built for a merchant from Dubai."

Beypore has a majority of Muslims with a large mosque dominating the landscape Most shops along the sandy path deal in ship-building products like anchors, iron nails and sails, all of which are made in and around Beypore. A number of lodges are also available for the Arab merchants who come shopping for boats.

But in the past few years this small-scale industry has been facing rough weather Says Gaffur, "Orders are few and far between now." Like all things else one can blame it on mindless modernisation For one, the Nilambur teak, considered one of the best by the Arabs, is no longer grown. "The British had started Nilambur plantations in the Malabars in 1800, but now it is difficult to find even a single tree," says Gaffur

About 40 to 50 feet of teak is required for the keel of a ship and transporting it is a major problem. Now, Karimarudu wood, found in the Wynad forest, is used instead Since the wood is also available in Malaysia, the Arabs import it directly and are making their own ships with the carpenters brought from Beypore. Moreover, since the wood has to land via Mangalore, most of the ship building activity has shifted to the port city of Karnataka.



The exodus of good carpenters to West Asia, where they are paid more, coupled with greater demand for fishing boats made of fibre glass has added to the woes of the builders. The fact that the industry is facing a lean season, which is from September to May, is evident from the half-finished to just started ships covered with dried palm leaves resembling remnants of some forgotten civilisation.

But who knows when another Japanese may turn up with an unusual request, or even an American in search of a replica of the Noah's Ark. And then, the builders of Beypore may be in business again. ■

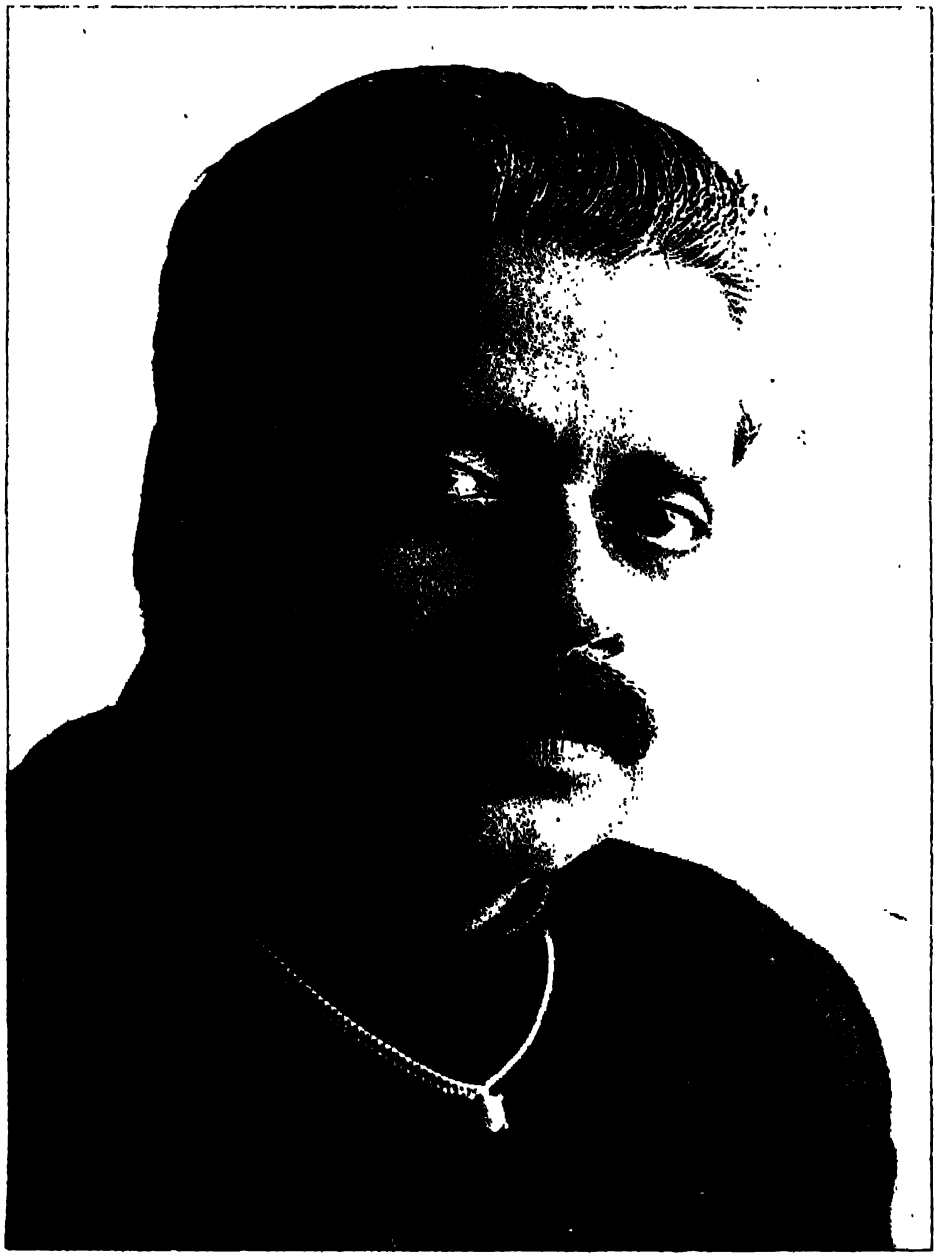
CARRYING A TUNE

Is what Hariharan does best. ***Sudha G. Tilak*** *profiles the singer, whose new album, Colonial Cousins, is doing great business*

Colonial Cousins, you say, sounds more like a white man's tag for a couple of Indians. But instead of taking offence, Hariharan merely chuckles good-humouredly. But then, he can afford to laugh; in fact, such has been the success of this album that Hariharan can laugh all the way to the bank.

Colonial Cousins, touted as the "first ever Indian pop album" was released in April and has already crossed 65,000 copies in sales so far and is expected to do even more business in the months to come. And, clarifies Hariharan, "There's nothing gimmicky about the name. It's just to signal a moving away from the norms."

Hariharan: A voice that is all honey and velvet



The fact that the album was destined for success was apparent even when it was being recorded by Hariharan and Leslie Lewis at Manor Studio in London. All those dropping in at the studio—and this apparently included several big names of the music world—were so carried away by the beauty of the music they were listening to that they decided to pitch in "for this new sound and different kind of music", as Madhav Das, general manager of Magnasound, south, puts it

Grammy winner Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Vernon Reid and Doug Wimbish of Living Colour, Skip McDonald, Talvin Singh, Sipra Bose and Najma Akhtar, all of whom were there at Manor Studio in London, contributed to give the album a universal colour. And the atmosphere at Manor Studio helped. As Hariharan says, with a hint of pride, "That's the place where Elton John and Paul McCartney recorded their albums "

Ghazal singer and currently a favourite of the film playback industry, Hariharan says the album was born of an "unplugged concert" close to midnight at a recording studio in Bombay Leslie Lewis was composing the music for an advertisement jingle which Hariharan was to sing. During a break that went on for too long, Leslie, to alleviate the boredom, began to try on a bit of jazz and blues and Hariharan joined in, humming a *sargam* and pitching in with a *taal* Break over, the hangers-on clapped and went back to work.

But the experience stuck with the two musicians. Keen to replicate the sound they had created, the two came and together decided to compose the lyrics, set the music and sing together. The album has numbers that mix English lyrics with Indian classical notes. The songs

Posing with Leslie Lewis for the album *Colonial Cousins*

deal with such subjects as religion and friendship and rely on such diverse musical influences as the blues and Rajasthani folk tunes

Colonial Cousins is a bit of a surprise coming from Hariharan who for the last one decade has been better known as a ghazal singer. He was included in the World Archives of Music, when his ghazal album, *Aab Shaar-e-Ghazal* attained gold status. And this year, his album, *Gulfam*, won him the Best Album of the Year Award. What's more, he has a firm grounding in Carnatic music and is a Tamilian to boot. "He has broken the taboo that a south Indian can excel in north Indian classical music too," says playback singer S.P Balasubramaniam.

Hariharan is too modest to admit it, but at 40 he has come into his own with mass recognition for his film songs like *Tu hi re* from *Bombay*, *Hai rama* from *Rangeela*, which have turned out to be chartbusters. "Life", he chuckles, "begins at 40". Actually with a bit of pancake and lighting Hariharan could well be the ideal do-gooder elder brother in the Tamil movie. That is, of course, if he got rid of the ponytail that he has been sporting of late.

A science graduate who later picked up a degree in law ("You are expected to pick a couple of degrees in the south," he says) he decided to make music his profession. True to his roots in Tamil Nadu he had in his boyhood days been tutored in Carnatic music by his parents, classical vocalists of Thanjavur and Tirunelveli. Moving to Bombay the NRT (Non Resident Tamil) got to listen to an LP of Ustad Mustafa Khan and overcome by the beauty of the music began learning Hindustani music.

The next milestone was ghazals, thanks to an earful of Mehdi Hasan. In 1980 he released his first album *Ghazal ka Mausam*. Hariharan got to prove a point this way: that 'Madrasis' don't sing with an *aiyaiyo* accent. He worked hard on perfecting his Urdu diction and unlearning his Carnatic influence while singing Hindustani.

Hariharan's ghazals at their best are a package of soulful music, drowsy dreams over lost love, with a strong streak of romanticism. "The fusion is not in my music but in me for I have got all streams of music into me," says Hariharan.

But despite the training in various genres of music and being gifted with a voice that's all honey and velvet, popular adulation evaded Hariharan. "That came with A R Rahman", he acknowledges, sitting in Rahman's Panchathan Recording Inn at Madras.

Despite popular songs in *Lamhe* or *Boxer* and having worked with Naushad, Salil Choudhury, Hariharan wasn't accepted by the Hindi film industry. It made it difficult for those who wanted to typecast him as either a ghazal singer or a Tamil trying a different kind of music or a classically bent film singer.

"My contribution is that I have avoided the claustrophobia that comes with being slotted in a particular kind of music and made my mark in whichever genre I have been involved with", says Hariharan. So a *Colonial Cousins* which has him switching with ease from Carnatic to Hindustani and to English vocals is just an extension of a long innings in the music business. Backstage at his home in Bombay, which he shares with his wife and two sons, Hariharan flips for action flicks, hangs around in shorts and tries his best not to miss his morning *riyaz*. "I just love to do all kinds of things", he says. He might like to give an ice cream a skip to save his voice from thickening, but he can't give up a spicy Tamil diet of *sambar* or *kozahambu*.

Having finally come into his own after frustrating years of having his talent go unappreciated, Hariharan isn't going away in a hurry. There is a quiet confidence that is evident about him now. But, for the rest, he's pretty much the same. Quiet manners, friendly laughter, completely unaffected, but easy and stylish. And like his music: soothing, mellow and romantic. ■

FIRST PERSON

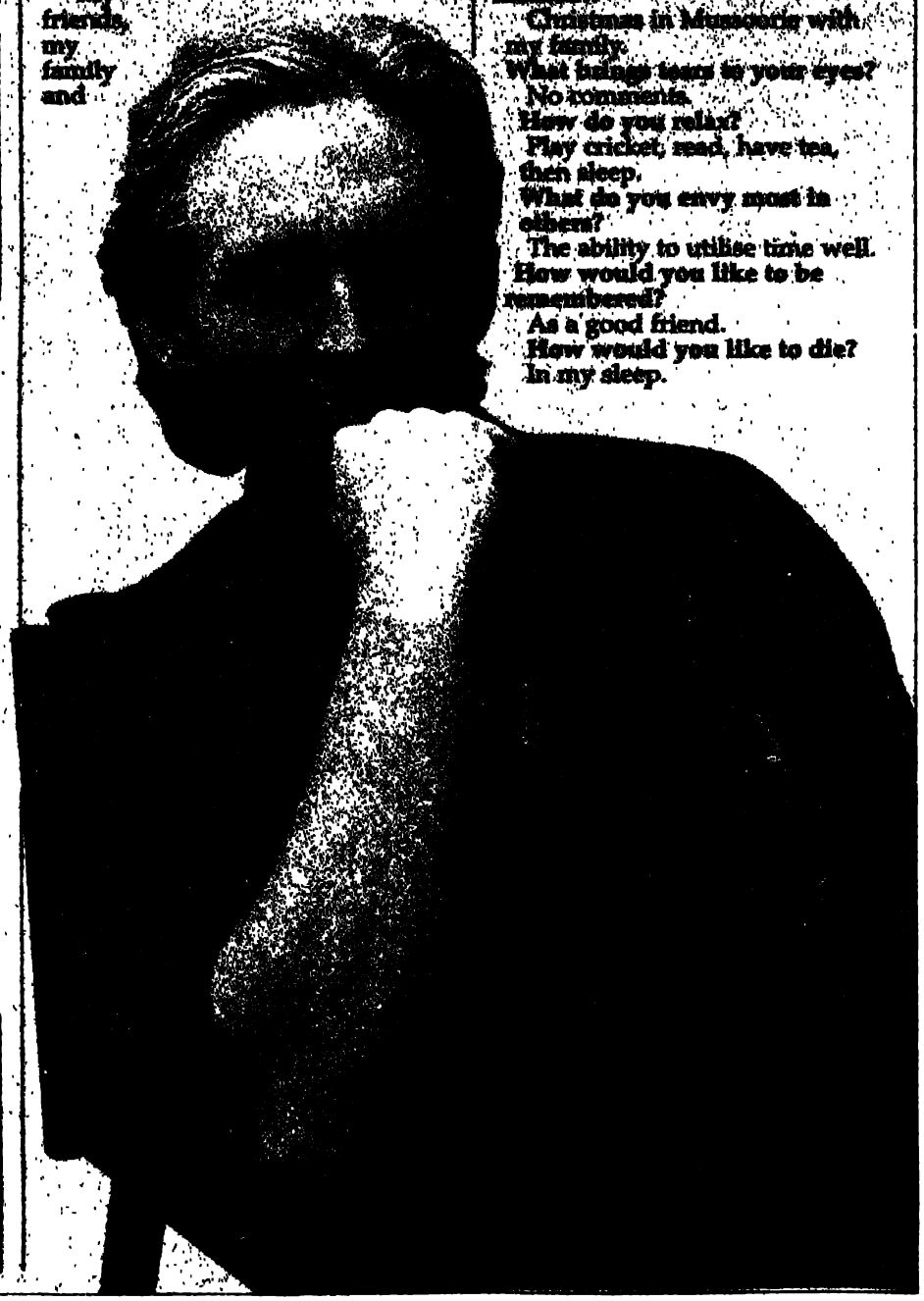
***TOM ALTER** over the last decade or so, has become familiar to movie-goers as a police officer, a thug, a man of the cloth, a slick diplomat, a tea planter and a British colonial. Born of American missionary parents, Alter has come to occupy a special slot in the mix of romance, songs, violence, crime, sex and kitsch in Hindi films. To his credit, are appearances in Satyajit Ray's Shatranj ke Khilari and Sir Richard Attenborough's Gandhi.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A hot cup of tea after a job well done.
What is your greatest fear?
Fundamentalism—either in religion or patriotrism.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My family.
What do you dislike most in others?
Cynicism.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Laziness.
What is your most precious possession?
My children.
What objects do you always carry?
My typewriter and my track suit.
What makes you most depressed?
Narrow-mindedness.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Too many things to choose from.
What is your favourite word?
Amazing.
What is your favourite journey?
Dehra Dun-Mussoorie.
What is your favourite dream?
Playing a perfect cover-drive.

> **What is your favourite dream?**
>
> Playing a perfect cover-drive

> **What is your greatest regret?**
>
> Being born about 50 years too late

What is your nightmare?
Not being able to run.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My family.
What is your source of sustenance?
My friends, my family and myself.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I am really, really tired.
What is your greatest regret?
Being born about 50 years too late.
What has been your happiest moment?
Christmas in Mussoorie with my family.
What brings tears to your eyes?
No comments.
How do you relax?
Play cricket, read, have tea, then sleep.
What do you envy most in others?
The ability to utilise time well.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a good friend.
How would you like to die?
In my sleep.



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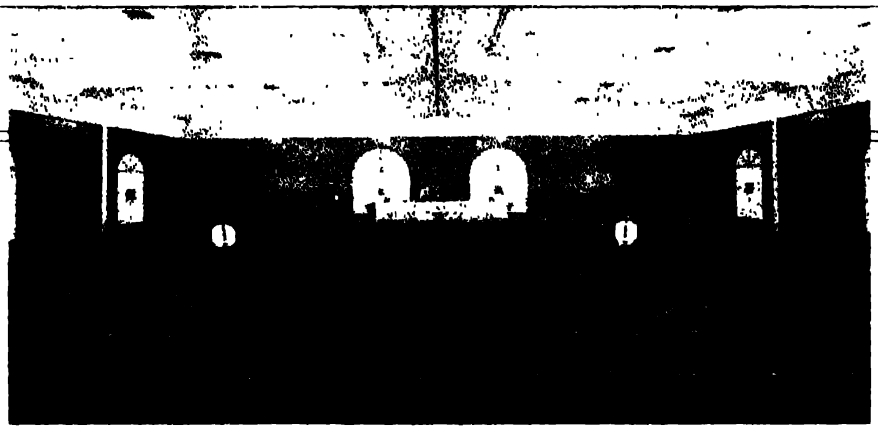

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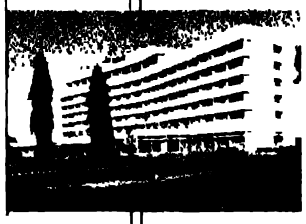

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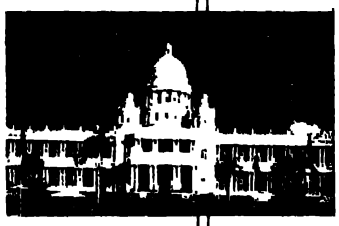

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The Telegraph

23 JUNE 1998

POST MORTEM

Over to the Quiz Master

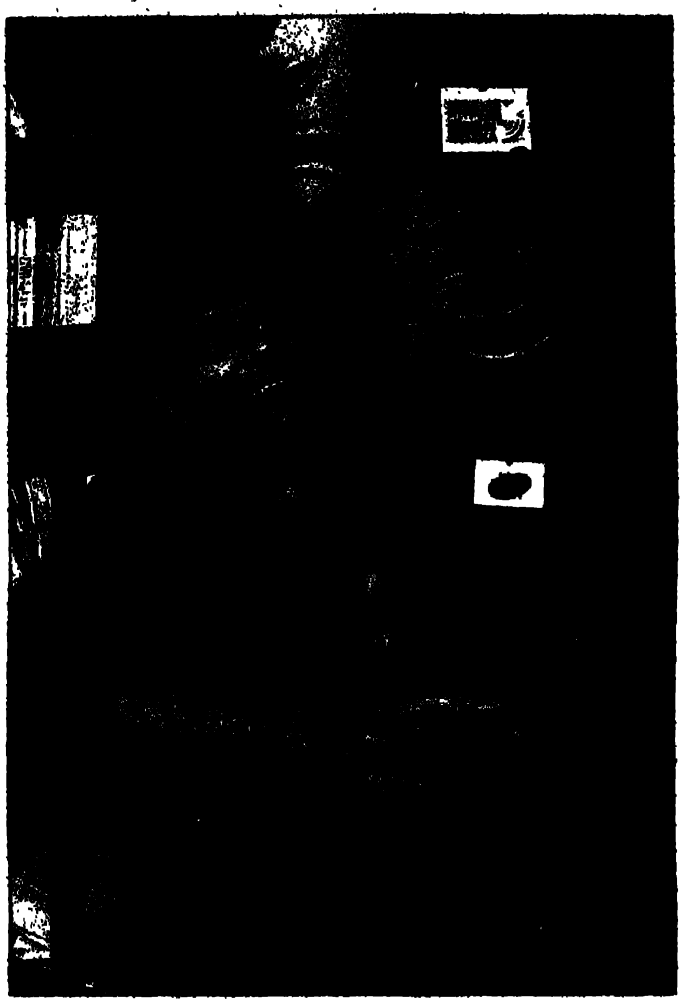
■ It was simply delightful to have a cover story profiling the handsome quiz master, Siddhartha Basu, ('Quizzically Yours', May 5).

Quizzing has become a popular form of entertainment where the participants range from young school kids to college students and adults. Quizzing is a nice way of keeping oneself alert about current affairs. It's also a good way of testing one's level of intelligence.
Nirmalendu Chakraborty,
Cooch Behar

■ Thank you for the cover story on our favourite television personality, Siddhartha Basu. His good looks, coupled with his serious image, have made him a cult figure of sorts.

As quizzing adds to one's knowledge, it should be introduced as a compulsory subject in schools.
Manohar Mandal,
Nabadwip (W.B.

■ Quiz contests have become so popular because general knowledge is very important for excelling anywhere; be it in schools/colleges or in competitive examinations.
Debanjan Banerjee,
Calcutta



Siddhartha Basu: The friendly quiz master

■ One quiz master who became very popular in the Eighties was Bhaskar Bhattacharjee whose rivalry with Siddhartha Basu is well known. He had a good voice and diction and was also the English news reader on the National Network. But he faded out of the scene in no time leaving the world of quizzing to the one and only Siddhartha Basu.
Dyutiman Bhattacharya,
Buxarah (Howrah)

■ The best thing about Siddhartha Basu is the confidence with which he conducts the programmes. His success is purely due to the research he and his team undertakes.

There can be various opinions about one particular question. But the credibility of the quiz master lies in giving the correct or *most* correct answer; for which research is necessary.
Prafulla Sinha,
Patna

■ With quizzing becoming a regular feature on the social circuit and most lavishly promoted by clubs and other establishments, it has become the favourite pastime of students.

In fact, some of them are seen reading more of quiz books than their school text books.

Aren't studies more important than quizzes?
Suman Burman,
Calcutta

INSIDE

The Khan family

PAGE 4

SUBHALAKSHMI KHAN, wife of sarod maestro, Amjad Ali Khan, is more than just a housewife and mother; she's an artiste by her own right. A profile.

PAGE 26

KABIR BEDI is back in action in *Sandokan's Triumph*

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30 FIRST PERSON

COVER STORY

HIS BETTER HALF

Subhalakshmi, the wife of sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, isn't just a perfect home-maker and ideal wife. She's also an artiste in her own right, reports ***Manisha Gulati***

"DOMO ARIGOTO UDAI MASta. Ami ki bolbo. Madras vande renda aradha veedi madyri. Afeete sen. Nice to see you. *Hindi to apko pata hai.'*

Meet Subhalakshmi Khan in five different languages. A perfect welcome by our perfect hostess for the day. But then, Subhalakshmi, spouse of the sarod maestro, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, is full of surprises. A dancer, a cultural ambassador of India, and now a linguist.

Treading warily you step into the breathtakingly beautiful interior of the Khan homestead. Every hand-picked piece breathes exclusivity, and you're almost afraid to sit down for fear that you might knock one down carelessly. A white marble staircase leads up to the bedrooms from the colour co-ordinated drawing room. A split-level house, the wooden library and teaching room are situated in the basement.

Over chilled glasses of mango milk shake and Bengali *mishti*, Subhalakshmi Khan, looking radiant and fresh, opens her heart out about her life as an artiste, as an artiste's wife and

Tapan Das

Subhalakshmi with Amjad Ali Khan:

Their wedding: It was love at first sight for Amjad Ali Khan

as a mother of two artistes.

"What can people want to know about me? I am such a simple person, what is there to tell?" is her very modest beginning. Right, why would people want to know more about celebrities. She laughs, looking 15 years younger than the 50 that she is.

Subhlakshmi started her career as a dancer at the age of eight. Born in a family of music lovers in Assam, she was exposed to the arts at a very young age Her father, Parshu Borooah, left his home and parents because they didn't approve of his interest in music. But the major influencing factor in her life was her father's brother, P.C. Borooah. He was the first to script Assamese music and also encourage her to learn dancing.

The Maharaja of Manipur was a good friend of her father and he guided her, under Guru Rashibari Sharma to learn Manipuri dancing. "There was also nothing to do in the evening after we came back home from school. We had so much time on our hands, my sisters and I decided to take up dancing. And I continued it and took it up more seriously. In those days dancing was considered a real art and very well respected. I started learning Manipuri dancing with the maharaja's daughter."

Her family shifted out of Assam for reasons of the children's education. Subhalakshmi also travelled all over the country for holidays and later on to perform. Not too keen on studies and school, she dropped out after her tenth class and that's when she could devote all her time and energies to dance. In 1955 she met Rukmini Devi Arundale at a dance drama. Watching her perform, Subhalakshmi made up her mind that that particular form of dancing was the one she wanted to learn. And so the transition from Manipuri to Bharatnatyam took place. And Subhalakshmi started learning under Rukmini Devi at the internationally famous Kalakshetra Institute.

Fate seems to have played a part in her decision because it is through her dance that she was to finally meet the man she married. Performing in Calcutta in the year 1974, she wasn't even aware that the young Amjad Ali Khan was in the audience. Soon after that the two were to meet at a common friend's house. And then it was a spate of intermittent dating and coincidental meetings for almost two years.

In January 1976, the two performed together on stage in Guwahati, and made magic But for Subhalakshmi it was a slow kindling of fire. On the other hand, Khan Saab, as she calls him, was smitten from the word go. It was almost love at first sight.

Revelling in her role as *gurupatni*

Subhalakshmi, Amjad Ali Khan and their two sons with Prince Charles

Subhalakshmi and Amjad Ali Khan at a function: The happy couple

The Khan couple with Hariprasad Chaurasia

She confesses, "I could never believe that such a well-known person could fall in love with me. When people used to tell me that Khan Saab keeps coming to see your performances and it's a big thing, I didn't even take it seriously. Afterwards when he started calling me up from Delhi to tell me how he felt I realised. But even then I didn't say yes immediately. I told him I needed time to think."

And think Subhalakshmi did. For a good six months. During which time she was plagued with telephone calls from people she scarcely knew or didn't know at all. Calls that were meant to ward her off Khan Saab. But rebel that she is, the more people spoke against him, the more her desire and determination rose. Until she finally accepted his offer of marriage

Till today, though, Subhalakshmi remains the individualistic woman in command. She knows her mind and she plays according to her rules. "I'll accept Khan Saab's views if he is telling me something different to what I believe, but he has to convince me it's right. I have my principles and I stick by them." Which doesn't go to say that Khan Saab doesn't have the last word in most matters at home. "But I need to express my opinions and have my questions answered."

A typical day at the Khan household begins at 6:30 am. "I am lucky that Khan Saab doesn't insist on me waking up before him. Sometimes I wake up to the sound of him playing

the sarod. It's a beautiful feeling. And then we have tea together. Even if Khan Saab has had a cup before me, he'll always have another with me. That's a must. It's these small ways in which he makes me feel very special."

After that it's the constant ringing of the telephone and people, people, people. "He tells me to answer most of his calls and take the messages. People must be thinking the wife always picks up the phone. But I manage all his affairs and trip arrangements, concerts, meetings."

And does a good job of it, too. A very organised person, Subhalakshmi likes to have everything just pat. Always with a diary in her hand for all the do's and dont's for the day, she is a stickler for detail. Going by the decor in the house one can be assured about that. Nothing is where it shouldn't be and a broken candle in a crystal candlestand is giving her that familiar uncomfortable feeling. "I've joined it but I know I'm going to change it. I'm a perfectionist."

The menu for the day is planned, so all that's left is the running after the servants for the upkeep of the house. After a life of dance, spent under the limelight, doesn't the thought of a routine scare and suffocate her? "The decision to leave dancing was totally my own. I am a conventional person with strong family values You can't have two people so involved with their career that there is no one to look after the needs of the family."

Was the decision coloured by the fact that Khan Saab is a big star and needed her support at home?

"It is not a question of being a star," she says. "If you love someone you do certain things because you want to for that person. It is not a sacrifice. So many housewives give up their career after marriage because they want to look after their husbands and children "

One can't fault her for her decision. Their two sons, 18-year-old Amaan and 16-year-old Ayaan are extremely well-mannered boys with no pretentions and strong values that can teach one a thing or two about family, discipline and respect (And very handsome to boot — well, what do you expect with that kind of lineage)

"It's a great feeling to see how my boys have turned out," says the proud mother. "Even if they fight with me they always come back later to tell me that they are sorry. They respect me and they are not spoilt or ill-mannered. I always teach them to live in a balanced way. There are cars coming out in the market everyday Today if they have a Maruti 1000, tomorrow they'll want something better that's available I tell them whatever car you have it is good enough to take you from one place to another They listen to what I say."

The smile that charmed the sarod maestro

Both boys are also extremely talented and have at this early age achieved star status They've performed with Amjad Ali Khan on the sarod at several concerts. A lesser-known fact about the boys is Ayaan's painting skills. He is sheer magic with a paint brush The walls of the house are decorated with his masterpieces — Ganesh in every inconceivable form: as a billiards player, as Charlie Chaplin, as Akbar The Great, smoking a pipe, performing on the sarod, eating ladoos.

Obviously the boys have no qualms about religion and its various forms,

even though their parents belong to different faiths. "We respect all religions and celebrate all occasions," says Subhalakshmi. "Khan Saab and I are not rigid people." So much so, that she did not feel the need to convert to Islam when she married a Muslim

But talk about possessiveness and Subhalakshmi's eyes start sparking. "I'm a typical Cancerian. I love intensely and very possessively. But trust is the biggest thing in marriage. Khan Saab travels so much and meets so many people I can be jealous and suspicious But I always tell him, if there is something you tell me first. I don't want to hear it from other people And people are always talking. I just tell them to keep quiet "

Does he react in the same manner? Laughing loudly she replies, "I don't know He's a Libran and very balanced If there is a party that we are invited to and he's not in town and I ask him if I should go, he'll say, '*tum dekh lo*'. He trusts me and lets me make my own decisions "

For the long trips though, she and the boys both join him, making it business-cum-pleasure "It's expensive but then he likes to have us with him " At this point a very polite servant enters and she rattles off some instructions to him in Bengali. "When Khan Saab isn't here I get all the pending housework done like painting and plumbing jobs " The perfect homemaker

So, what is the one thing that is not so perfect about her?

"Oh, I have a lousy temper," she laughs. "It blows up to the sky but when someone talks to me and makes things okay, it immediately cools off Like a bubble. I keep telling Khan Saab neither of us is normal. We both have these artistic temperaments." And now with four artistes in the house plus several more when teaching is on, it must be a very volatile atmosphere.

How strongly does the concept of '*Guru Patni*' apply to her?

"Very strongly. Khan Saab's students call me '*Didi*' or '*Ma*' and many of them come to talk to me about their problems Even when Khan Saab and the boys are sitting together and talking and I enter the room and ask them what the matter is they tell me and say you tell us what to do. I give them a solution and they always listen and take my advice "

Subhalakshmi and Amjad Ali Khan have always been referred to as the cultural ambassadors of India. "When Khan Saab and I go abroad it is not only for his performances but also when we meet people we reflect the culture of our country in our behaviour, our speech and our views," she says. "I do perform with Khan Saab occasionally if it is a charitable function. I guess that's how the name, cultural ambassadors comes about."

So, how does she feel about Sushmita Sen getting the same tag? "Probably Sushmita and Aishwarya both reflect the culture of our country," is her diplomatic response.

Just then the telephone rings Meetings for the day and the next are being fixed up It's time to make a graceful exit. Subhalakshmi laughingly claims, "I don't know what you are going to write, but I will probably be in the US when it comes out so I don't know how people will react "

The words of an American artist come to mind, 'Art is the only way to run away without leaving home'. ■

The Khans with Ravi Shanker

Girija Devi blesses the couple

FOCUS

ROAD BLOCK

Calcutta's chaotic traffic has ***Nari Kripalani*** *up in arms*

This *mahanagar's* mobile mayhem must make most men mad. See the impossible vehicular assortment juxtaposed with various living creatures, a veritable Noah's Ark of moving bodies and contraptions.

You start with the two-legged variety, the ubiquitous self-propelling pedestrian (call it PRT Personal Rapid Transit), then come bicycles, rickshaws, carts, carriages (drawn by horses, mules, bulls, donkeys, perhaps even by camels and elephants), two-wheelers, three-wheelers (autos, tempos), taxicabs, trucks, buses, goats, donkeys, sheep, horses, pigs, chickens plus bears, monkeys, geese, ducks, cats, dogs, rats, squirrels, bandicoots, serpents and a motley collection of birds and insects, and of course, men-at-work and equipment from the electric, telecom, metro-rail, tram, road repair departments, etc. (Despite this exhaustive list, some exotic life forms might have been missed.)

The frenetic and unruly drivers, riders, pullers, 'pilots' of Calcutta are a breed apart. They have learnt the hard way, that only the gutsy, the congenitally aggressive can get ahead in the city's horrendous traffic jams.

As you know, 'offence is the best form of defence', and the only way to advance in Calcutta is by sheer, cussed, Offensive Mobility (OM in short). Good manners, abiding by the law and common road courtesy and decency are thrown to the winds just so you can put one foot (or one wheel) forward.

The following 10 commandments of Offensive Mobility are prescribed for the different categories to ensure that their capabilities are well-honed.

The pedestrian

You are the king, so please hog the roads, the footpaths, the streets, the lanes, in fact, any walkable space. More power to PRT. The pedestrian must have the right of way, and while crossing any road at any point, indulge in your death wish of ending your life as a traffic cop with your hand blatantly raised to oncoming and perhaps, unstoppable traffic ordering it (like King Canute with the waves) to

Caught in the jam: A school girl, impatient after a long wait, looks out of the window of her car

stop

If in the bargain you are maimed, injured or simply run over, well, that's the surest one-way ticket to your creator Onward brave soldier, say a prayer and move on, as one false step and it's curtains for you.

Rickshaws and hand carts

You guys are a bunch of militant maniacs, to say the least, with no sense of direction or road manners Continue to push/pull forward—squeeze through any nook, crevice and opening and prolong Calcutta's anachronistic anomalies, the rickshaw/hand cart should have been junked long ago—but what the hell!

Bicycles/cycle-rickshaws

Being the poor man's transport how can we possibly deny you your place in the sun or the rain, day in and day out? Use your power every which way you can and go forth

Two-wheelers of all kinds

Why do you always want to move up in front, snaking in and out of traffic so senselessly? But since you fellas are a bunch of moustachioed toughies, continue your one-step-ahead-manship and merrily proceed, despite danger to life and limb

Autorickshaws, taxis,minibuses

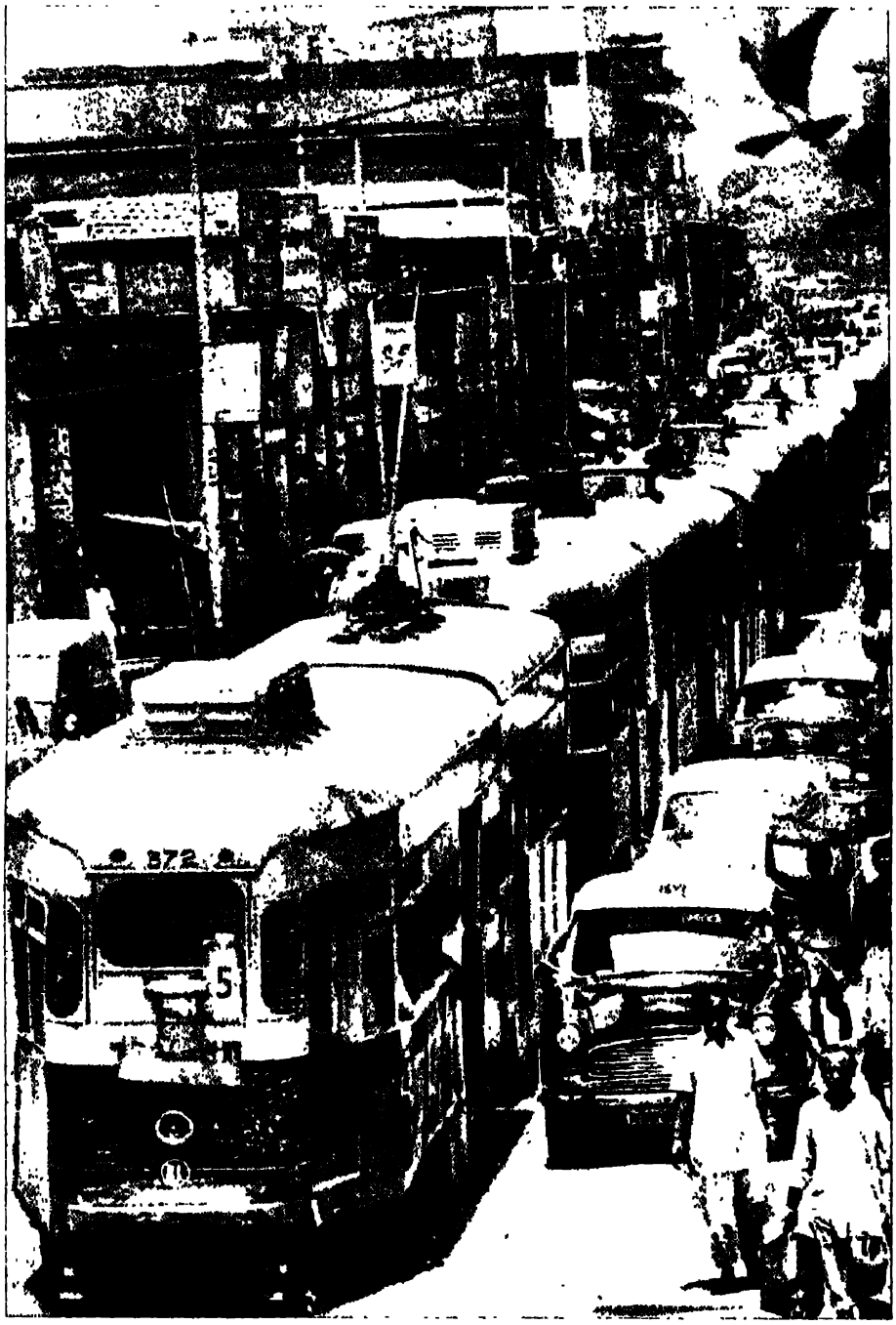
You break every traffic rule every day and get away with it Your astonishing insouciance and devil-may care attitude are just the right ingredients for moving forward in the city

Where in the world do you have vehicles stop anywhere in the middle of the road in any crowded intersection to load/unload passengers or cargo? You minibus 'pilots', why do you drive with such hysterical frenzy treating every turn in the road as the last lap of the Indy 500? You sure know how to charge into the valleys of death every minute without respite.

The problem is that we foolish Calcuttans, with our naive masochism and innocent streak for identifying with the underdog (including hyenas, jackals, wild dogs, wolves, pariahs and the like) bear your shenanigans with unmitigated indulgence. Keep up the 'BAD' work You guys are doing fine.

Trucks and buses

With you smoke-spewing, polluting, ramshackle, antiquated behemoths hurtling down Calcutta's mean thoroughfares, small wonder so many denizens are despatched to that kingdom in the sky every day, thanks to your 'killer' instinct



The authorities still cannot decide whether to preserve or terminate trams

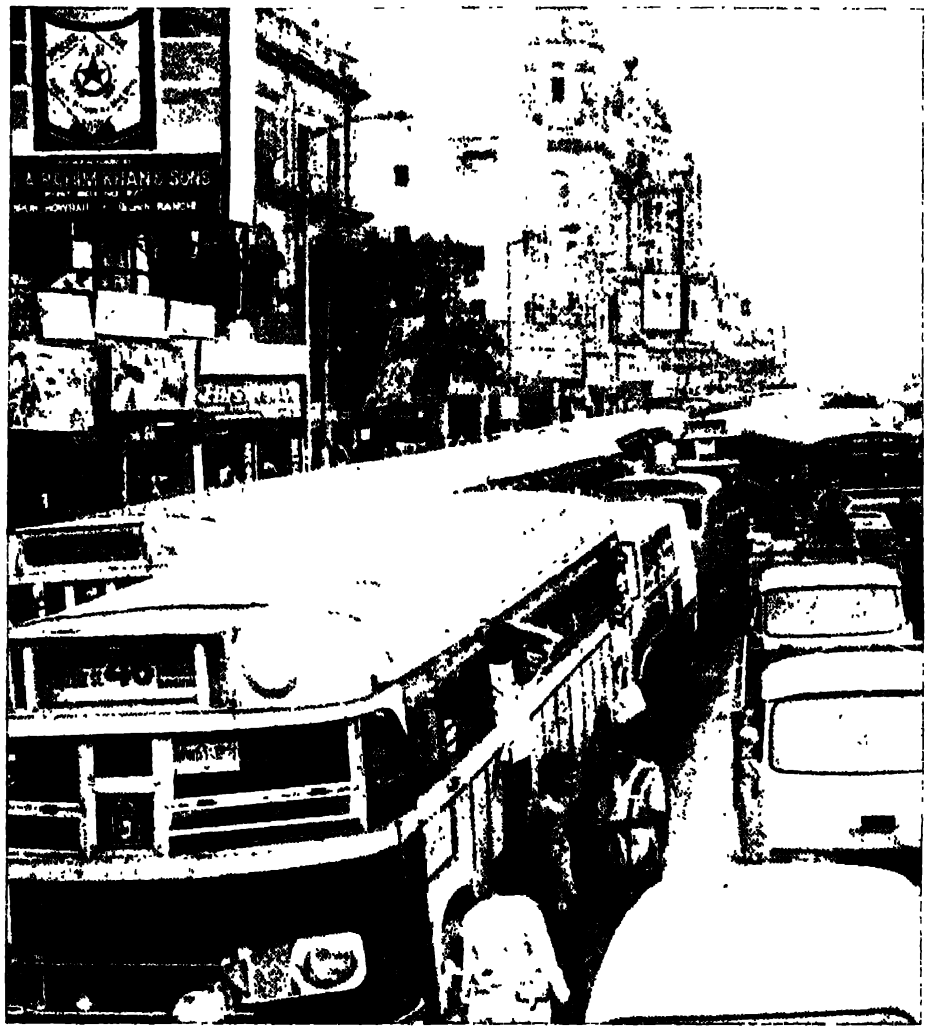
Cars

The utter lack of common civility, the culture of dog eat dog, dog run over dog, is evident everywhere There is fire in the motorists' eyes, a certain burning desire to proceed by any means, against all odds, all the time ready to brave the moving multitudes, some psychopathic proneness for jockeying into positions of advancement on the byways and highways of the city, oblivious to the obvious dangers, giving no change to the other driver to move forward

Perhaps, this is your idea of one-up-manship, a free-for-all condition, even though in the insane crush all you save are perhaps only a few, worthless seconds in the face of possible injury or death Well, if you gotta go, you gotta go

Trams

You have been reduced to the status of pitiable, forlorn destitutes with the powers that be unable to decide whether they should preserve



Chowringhee: Forever witnessing a traffic bottleneck

or terminate you. Seeing you sometimes brings tears to one's eyes, remembering nostalgically when your gleaming beauty was the pride of Asia. But who knows there may be a metamorphosis soon. The venerable hulk will be transformed into a wondrous light-rail car. Cheer up, there is still hope for you.

The political/executive heavyweights

Why, when the dictatorship of the proletariat must prevail, do you need to shut down every street and road when you pass? If empathising, sympathising, and participating with the public is the *summum bonum* of your ideology, why do you have to 'cleanse' the roadways when you drive by? You should be reminded that in many socialistic countries even prime ministers ride to work on bicycles, mingling with the crowds.

Perhaps, all of you dreamt dreams of being generalissimos and commisars, godspins of all you survey. If you want to look like road-struck, tin-pot dictators with your cavalcades of jeeps, cars, ambulances, whizzing past us, flags afluttering, what you must do is get some flashy gilt-buttoned, epauletted uniforms from Soviet-surplus marts for a song and strut around the city in full gear with richly caparisoned flunkeys.

Don't worry, if every time you rush by you create unnecessary resentment and hostility against you in the hapless waiting public. Please remember, Calcutta needs 15 per cent of pavement but has only about six per cent and your path-clearing reduces available road space to about three per cent as you breeze past with your screaming sirens. The Geriatric Brigade rides forth in blazing glory.

The traffic police

You arbiters of our transit destiny, you have to be pampered and cajoled; you have to be preserved well as you are an endangered species.

You suffer from ennui, totally burnt-out, placed as you are above (and beyond the reach) of the law, you can have your cake and eat it too. You constantly do the disappearing act from traffic jams and mix-ups, hold up traffic while you chatter with your buddies chewing *paan* and/or *khaini*. You allow indiscriminate jay walking and speeding and look for 'duck ponds' where inevitably you will make your daily assigned quota of fines with the least effort.

You poor scrawny blokes, constantly facing those wayward juggernauts that zoom about you from all sides, you indeed are sangfroid personified. Believe it or not, your lives are protected by the mothers from the crushing jaws of death on the streets. Here, however, are a few commonsense tips to relieve some of the recurring congestion and daily bottlenecks.

(a) Every intersection or T-section should be clear and blocked. This will allow cross-traffic to proceed uninterrupted.

(b) On one-way streets, any traffic from the opposite direction (other than emergency vehicles) must be strictly controlled. Rickshaws, taxicabs and police vans have a tendency to ignore traffic regulations thereby aggravating the problem.

(c) School zones (where nowadays cars and buses are parked two or three deep) must be cleared and made 'Pedestrian Only Zones' during school opening/closing hours; the timings of various neighbouring schools must be staggered.

All vehicles for picking up or depositing students must be parked only where there is open space, i.e., in the Rawdon-Loudon-Hungerford Street area, for instance, vehicles should be parked at Rawdon Square. There should be shuttle buses from the schools plying the school entrance/egress routes and students should board these shuttles and be taken to and fro. These shuttle buses alone should use the streets during school start and finish timings, except vehicles of people living in the adjoining buildings only to enter or exit.

(d) Every unmanned crossing/intersection must have traffic lights or four-way stop signs with vehicles from each direction proceeding alternately.

These ten commandments must be etched in stone for the itinerant public that must be taught proper discipline and traffic rules. ■

EXTRACT

The Sands of TIME

The intrepid travel writer, ***Robyn Davidson****, wandered through Gujarat and Rajasthan, accompanying a group of nomads. An extract from* Desert Places, *in which her experiences are documented*

A squiggle of smoke, a figure in billowing robes, a camel and a bed silhouetted themselves against the horizon. To the east a moon squeezed into the sky; behind me the sun dissolved in the Arabian Sea. This was where I wanted to be. These were the people I wanted to live with. The previous year of doubt and confusion lifted off my back like an outgrown skin.

It had taken us three days to reach Bhuj, the ancient capital of Kutch, in northern Gujarat Dreamboat and Narendra had done most of the driving which left me free to appreciate the landscape, a labyrinth of desert and sea as barren and beautiful as Mars The instant we crossed the state border the roads became strips of aerodrome perfection. Gone were the death-trap potholes, gone the ridges, bumps, two-foot-high shoulders, gravel patches suddenly appearing on hairpin bends Gone the overloaded trucks littering the sides of the road like dead cockroaches, their guts spilled, their wheels pointing skyward. Why? Because in Gujarat, unlike Rajasthan, the money for roads did not go directly into someone's pocket Some of it was actually spent on building roads In Gujarat one could see women Unveiled women Women riding scooters! And you couldsee forestry plots by the side of the road that contained real trees rather than phantom trees which, in Rajasthan, only exist on paper But best of all was having Narendra with me. Not only could he translate languages, he translated what was buried beneath them — the gestures, cultural forms, shared social signals Besides that, he was the least flappable companion I had ever travelled with, the most patient, the most generous.

I had in my possession one hastily scribbled name. Dr Rama Krishna, assistant-director, Gujarat Sheep and

The author walking her new camel back to Jodhpur

Extracted from *Desert Places,* ***by Robyn Davidson. Published by the Penguin Group. Price Rs 500***

The author in a reflective mood

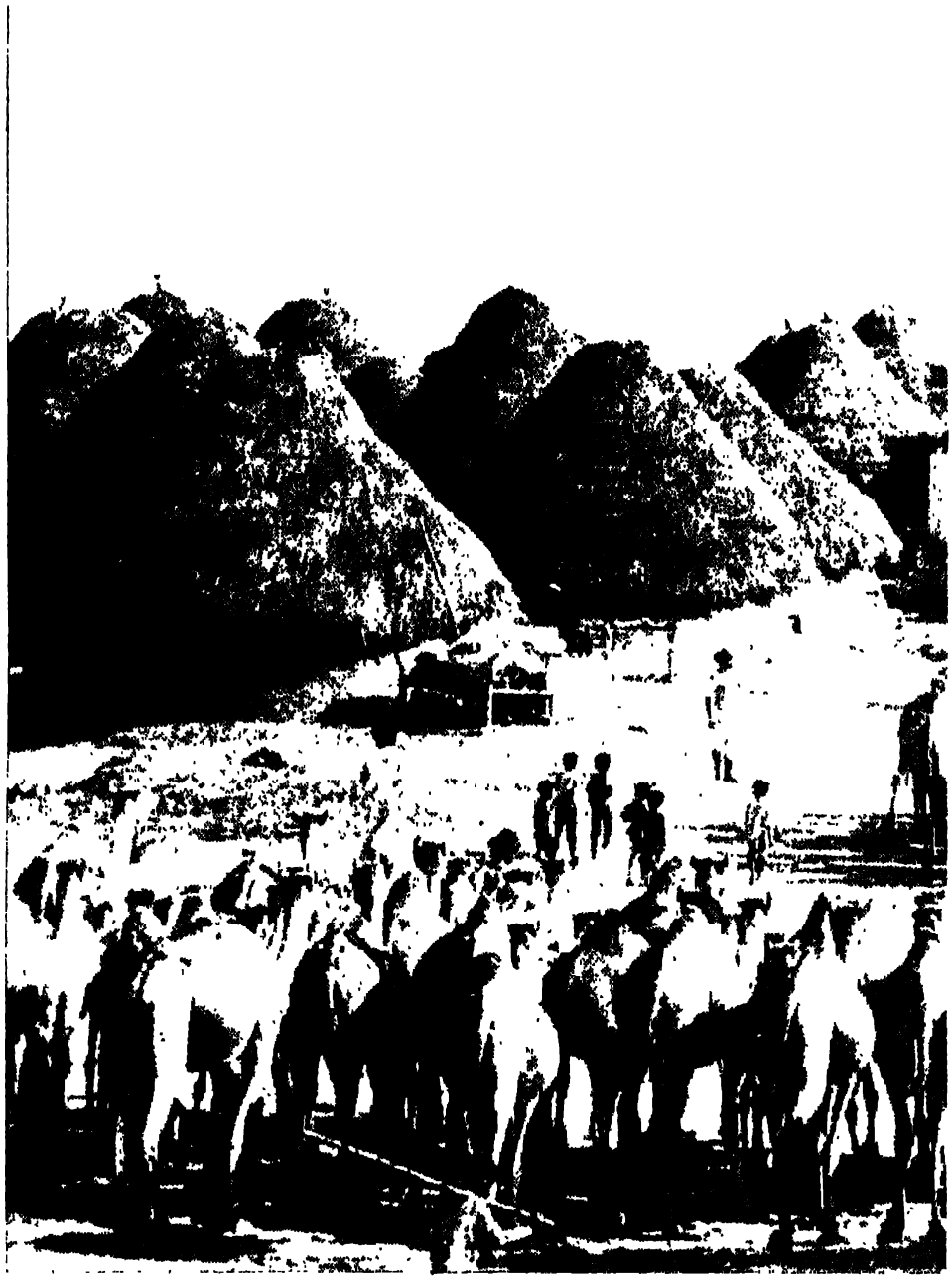
Wool Development Programme, Bhuj Experience had taught me to place little hope in such names But on meeting this South Indian and the saints-among-bureaucrats who worked for him, I knew I had struck gold.

Dr Rama Krishna had immediately brought us to a shepherd whom he particularly liked, Rangka bhai Rabari It had taken us a day to find him, camped on his windswept little plain just a mile outside the village His mother spread her best quilt on the ground for us and brought tea

"I have no home but these camps," she said "I live under the sky, no matter whether there is rain or sun The village is not our home, the dang is our home. That is where our property is"

Rangka assured me that there would be several dangs leaving from his village and setting out for Saurashtra He would not be going this year but he would talk to his community on my behalf. His mother suggested that I would do better to remain here in Kutch, wandering the local area with her.

Rangka's wife Jasu laughed, dazzling the company with her beauty, which was not merely physical but an emanation of her whole potent self "Yes, stay with us here. You carry the water and I shall carry the flour But be warned, if you travel with us your skin will become as black as ours Even your hair will go black" She tugged at my blonde straw then took me to see her 'equipment' stacked neatly on the cot Thickly embroidered blankets, appliqued flour sacks, a marriage smock for a little brother which would take years to complete, a blouse studded with fragments of mica into which she tried, unsuccessfully, to squeeze my bulk

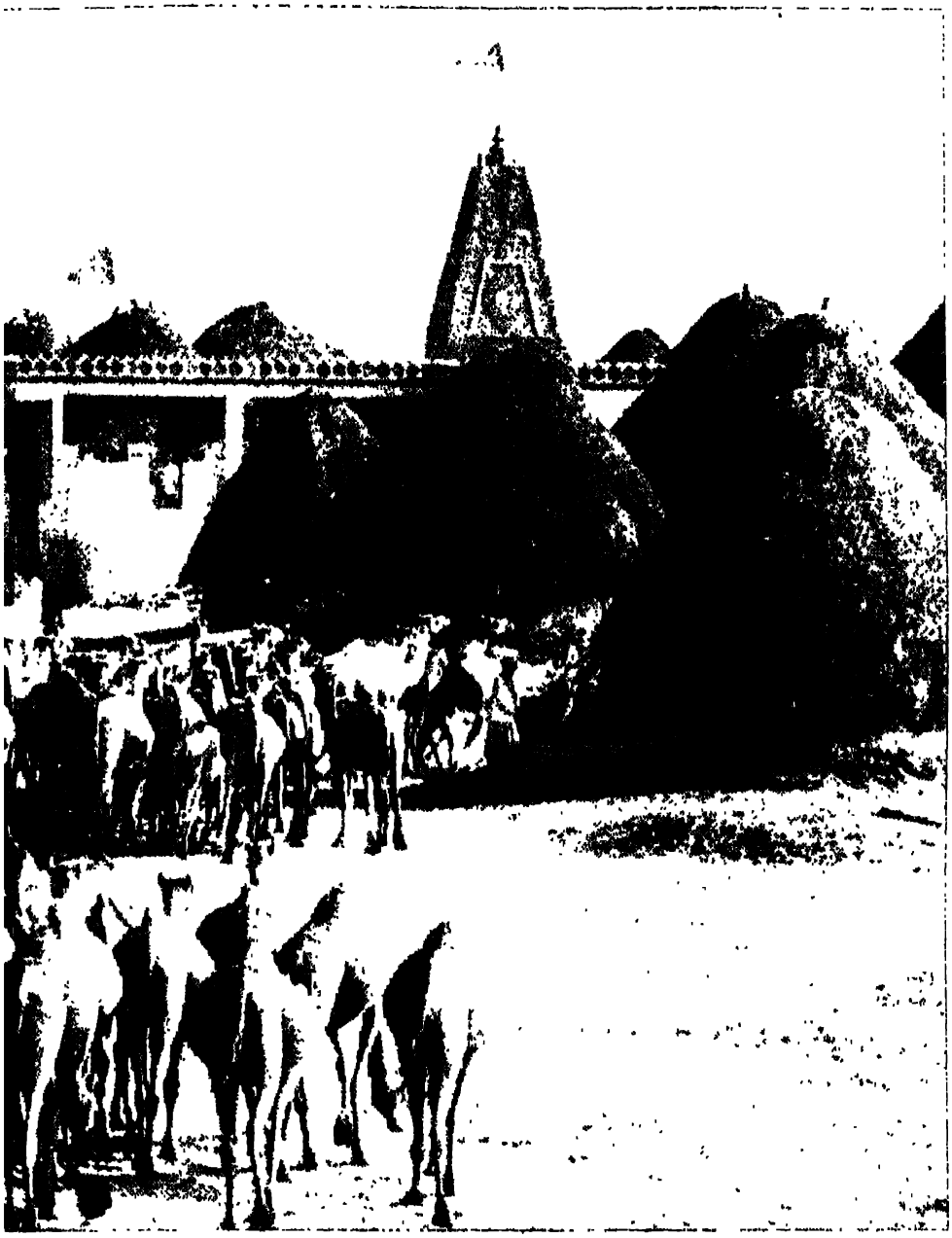


Bhopavand, a Rabari village near Anjar in Gujarat

This was the finest embroidery I had seen anywhere and aeons of wandering were coded in its patterns.

Rangka would not be migrating this year because he was on his honeymoon. He had waited for his wife for over 20 years travelling back and forth to his in-laws' house, begging them to send her to him He and Jasu had been together for just four months, so I can be forgiven for seeing him as a man undone by love. She had cost him Rs 45,000, most of it in jewellery, but by the way he looked at her from under his brows, checking whether his words received her approval, it was clear that he thought she was worth that and more. They were a handsome couple and you wished, when you saw them together, that the feudal tales of desert romance were true that Jasu and her husband found deep pleasure in each other out there on the bed under the stars. But it's unlikely

For one thing, there was always someone else around-- his sisters, mother, visiting children, other shepherds. For another, there weren't the necessary hours to spare. And it was the women and children who shared Jasu's bed, not Rangka.



Two ancient shepherds came hobbling in. They worked for a local landowner for a yearly set of clothes, their tobacco and flour, and a Rs 170 per month. We teased them by asking if they were married, to which they laughed good-naturedly and confessed that they weren't wealthy enough even to get engaged. I did find myself wondering if they enjoyed carnal knowledge of their ewes but I found out later that though the practice was not unheard of, it was considered immoral and punished accordingly. Sex was not a right but one of life's bonuses. Like wealth, you were lucky if you had it but if you didn't, you got on with the task in hand— surviving.

It was not uncommon, I was told, for a woman to be in her mid thirties before her parents finally relinquished her to her husband, usually at the behest of the elders. The reason may well be economic as a daughter is a valuable worker. But from what I was to see later on, the detaining of daughters had as much to do with affection as it did with finance. Or, perhaps in a community like this, one's ability to work and contribute is inextricably bound up with love and respect one receives.

Dr Rama Krishna thought that the Rabari had a hard time being kept in their parents' homes until they were old. But I interpreted the phenomenon differently. Here were women whose value as human beings was reflected in the heavy bride price. They owned property in their own right (receiving sheep from the husband's family at marriage and inheriting the mother's jewellery) and although they did not sit in *panchaits* or attend the men-only smoking/yarning sessions, no one doubted the ferocity of debate back home. They were not burdened with child-bearing during their teens. Their work was as valued as the men's. They could shop and do business in villages and towns without being chaperoned and without covering their faces. I do not mean to say that women were in any sense capricious regarding community law. Only that the power between the sexes was balanced, so producing a confident sauciness in the women and a humorous appreciation in the men that were delightful to behold.

The Rajasthani Raika women I had met were freer than females of many other castes, but, even so, I had been somewhat taken aback by those little peep-holes they made in their *orris* and the way they covered their heads and went silent when their men were present—so unlike their Kutchi cousins. Perhaps this was due to their links to the higher caste Rajputs, who are such sticklers for *purdah* that women may be locked up for their entire lives. It seemed to me that the Rajput influence had other negative effects on the Raika. While the Rabari of Kutch were patrician in their demeanour—the servants of no one, the Rajasthani Raika boasted of being servants to kings and were quick to dissociate themselves from Rabari who were not.

These were the first people who had wholeheartedly supported the idea of my travelling with them. When we rose to bid farewell, the mood was one of excitement, pleasure, satisfaction. Narendra took out two hundred and one rupees and gave them, with a certain flourish, to the youngest child who accepted the money with equal graciousness.

"How do you do it?" I said as we got into the car. "Please, tell me the rules."

"There are no rules. It was a happy meeting. The money was a way of acknowledging that. It is only done once and then only if the

feeling is good. I gave it because they impressed me, because we liked each other. You don't have to feel nervous of doing the right thing. Just do as you feel. Be spontaneous. What they respect is genuineness."

We drove to Anjar, or as it is otherwise known, the Paris of Kutch. (There was a Copenhagen of Kutch, a Jaisalmer of Kutch, even a Venice of Kutch.) It did not look at all like Paris but like a dusty little medieval town with a Portuguese influence in the architecture. Kutch is more or less cut off from the rest of the country during the monsoon and Kutchis tend to be faced, psychologically, to the sea. The thriving ports, the huge ships with foreign names, give the people an outward-looking character, a cosmopolitanism that is not shared by their land-locked neighbours. There was room to breathe here. I did not get stared at quite so much. The population was thinner too because Kutch lacked water and without it people cannot live.

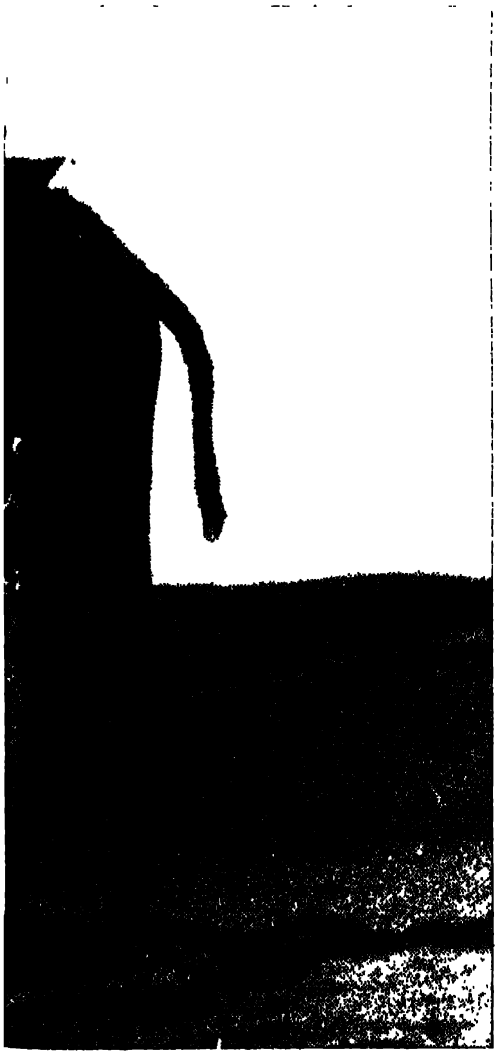
Narendra provided everyone around us with a glass of tea (cobblers, cloth merchants, beggars, shepherds et cetera) and we sat on wooden planks outside a tiny shop made of beaten tin and cardboard—Anjar's version of cafe society—to watch street life. It was the wedding season and the streets were packed or rather, I should say, garlanded with Rabari grooms, ranging in age from two to twenty. The old man slurping next tome grumbled that he was fed up with the wedding season because the young shepherds were showing off their finery instead of helping him with the sheep. He grumbled but he watched me watching the young men and smiled with satisfaction.

Beauty is a poor standard by which to judge human beings but how could people who looked like that not be beautiful inside as well? What flair! What sense of colour and design! What magnanimous display of self for the delight of others! First, the turbans. Purple, red, gold, black silk, tied so that they had a slightly triangular shape lending the faces beneath a Pharaonic cast. Next, a long sleeved smock made of thick white cotton drill, embroidered in minute stitches of every colour—purples and reds dominating—edged in gold or silver, tight fitting until gathered beneath the breast to flare at narrow hips, the sleeves pushed up into wrinkles at the wrist. Beneath the smocks, white lawn dhotis, one of the oldest forms of dress in the world, were tucked into pink-, red- and black-striped nylon socks which disappeared into high-heeled leather clogs decorated with brass studs, the toes curling backwards into Sindbad points. They hung around together in groups like adolescent boys anywhere, shy and giggling one minute, swaggering the next. And, in among the riot of masculine colour, groups of women in black wool and silver, black *ornis* swelling out like jib-sails, strode past whitewashed walls

The end of another day: The sun sets over a desert; a camel is silhouetted against an evening sky

Here, Rabari marriages all occurred on the same day, the second of September. Usually, auspicious times for Hindu weddings are ascertained by Brahmin priests who are paid to consult the stars. But the second of September is Krishna's birthday, so how could it not be auspicious? This bending of rules was typical of Rabari thrift and sense.

Dr Rama Krishna and the others held no illusions about the innocence of the nomads but they felt deep admiration for them and worked unceasingly on their behalf Building up trust with their clients and at the same time challenging certain traditions which were no longer useful to them (for example, convincing them that the goddess would not punish them if they gave their sheep medicine for pox infections) were no easy tasks That they had success in both was a tribute to their commitment and vision



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Back in Bhuj I collapsed in a heap in the Prince Hotel whose air-conditioning, fine service and chicken *tikka masala* I would come to depend upon in the months ahead. But today the very thought of chicken *tikka masala* made me want to die Narendra sat on the side of the bed and forced me to drink *nimbu* soda with sugar. I hated him

My policy in India had been to eat anything and to drink whatever was available on the assumption that sooner or later my body would learn to accommodate the bugs. And it worked I had only two bouts of illness, both of them mild, and this was one of them Besides, from what I could discern of what lay behind various village walls, it wasn't only visitors who suffered intestinal troubles. And if Indians could cope without dubiously bottled water, so could I I had had my shots of gamma globulin, rabies vaccine and tetanus, and sometimes remembered to take my quinine More precaution than that seemed obsessive . .

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It is not easy getting from Delhi to Bhuj—a long plane journey via Bombay—then from Bhuj to a village, carrying all your camera gear and sqeezing it, along with half a dozen people, into a single jeep, specially when back in Delhi you have a wife and a newborn baby with whom you would prefer to be

At village Varshameda, we were greeted politely but not warmly Word had spread that child marriages were to be photographed and this had caused some ructions within the community Might we not show these photographs to the government and land the people in trouble? The women regarded me sourly. Our contact, Naka Bhai, was doing his best to help us but even he was having a difficult time with his relatives He said, "Most of the Rabari are innocent but I've lived around the ports and I am more knowledeable. It is hard to change them" Naka was aware of the difficult future facing his caste. He had sold all his sheep and bought a truck, and was trying to convince others that they should follow suit Slowly, a knot of men formed around us, anxious that we should hear their problems

An old retired *mukki* began, "Our children will always herd sheep. What else can they do? They are not educated And how can we abandon our way of life, it is all that we know?"

A young man took up the theme "They is no fute for us Rabari. The government tells us that we destroy the forests but they said they'd replant those forestry areas 20 years ago and they've done nothing. So why can't we graze our sheep there? And why do they plant a tree that is useless for everyting except cooking fires? The thorns gets stuck in the sheep's mouths during the drought when they eat them in desperation" Hoping, perhaps, that his words would travel further than Varshameda, perhaps, even as far as the Rajsabha itself, he declaimed, "If the government does not help us, we'll go to Pakistan." The discussion became more heated, the old men, confused by the politics giving way to young hot bloods. Finally, the anger exhauted itself

To lighten the atmosphere, I addressed the old men "So when are you going to make this young man a leader."

To which someone , replied, "How can we make him a *mukki, yaar*? He might land us all in Pakistan" And everyone fell about laughing

We waited several hours for the ceremonies to begin At last Naka came to us full of apology, and said, "They have decided that you cannot photograph" Dilip went off like a cracker but it was no good The decision had been made It was final.

I worried for Dilip. As he said, "You are only as good as your last photograph," and he felt he wasn't getting the materialhe needed The Rabari were not making it easy for him. But what more could I do? During the long periods of waiting, events would hppen without warning, leaving no time to call him from Delhi Or, as on this occasion, I would summon him and nothing would happen My responsibility button was being hit with the force of a jackhammer Very well then, one thing I could praise him—pictures of camels swimming in the sea and of the last traditionally built Rabari village in Kutch. But not just yet I had been told the people of that village were suspicious of outsiders. Therefore, I would go to live there myself for a couple of weeks under the auspices of Dr Rama Krishna, so that the inhabitants would get to know me and to understand what was being asked of them I would prepare them for the rather more dramatic arrival of a photographer ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ● MONDAY ● TUESDAY ● WEDNESDAY ● THURSDAY ● FRIDAY ● SATURDAY ● SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOM

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 711	0640	1 2 3 6	IC 742	0845	1 3
			IC 742	1010	4 7
IC [illegible]	0945	daily	IC 744	1205	daily
M9 [illegible]	1[illegible]	3, 5 7	M9-327	1610	3 5, 7
M9 [illegible]	1720	2 6	M9 323	1555	2, 6
AHMEDABAD					
M9 304/143	0850	1, 2, 3 4 5 6	M9 143/308	2235	1 2 3 4, 5 6
AIZAWL					
PI 401	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PI 302	1555	2 4 5
			PI-302	1635	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1040	1 3, 5	IC 722	1300	1 3 5
IC 721	1250	4 7	IC 722	1520	4 7
D2 183	1200	6	D2 183	1430	6
D2 181	1340	1 , 3, 4, 5 7	D2 181	1600	1 2, 3 4 5 7
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
M9 305/429	0640	1 2 3 4 5 6	M9 430/308	2235	daily
9W 511	1100	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 402	0700	4 6	D5 401	1230	3 5
IC 544	1115	4 7	IC-543	1035	3 7
IC 763	1[illegible]	2 4 6	IC 770	2120	2 4 6
VI 106	1740	1	VI 105	1700	1
DELHI					
IC 262	0640	daily	M9 302	0820	daily
M9 304	0850	daily	AI 662	0925	
IC-[illegible]	1215	daily	IC-855	0955	4 7
4S 805	1320	1 2 3 4 5 6	4S 806	1130	1 2, 3, 4 5 6
IC 256	1935	4 7	IC 401	1855	daily
M9 [illegible]	2010	daily	M9 301	1935	daily
			IC 264	2040	daily
DIBRUGARH					
4S 8[illegible]	1205	2 4 6	IC 702	1630	1 3 5 7
4S 812	1305	1 2 5	4S 815	1635	1 2 3
IC 701	1340	1 4 5 7	4S 811	1635	2, 4, 6
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC 257	1550	4 7
PI 301/303	0645	1 3 5	PI 306/302	1555	2 4 5
GOA					
M9-304/121	0850	1 3 5 7	M9 428/308	2235	daily
GUWAHATI					
IC 702	0610	4 7	IC 704	0900	2 6
D5 605	0600	daily	IC 290	1310	daily
PI 303	0830	1 3 5	9W 512	1310	daily
IC 211	1000	daily	PI 302	1500	daily
9W 511	1030	daily	M9 327	1610	3 5 7
4S 816/811	1205	2 4 6	M9 325	1610	1 4
M9 327	1220	3 5 7	4S 811	1635	2 4 6
M9 325	1[illegible]	1 4	4S 812/815	1635	1 3 5
IC 702	1500	1 3 5	IC-704	1605	1, 3, 5
			D5 605	2015	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W 511	1430	daily	VI-106	1700	1
IC 772	1615	1 2 7	IC-778	2115	2 5 7
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2120	2 4 6
VI 106	1740	1	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0915	3, 5 7	IC 256	1405	3, 5, 7
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
JORHAT					
IC-257	1145	4, 7	IC-257	1550	4 7
LILABARI					
PI 301/303	0645	1 3 6	PI-304/302	1635	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1620	1 3, 5	IC 811	2100	1 3, 5
MADRAS					
D5 402	0700	4, 6	IC-541	1030	1, 2 4 5, 6
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC-543	1035	3, 7
IC 544	1115	3 7	D2-173	1130	6
D2 173	1940	daily	D2 171	155	1 2 3 4 5 7
			D2-401	2250	1 5
IC-765	1720	daily	IC 766	2220	daily
MUMBAI					
M9 305	0640	1 2 3 4, 5 6	IC-675	0820	daily
9W-209	0715	1 3 4 5 6, 7	D2 101	0850	daily
IC 675	0740	daily	9W-201	0920	1 3 4 5 6 7
D2 101	0920	daily	M9 306	1125	1 , 3 4 5 6
M9 307	1700	daily	AI 306	1730	5
AI-307	1940	6	IC 274	1850	daily
9W 212	1940	daily	9W-211	1905	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	D2 105	1935	daily
D2 104	2005	daily	M9 308	2235	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2120	2 4 6
PATNA					
D2-400	1330	3 5	IC 249	1820	2 6
IC 743	1445	2 6	D5-406	1835	3 5
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC-811	2100	1 3, 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0640	1, 3 5	IC 286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 249	1445	2 6	IC 249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0700	2 4 6	IC 254	0940	2, 4 6
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC-256	1405	3 5, 7
M9 323	1220	2, 6	M9-323	1555	2 6
M9-325	1220	1 4	M9 325	1610	1 4
TEZPUR					
IC-213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
M9 304/111	0850	daily	D5-406	1835	3, 5
D5 406	1330	3, 5	M9-112/301	1935	daily
VARANASI					
S2-016	1555	1, 3 5	S2-015	1015	1, 3, 5
D5 406	1330	2 4 6	D5 406	1835	2 4 6
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC-541	1030	1, 2 4 5, 6
IC-542	1115	1 2 4 5, 6	D5 401	1230	3, 5

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 184	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0325	7	KL 875	0110	7
BANGKOK					
KB-105	0850	2, 6	KB-106	1020	3
			KB-106	1240	5
IC-731	0855	2 5	TG 313	1240	1, 3, 6
			IC-732	1505	2, 5
IC-855	1105	4, 7	IC-856	1730	4 7
TG 314	1355	1, 3 6			
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1825	6
BOURNEMOUTH					
RO-076	2130	5, 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0700	1	IC-226	0920	1
BG-698	1745	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2, 5
DHAKA					
BG 092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG 092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC 723	1300	1, 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1, 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
DOHA					
Q7-061	1000	2	Q7-060	1230	2
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
IC 747	1035	1, 2, 4, 5	IC 748	1350	1, 2, 4, 6
RA-214	1525	2, 6	RA-213	1425	2, 6

Departures Flt No.	Time	Days	Arrivals Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
BA 142	2115	3, 7	BA 143	1515	3, 7
[illegible]					
SU 538	2100	4	SU 537	0930	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1105	3	KB-105	0810	2, 6
KB 106	1325	5			
[illegible]					
BI-108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ 415	2345	2, 5	SQ 416	2230	2, 5
[illegible]					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
[illegible]					
AI 306	1910	5	AI-309	182	6
[illegible]					
IC 227	1530	4, 7	IC 228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport **S2** Sahara India Airlines • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **4S** East West Airlines • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	3004
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express via [illegible] [illegible] Wed, Fri & Sat	[illegible]	2382
[illegible]		Poorva (New Delhi) Express via Patna [illegible] Tue, Thu & Sat [illegible] Mon, Wed & Sat	[illegible]	2304
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express via [illegible] [illegible] Wed, Fri & Sat [illegible] Tue, Thu & Sat	[illegible]	2402
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express via [illegible] [illegible] Sun, Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	2308
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible] Sun	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express via Wary [illegible] Tue, Wed & Sat	[illegible]	3074
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	3046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	5050
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible] Mon, Wed & Fri	[illegible]	5048
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express via Main Line	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	3056
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	3020
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	3022
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	5660
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	3318
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	3030
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	3096
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	3032
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	3072
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	3015
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express [illegible] Mon, Tues & Sat [illegible] Mon, Thurs & Fri	[illegible]	1160
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express [illegible] Wed, Sat & Sun [illegible] Sun, Wed & Sat	[illegible]	1172
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	3328
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible] Friday [illegible] Tuesday	[illegible]	1182
Up	**Time**	**Sealdah**	**Time**	**Dn**
3141	13.40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6-35	3142
3145	19.15	Darjeeling Mail	8.45	3144
3113	16.15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7.15	3112
5657	18.25	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20.35	5658
3153	22-00	Gour Express	5-15	3154
5661	20.00	Kaliar Express	4-15	5664
3151	11.20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15-50	3152
3131	20.55	Mughal Sarai Express via SRC Loop	12-30	3134
3101	18.25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10-25	3104
5085	17-40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible] Tue, Thur. & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20.30	Madras Mail	[illegible]	6004
8002	19.20	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	[illegible]	8001
2860	12.40	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	2859
2021	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	2022
8034	[illegible]	Ahmadabad Express	[illegible]	8035
8010	11-35	Kurla Express via Nagpur	[illegible]	8009
2841	14.05	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	17-05	2842
7002	8.10	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible] Sun, Tues, & Fri [illegible] Mon, Thurs & Sat	19.40	7004
6311	[illegible]	Bangalore Express [illegible] Sunday [illegible] Sunday	13.45	6312
8013	17.30	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	8014
8111	[illegible]	Jajpur (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8111
8005	20.15	Titagarh Express	[illegible]	8006
8015	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	8016
8001	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	[illegible]	8002
3410	19-00	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	8410
3821	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	3822
6045	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	6046
3017	[illegible]	Purulia Express [illegible] Sunday [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	3018
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	1029
[illegible]	16.40	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via Howrah Sunday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via Howrah, Saturday only	[illegible]	2402
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express Monday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	14-05	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
6314	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	[illegible]	
6316	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah [illegible] Tue. & Fri [illegible] Tue. & Fri	[illegible]	6315
6520	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14.05	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3800 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 136 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry)

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says joint-finance, insurance, premiums, loans, funds, capital formation, will be the salient features of this week. Thanks to Mercury, plenty of messages, hectic communication and partnerships, either on a personal or a professional level are foretold.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Romantic linking, business collaborations, travel and trade, a certain giving and taking of heart and head, a fair exchange, really, is what the week is all about. For quite a few, the peal of wedding bells is foretold. That's good tidings for you. Prepare yourself for the best.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

On the work frontier, spectacular developments can be anticipated. Expect good money around June 25. Your health will improve and that, in turn, will enable you to give your best. It would be wise to go in for physical fitness and take an interest in your health.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

A week to score, take chances, be your best, get work done and also find time to enjoy, have fun and socialise. Mercury-Venus beautiful conjunction formation helps you to be imaginative, intuitive and ingenious. This is the right time to make friends and have a hobby.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Mars in your sign, according to Western astrology, gives you the pep and push needed to go for the goals and goodies. Many Leons will also be attending to house, office in the sense of buying, selling, renovating, decorating, painting and refurbishing. Health safeguards essential.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

You have a chance to launch a venture, open a restaurant, start a business, reach out to people and places by different media of transport and publicity. For salesmen, teachers, statisticians, secretaries, pshychologists, doctors and accountants, a week to go ahead.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

The focus will be on finances, family values and personal relationships, a grand trio. In finances, earned income, loans and business transactions are definitely included. A family get-together is on the cards. Many Librans will be seeking new goals.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Moon-Mars opposition makes you mighty ambitious and forward looking. Many of you will be taking decisive action, and it will be the right one. The next week will also be important for it. The moon's last quarter also favours taking a few chances. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Plenty of behind-the-scene activity, cross currents of friendship and animosity, says Ganesha. So keep your cool. Many of you will be seeking pastures new and green shortly, so it would be best to go about making plans now. Travel is on the cards, as things start happening rapidly.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

An excellent week to ask for favours, move ahead with plans and projects, start a campaign, spearhead a movement. The beauty of it all is, you will squeeze out time for fun and games, have a ball, be happy like a king and queen. The next 25 days are for achieving.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Time to make your move, without being too agressive and the chances are you will succeed. Many Aquarians will now feel confident enough to be on their own, start something new and different and exciting and by November 1996, the project should come through.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

A good time to travel publicise your wares, burnish your image and that of your company, a time to sally forth in style and conquer. Your heart will pine for love and that is what you shall find. For those in business or profession, it is time for contacts and customer satisfaction.

BIRTHDAYS

June 23 : Mercury-Venus conjunction makes you laughter-loving, comfortable and fond of comforts. Those in arts, crafts and chemicals do well.

June 24: Moon's first quarter brings out the imp in you. Chances will be taken. Children, industry, arts, research and marriage play an important part.

June 25: Moon trine Venus gives you the much needed hope, courage and conviction. Try the long shot, the unattainable so to speak.

June 26: Moon trine sun will lead to glory and money. You have it made. Just do what comes naturally and that Cancerian and can do only too well. It is a year of solid communication at every level.

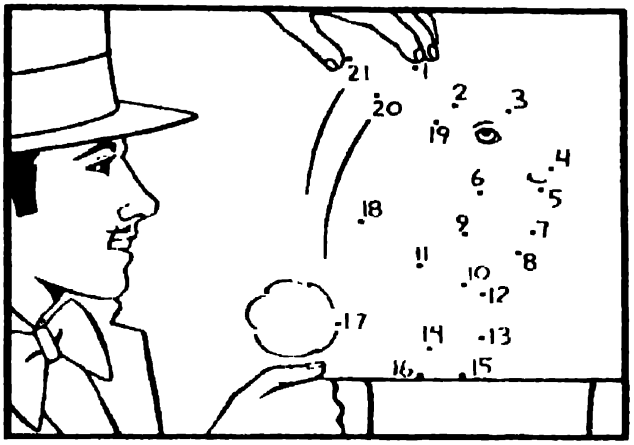
June 27: Moon sextile Jupiter means despite tensions, the year is good for any sort of creative enterprise, because of the opportunities and the people you run into.

June 28: Moon sextile Neptune will make a more inspired human being out of you and you are already fine tuned. You will tide over trials successfully.

June 29 : Venus-Mars conjunction will give you the strength and the imagination to fight and conquer. Expect both money and honey to come your way.

JUNIOR WHIRL

HAL KAUFMAN



DOTS LIFE! Yeah, it's only me again Who'd you expect, Tyrannosaurus Rex? Draw dot to dot to complete the picture

SAFE BET! Bet someone that he or she has a hole in a sock. You can't lose. Every sock has a hole in which to insert foot.

ROBIN 'HOOD! Four more five-letter words are needed to complement the word ROBIN in the diagram at right, and thereby form a word square — a cluster in which all words used read the same both across and down

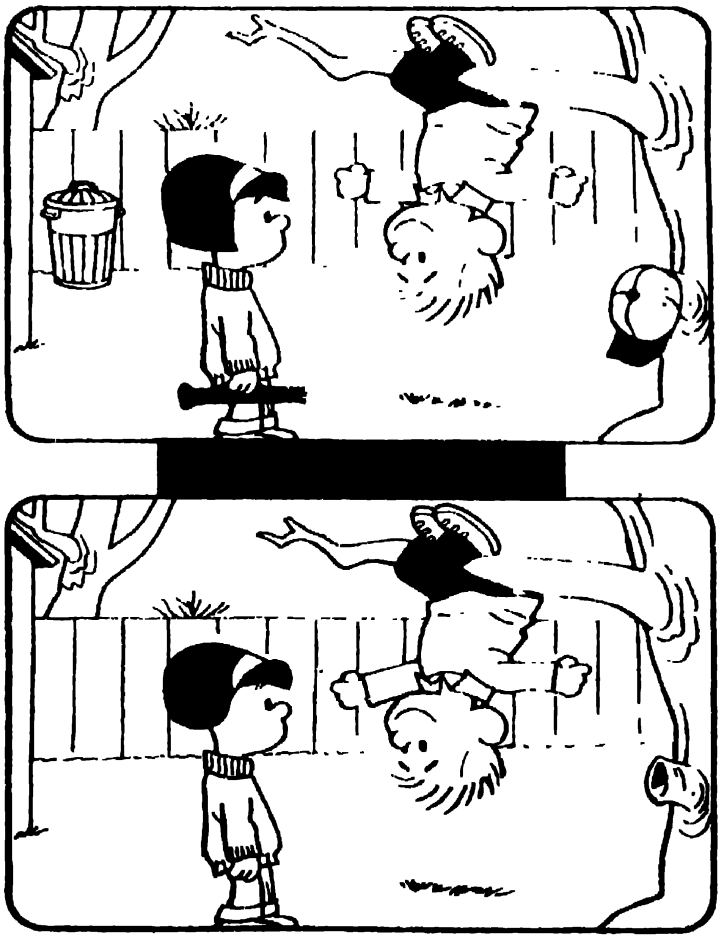
1	2	3 R	4	5
2		O		
3 R	O	B	I	N
4		I		
5		N		

Definitions: 1 "On the eighteenth of —, in Seventy five...". 2. Pennsylvania railroad town 3 Heralded first bird of spring (ROBIN, in place) 4 Trojan War epic by Homer 5 Singer Ronstadt, for one.

Let's see how quickly you can fill in these words to complete the sqaure.

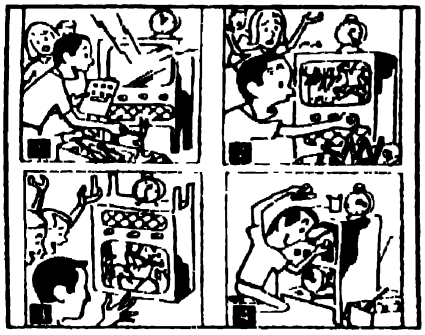
Answers 1 April 2 Paoli 3 Robin 4 Illiad 5 Linda

HOCUS-FOCUS



FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Trash can is missing 2. Hair is different. 3 Instrument case is missing 4 Tree limb is shorter 5 Arm is moved. 6 Cap is missing.



UNDO-IT-YOURSELF TV CAPER

So your TV's down, repair shop's closed, and you're bent on fixing it yourself. Such a person is shown at left, and pictured with him are some trials and tribulations in the fix-it process.

Is our good friend successful, or is he a bust? To find out, start with panel 1, study clues, and see if you can rearrrange panels 2, 3 and 4 i chronological order.

Time limit: 2 minutes.

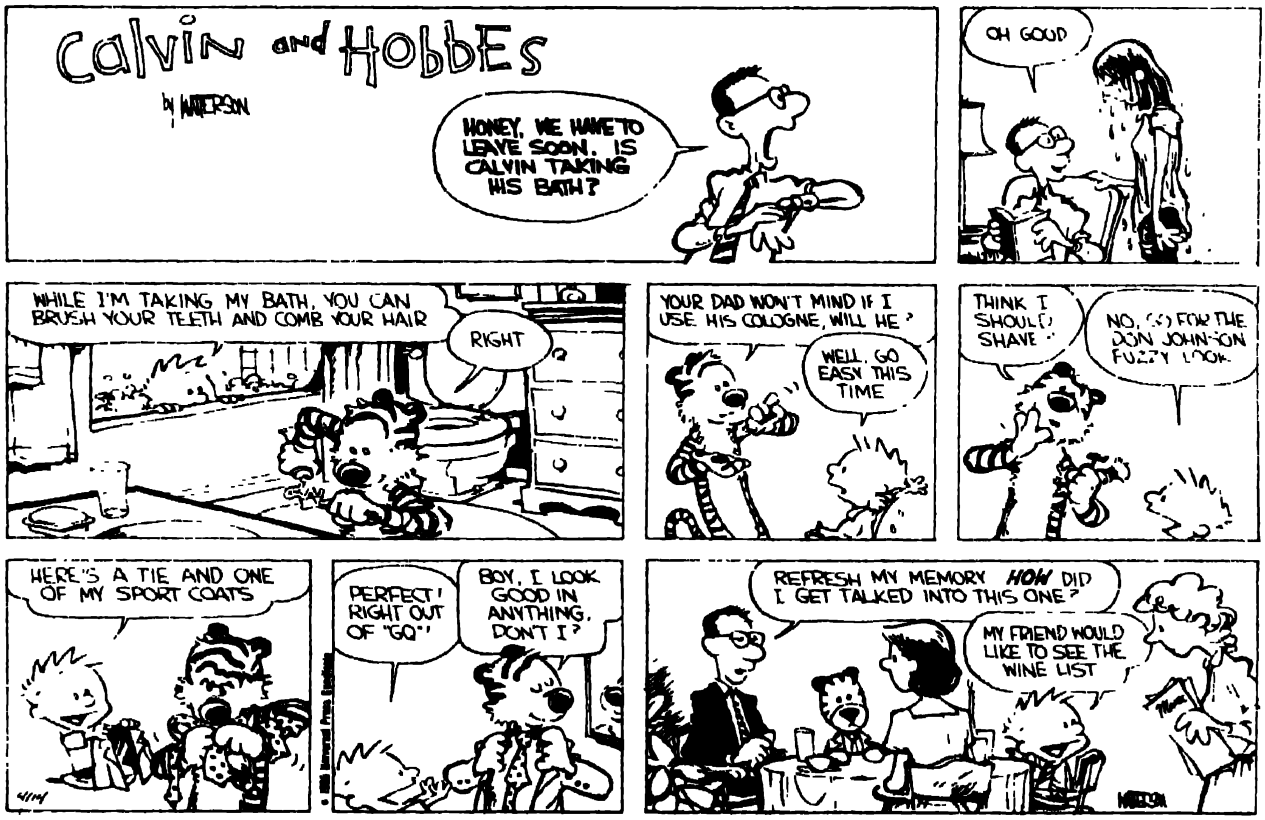
Fix-it tale unfolds in this order 1, 4, 2, 3

LETTER GO! Insert a letter (the same letter) in the middle of each of these words to form another word: 1. ROOT. 2. TALE. 3. ALUM. 4. REEL. 5. COOL. What letter complies?

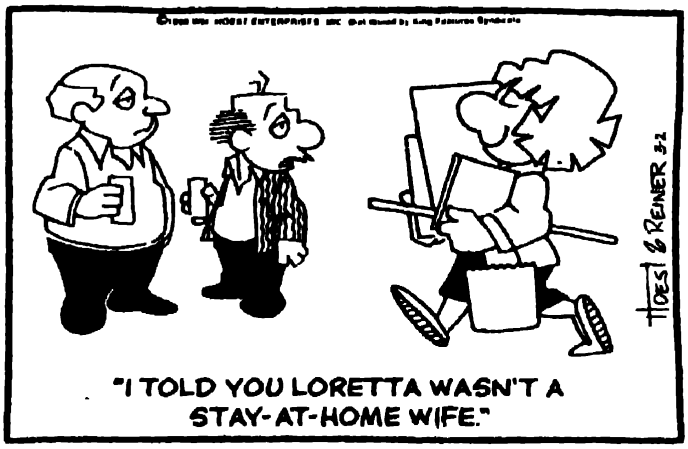
Letter B—1 ROBOT 2 TABLE 3. ALBUM 4 REBEL 5 COBOL (a computer language).

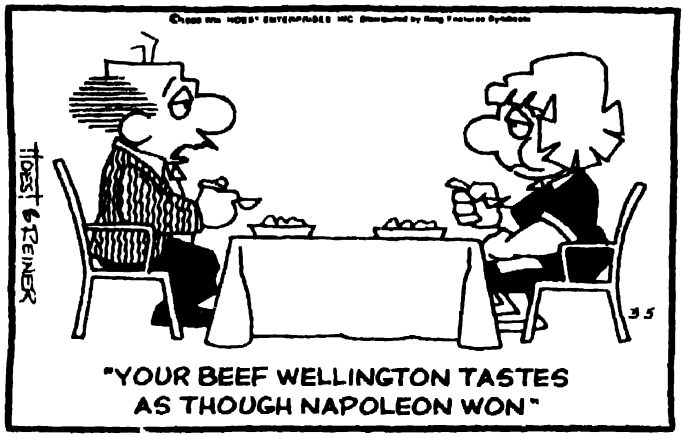
ARCHIE

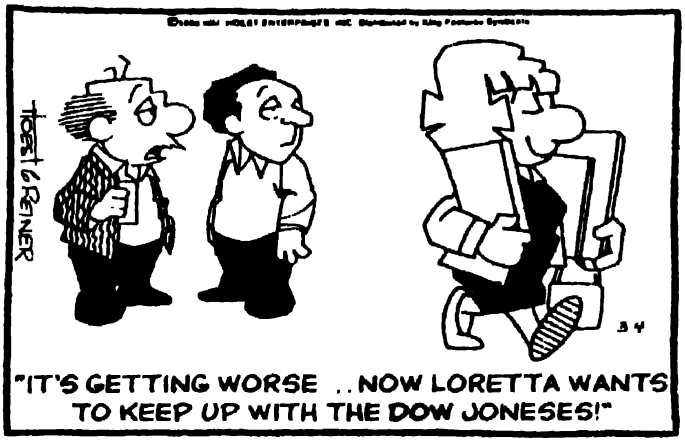
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



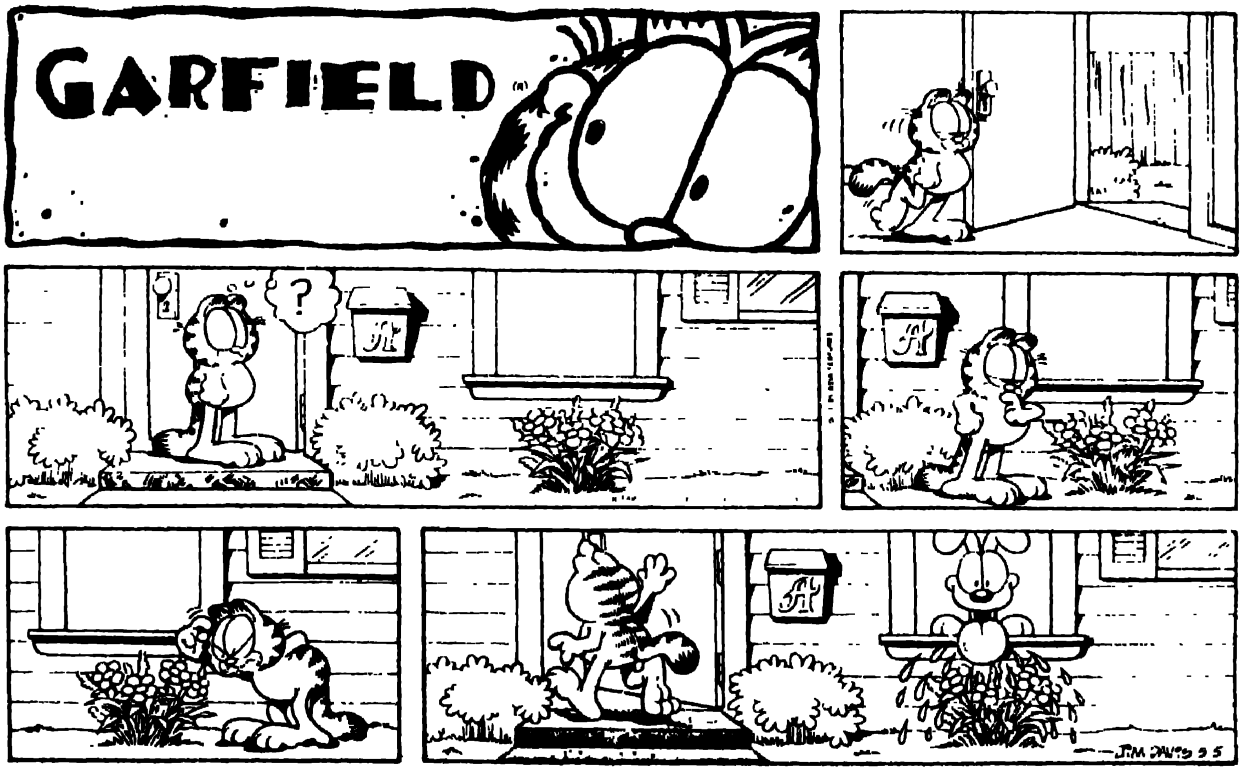
THE LOCKHORNS



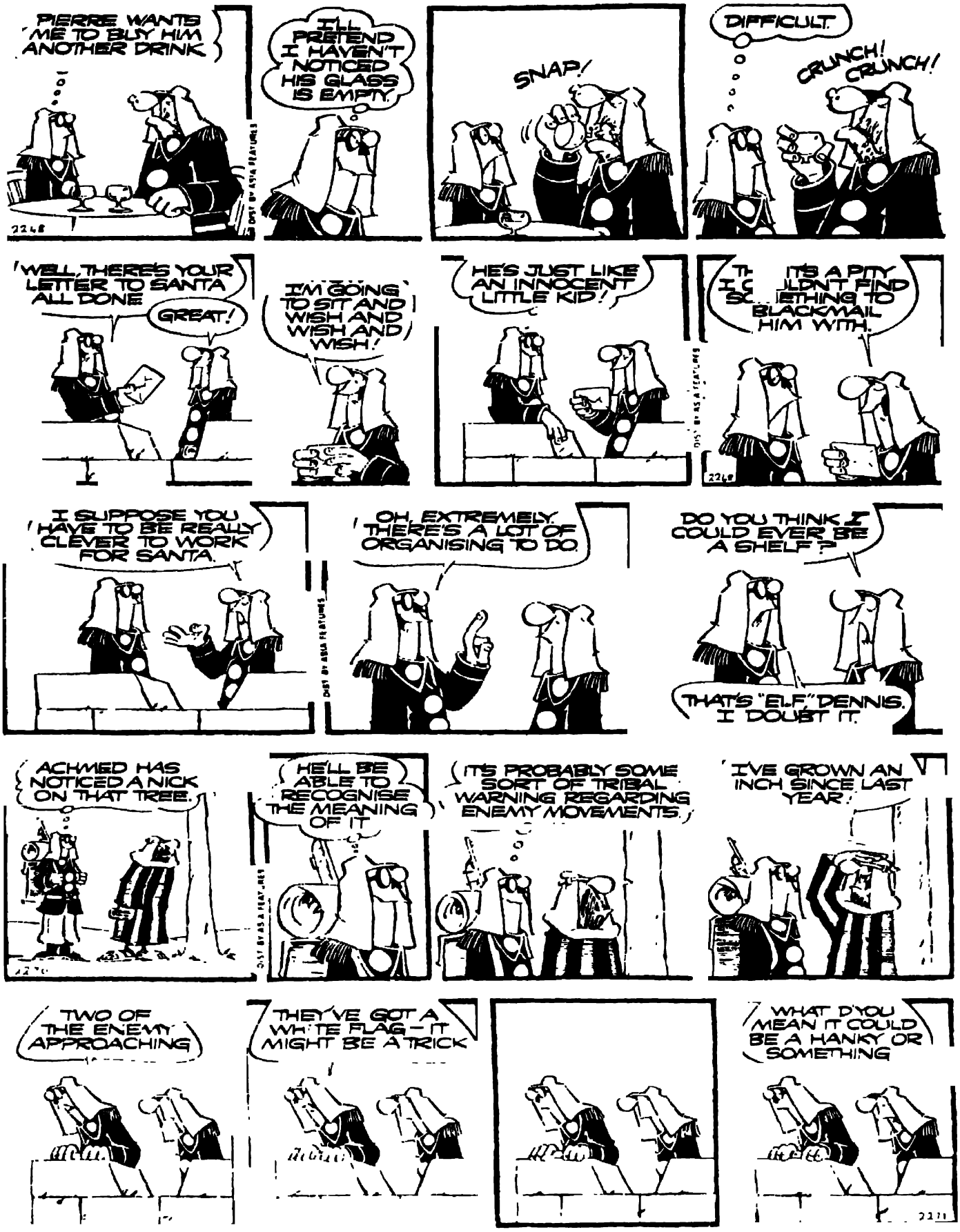


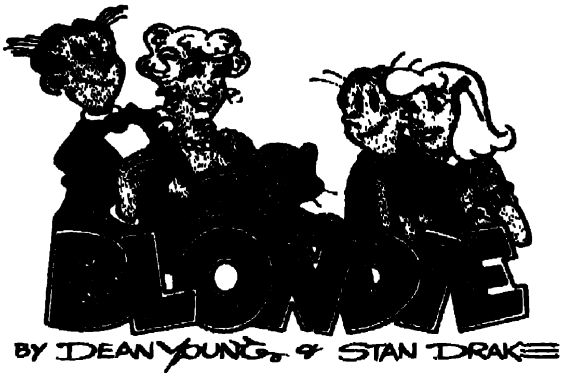


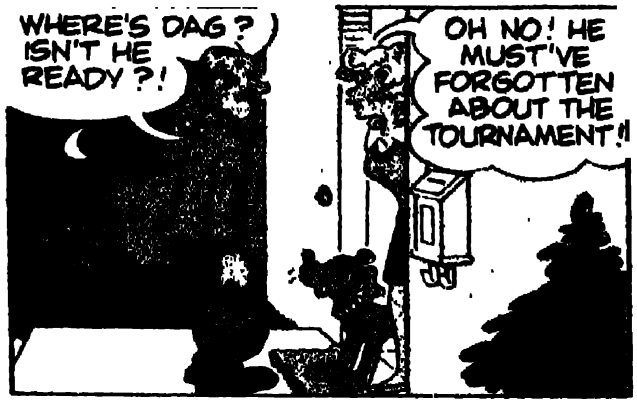
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP




BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE


WHERE'S DAG? ISN'T HE READY?!
OH NO! HE MUST'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT!!

DAGWOOD! C'MON, FOR PETE'S SAKE! TONIGHT'S THE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP!
HUH...? WHAAA...?
PLOP!

WOW! DID YOU SEE THAT?! DAGWOOD JUST GOT A BEAUTIFUL STRIKE!!

YOU'D BETTER WAKE HIM, IT'S HIS TURN AGAIN!
HE'S REALLY OUT OF IT! I WAVED A PIZZA UNDER HIS NOSE AND IT DIDN'T EVEN FAZE HIM!

OH MAN! HE GOT ANOTHER STRIKE!!
WHEN HE'S AWAKE, HE ONLY BOWLS HALF THIS WELL!
Z

HOORAY! WE DID IT!!
WE'RE CHAMPIONS!!
IT'S A MIRACLE!!

OMIGOODNESS! I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE BACK!
BACK? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I NEVER WENT ANYWHERE

Kabir Bedi playing the lead in *Sandokan's Triumph*

FILMS

SANDOKAN REVISITED

Kabir Bedi shoots for the sequel of the mini-series that made him a celebrity in Europe. ***Dipti Dave*** *reports*

It took all of 22 years, but Sandokan has been resurrected at last. Though the television mini-series was an instant hit in Europe two decades ago, what mattered to us in India was that the homegrown Kabir Bedi was playing the eponymously-named lead, that of a 19th century Malaysian hero.

And now Bedi is back in action in front of the camera in *Sandokan's Triumph*, an Italian-German production which will be aired on Channel Five in Italy over the Christman season. Bedi, who owns the Indian rights, plans to release the serial in India by next year, but the details for this have yet to be worked out.

Sandokan, which was aired by Doordarshan around 15 years ago, is the story of a swashbuckling pirate, also called the Tiger of Malaysia, who is fighting the British for his

desire to be free." Hinting at, perhaps, yet another serial, he adds, "A major part of Sandokan's story needs to be told and possibly I could do it."

One of the few Asian heroes, who has made an impact internationally, Sandokan is the creation of an Italian writer, Salgari, who supposedly never ever travelled out of his country but nonetheless wove fantasies about India, Africa and other Asian countries which he had read about in encyclopedias. So, Sandokan is not really a historical figure, though there were enough brave people like him who were willing to take on the colonialists.

Being made at an estimated cost of $15 million, the sequel, according to Bedi, will be a major media event in Europe this Christmas. The mini-series which is targetted at a Western audience and tells the tale of a Malaysian hero, is being shot entirely in Mysore. But then, as Mathieu Carriere, who plays the bad guy, Raska, explains, "This has palaces, temples, rivers and forests, which is an ideal location for a fairy tale kind of story."

Carriere, a German actor, looks every bit a *raja*, if one overlooks his white skin. And he confesses that he is relishing every moment of playing the "best bad guy yet". The scene being shot revolves around him, the

Sandokan (Kabir Bedi) with Yogi Azim (Franco Nero) and Yanez (Fabio Testi)

country's independence, and falls in love with an Indian girl. The sequel, which is currently being shot near Bangalore, brings Sandokan to India in aid of his best friend, Yanez de Gomera, whose lady love, a princess from Assam, is being harassed by neighbouring kings. Sandokan, while helping princess Surama retain her kingdom, comes in conflict with the British again. And all the while he is trailed by a half-Indian half-English reporter, who ultimately falls in love with him.

The serial, described as a "Western tandoori", is a fast-moving, plot-driven, action-oriented film with a cast which is a combination of the good, the bad, and the ugly. Explains Kabir Bedi, "Sandokan's story is basically a story of a man's

Sandokan: Fighting the British for his country's independence

Princess Surama (Romina Power) with Yanez (Fabio Testi)

black *raja* who is out to usurp princess Surama's throne, and has ordered the rebels to be trampled by elephants.

The tension is palpable as the entire unit waits nervously for the shot to be canned. Gemini, the elephant who has been hired from a circus, is gently coaxed by his *mahout* to raise his foreleg and bring it up until it touches the extra's head, so that it looks as if he is squashing it. After a few more takes, the director, Enzo G. Castellari, okays the shot.

This is Castellari's second visit to India. And the action movie director, who has such films as *Bronx Warrior*, *Shark Hunter* and *Battle of Briton* to his credit in addition to a number of Westerns, is hard to work trying to recreate the Sandokan magic. "But," he says, "though it has been good working on this project, but making a sequel to a film which was not directed by you takes away much of the excitement."

Incidentally, no one on the crew has had a chance to see the original serial. But asks Carriere, who has earlier played the romantic hero in German, Spanish and French films, "Does it really matter?" According to him, the original series did well because of the Italian love for costume drama, and the sequel will do well for much the same reason.

Carriere, who like Bedi has "had a ball throughout the shooting" with snakes, horses and elephants, says he would "definitely like to work in Indian movies". Dragging on his cigarette, he quips, "I think I have more of an Indian in me. I have not been down with either diarrhoea or malaria."

This is Raska's day. The erstwhile Rajendra Vilas Palace Hotel has been

AGE CANNOT WITHER HIM

He may have hit the half century mark, but Kabir Bedi is still going strong

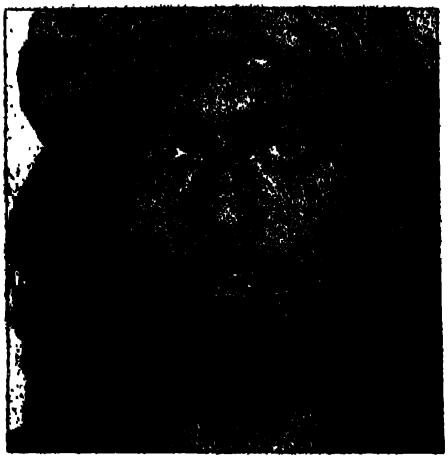
He may be 50-plus, but he's still going strong. His Sandokan had teenyboppers all over Europe swooning over him nearly two decades ago, and now Kabir Bedi is all set to perform a repeat.

Bedi, who is the only actor from the original series who will be performing in the sequel, *Sandokan's Triumph*, isn't in the least concerned about how the passage of the years may have treated him. And he's very confident that he is the right choice to play the Malaysian hero—even though Yanez, Sandokan's friend, is being played by a younger actor. "The only change in Sandokan," says Bedi, "is that he is more mature now. And why not?"

Why not, indeed!

Relaxing at the Lalith Mahal Hotel on his day off from shooting, Kabir looks good for another 10year run at least. The light-eyed hero, who amassed coveted awards in Italy, Germany and France for his role as Sandokan in the original, appears to be the image of an archetypal rebel; and thus eminently suited to play a Malaysian pirate. He still retains the rugged good looks that led the *Corriere Della Sea*, Italy's most respected newspaper to run a front-page article saying that he had brought "star craze back to Italy".

Drawing parallels with the character he plays, Bedi says that they share the same passion to willingly risk all for whatever they believe in. "I am my own man," says Kabir, "and Sandokan too is answerable to any authority."



More important, he says, is the legacy he carries with him of his family's role in India freedom struggle. In 1933, his father, Baba Bedi, married an English girl, Freda, at Oxford, where the two were studying. On their return to India, they plunged into the freedom movement, and also served time in jail. Hence, Kabir's empathy with Sandokan, whose life is one big struggle against the British, though he does fall in love with an English girl. And, as Bedi reminds us playfully, pointing at his beautiful wife, Nikki, "I also married an English girl."

Well, half English, at any rate. Nikki, whose father was an Indian doctor who married his English nurse, is better-known in India for her chat show, *Nikki Tonight*, which came to an untimely end because of a controversy over certain remarks about Mahatma Gandhi. These days, however, Nikki prefers to keep a low profile as she spends most of her time in Los Angeles with her husband, whose third—and he swears, last —marriage this is.

Panned by critics for his performance in Hindi movies, Bedi has proved to be a bigger hit with Western audiences, though the roles he can play are limited because of his ethnicity. But Kabir believes that things are changing in India. "With the boom in television channels," he says, "the nature of Indian cinema is also poised for a change." This change will bring with it greater professionalism, says Bedi, and an entirely new breed of film directors.

Of the new directors on the horizon, the one Bedi would like to work with most is Mani Ratnam, who, he says, "has some artistic sensibility in this world of commercial cinema". Other than that, Kabir, who has feature films, television serials and theatre plays to his credit, would like to turn director, perhaps with a sequel to *Sandokan*.

But until that happens, Bedi has no problem playing the stereotypical Asian warrior or prince in practically every Western film of his. He is yet to appear (in India) as a Moroccan prince in *The Bold And The Beautiful*, but he has acted with Joan Collins in *Dynasty*, David Hasslehoff in *Knight Rider*, Tom Selleck in *Magnum PI*, Hunter Tylo in *The Maharaja's Daughter*.

There's a fair bit of acting left in Kabir, though. So, don't be suprised if he's playing a swashbuckling pirate even as he celebrates his 65th birthday.

converted into his palace. And his enemies are being condemned to death, even as the palace gaurds shout "Long live Raska". The black raja even manages to knife a rebel while sitting on his cushioned throne, with the beautiful Yamira smiling behind him.

And Carriere is clearly enjoying himself hugely "Not a single drop of blood is split," he laughs, "Here lies the fun. I kill hundreds and no blood is shed." But what annoys him most is that whenever he is close to getting what he desires, Sandokan appears out of nowhere and forces him to a duel.

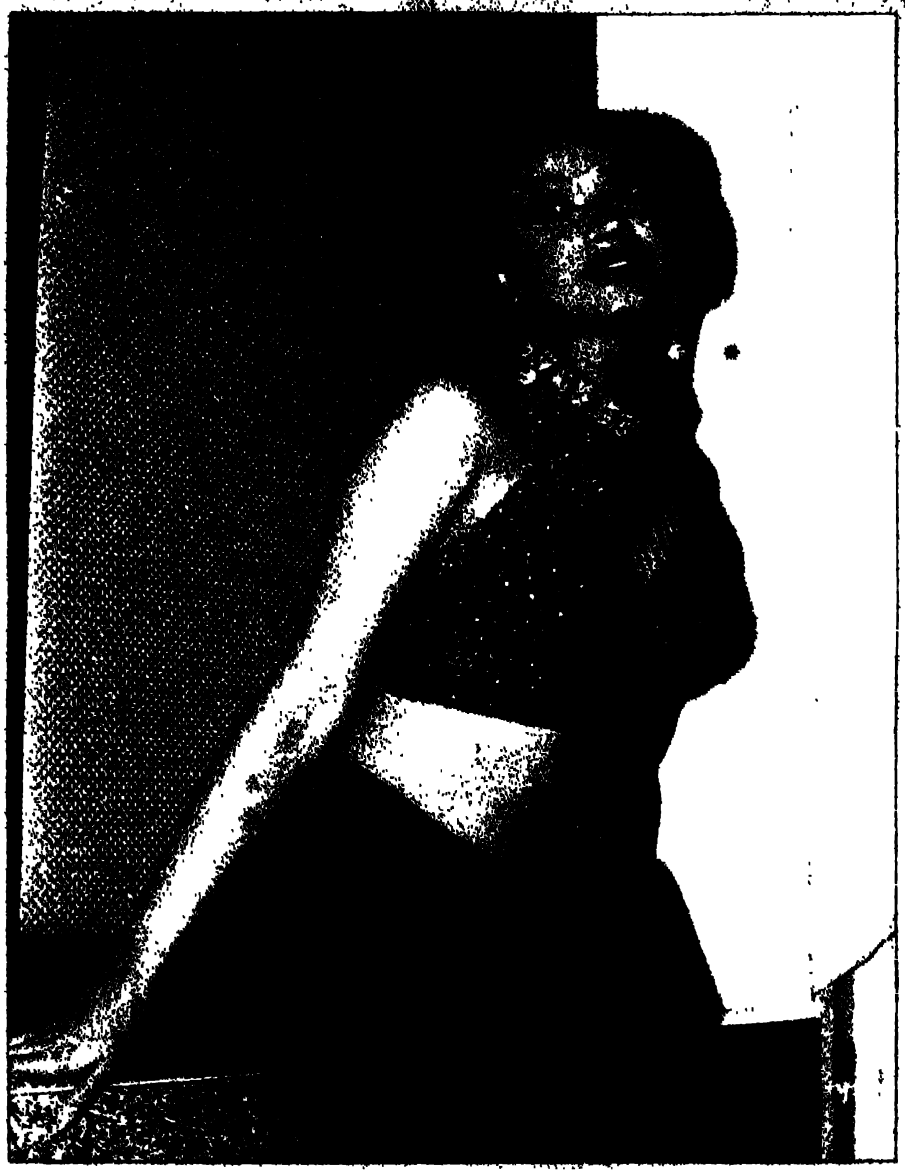
Except for Bedi, the only other Indian actors in the series are Arjun Sajnani, a Bangalore theatre person, Ravi Khote, Rajat Gowda and Shiv Nanda. But then, as Sajnani explains, "Since they are making the film, they would want to play the roles too."

And it's not as if they are doing a bad job of it, even as they have a good time on location. Randi Ingerman, the American actress who is playing Yamira, Raska's mistress, is very excited about her role "This is like a dream come true," she gushes, showing off her Indian costume and jewellery, "When I was a little girl, I would imagine myself as a princess of a faraway place "

Then there's Lady Dora Parker, the reporter, who falls in love with Sandokan, played by the half-Indian half-German Mandala Tayde, while the princess Surama is played by Romina Power, daughter of the famous actor, Tyronne Power

The serial which is being shot from April onwards, doesn't just have an eclectic star cast It also boasts of some extra-special effects, like chariots which blow up in the most spectacular manner, elephants on the rampage, and fights on horseback. So, remain warned, it's a masala mix all the way. ■

ACHLA SACHDEV *may in the same league as such supermodels as Aishwarya Rai and Sushmita Sen, but she still has what it takes to excel both on the ramp and as an MTV veejay.*



What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Lots of love and lots of success.
What is your greatest fear?
Drowning in a boat in the middle of the sea.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My sister.
What do you dislike most in others?
Lack of self-esteem.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
I love everything about myself.
What is your most precious possession?
My family.
What objects do you always carry?
Lipstick, hair brush and my digital diary.
What makes you most depressed?
People who have nothing good to say about others and who pretend to be moralistic. Basically hypocrites.
What do you dislike most on your face?
Lack of a mole on my face.
What is your favourite word?
'Let's party'.
What is your favourite journey?
My trip to China.
What is your favourite dream?
Being in a fantasy world with all cartoons around me.
What is your nightmare?
Growing old on my own all alone.

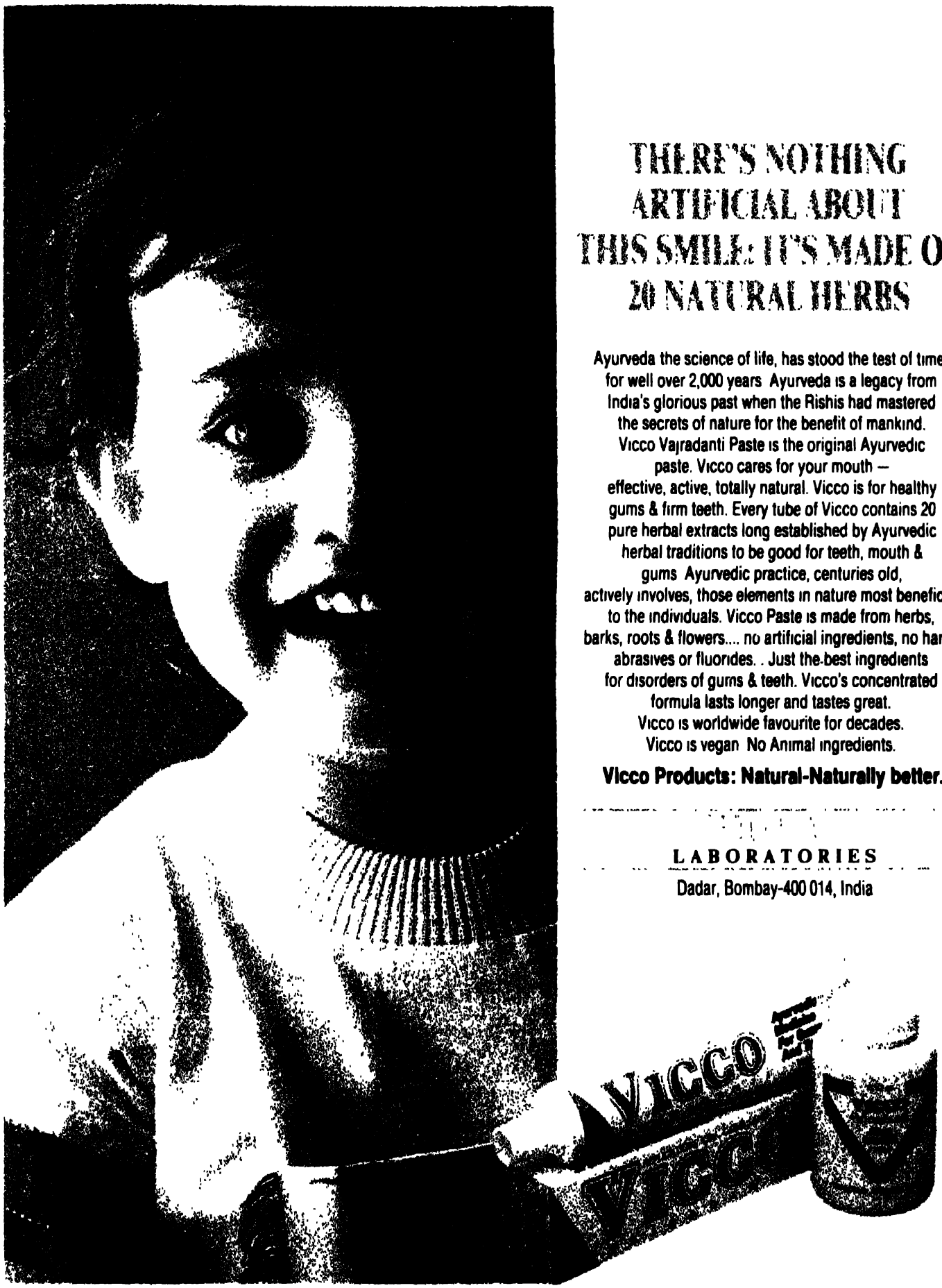
What is your nightmare?

Growing old on my own—all alone

On what occasions do you lie?

Whenever it's necessary to protect myself

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My father.
What is your source of sustenance?
Being the exhibitionist that I am on the ramp and in front of the camera.
On what occasions do you lie?
Whenever it's necessary to protect myself.
What is your greatest regret?
That I did not learn filmmaking.
What has been your happiest moment?
When I graduated and said goodbye to studies forever.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Orphaned children and the thought of death of my loved ones.
How do you relax?
Soak myself in a bubble bath with bath oil, a glass of champagne in hand and talking to friends over the phone.
What do you envy most in others?
Being born with a silver spoon in their mouth.
How would you like to be remembered?
As an emotional, funny intelligent model/actress.
How would you like to die?



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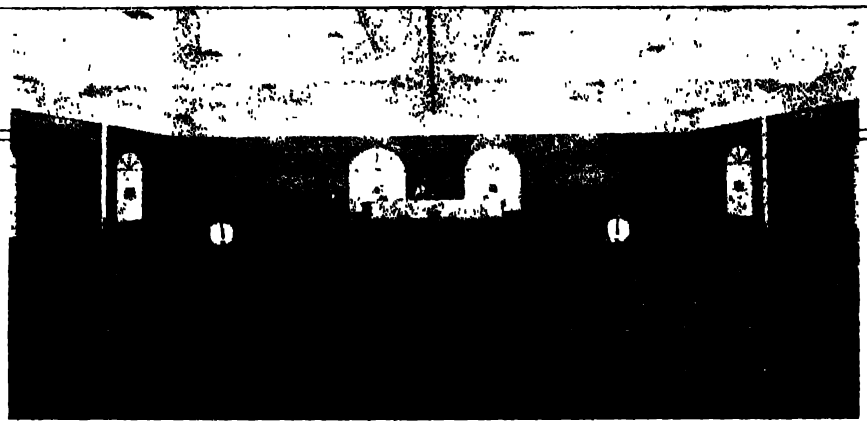

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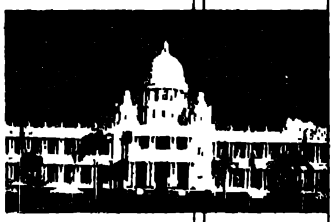

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30 JUNE 1996

The Telegraph *magazine*

POST MORTEM

A Friend and a Foe

■ Thank you for the wonderful cover story on Pakistan ('Travels Through Pakistan', May 12). As two neighbours sharing common problems and interests, we could have had a better understanding of each other. But due to false propaganda, illiteracy and misinformation, majority Pakistanis harbour a wrong impression of India.
B.N. Bose,
Calcutta

■ Congratulations to the writer for her brilliant cover story Having so much in common it is difficult to comprehend why we are always at loggerheads.
Nisheeth Bijawat,
Calcutta

■ The cover story was excellent. The writer's account was exciting and authentic. We don't get to read much about Pakistan in India and only real life accounts like this cover story satiate our curiosity about this neighbour.
Atish Bajpai,
Santiniketan

■ The hospitality that Indians received in Pakistan only proves that the hostility that exists between the two has been kept alive by those with vested interests.
Sujit Banerjee,
Calcutta

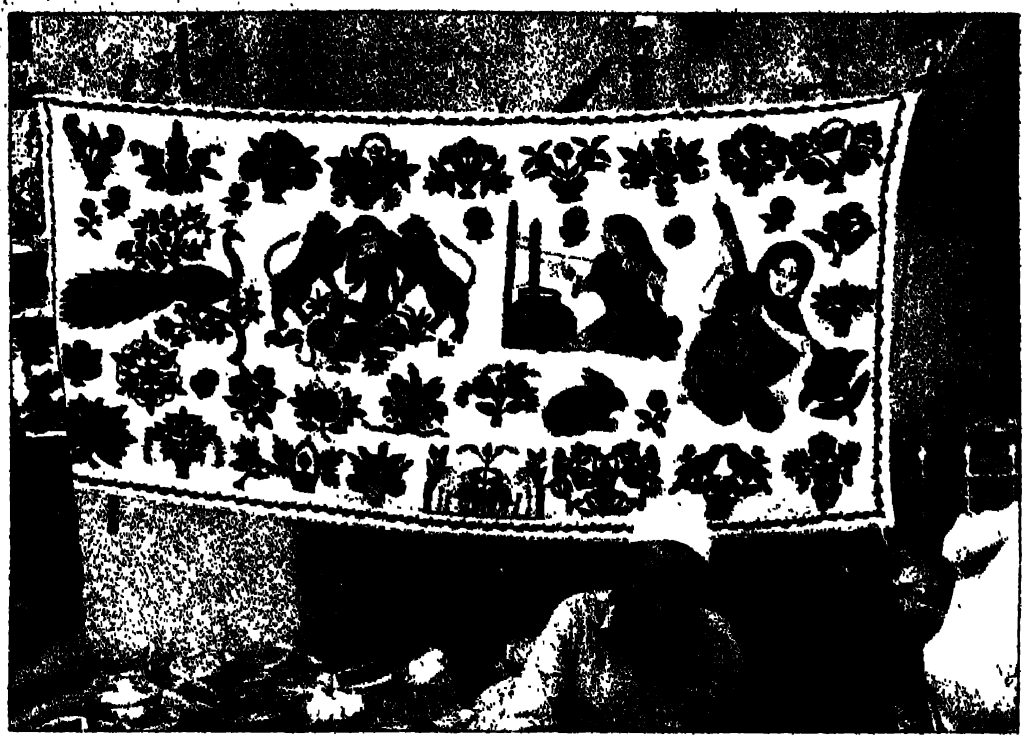
■ The hatred that India and Pakistan have for each other makes it necessary for the two to spend massive amounts on defence. With better relations, a big chunk of this budget could be channelised for national development.
Mili Das,
Sindri

■ I don't think the visits of Indian army heavyweights and intellectuals will bring any change in Pakistan's attitude.
M. Das,
Jamshedpur

■ Pakistani *roti, kebabs* and *biryani* may taste better, but its interests in India are certainly nefarious. It should stop exporting terror to India and be serious about peace.
Abhishake Kumar Saha,
Ichhapur (W.B)

■ Thanks for the free trip to Pakistan.
Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

Ashok K. Mehta



Street art in Lahore: The female figure atop the tiger is clearly inspired by images of the Hindu Goddess, Durga

INSIDE

Manjeet Kumar

Priya Paul

PAGE 4

PRIYA PAUL'S appointment as the new president The Park group of hotels is in keeping with the hotel chain's new policy of inducting dynamic professionals into the business. A profile of the young heiress.

PAGE 26

AMIT SAIGAL. The man who loves to rock.

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COVER STORY

MAKING HER PARK

Ranjan Das

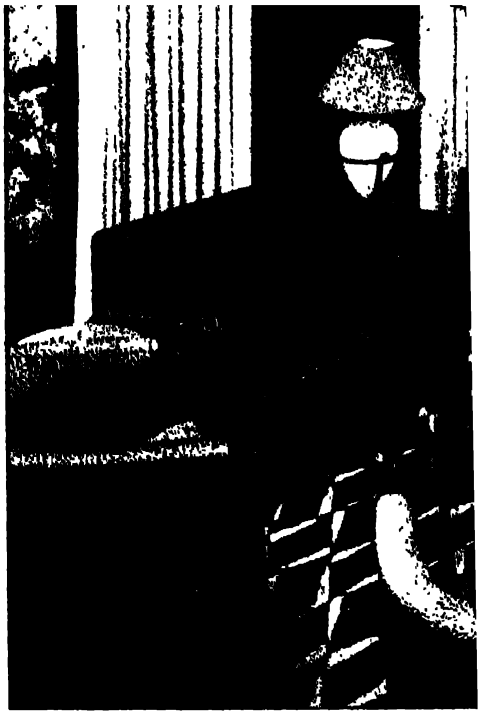
The Atrium: Part of Park Hotel's new look in Calcutta

Priya Paul is the new name to look our for in the hotel business. ***Samita Bhatia*** *profiles the young heiress*

NO COFFEE OR TEA FOR PRIYA PAUL, THE YOUNG president of Apeejay Surrendra Hotels. She prefers a tall glass of *nimbu pani* instead. Nor does the mandatory computer grace her polished desk. A palmtop lies within easy reach, though, and helps facilitate her work as a busy corporate head.

"You can hook it onto a fax or printer, which makes life very convenient for me when I travel," she explains, adding under her breath, "Must make sure that all my executives get them." That she is technology friendly is clear from the well-

Lighthouse: The new multi-cuisine restaurant at The Park, Vizag



Lutyens Lounge: Providing a panoramic vie

thumbed copy of *Microsoft Windows 95* that lies alongside *The Green Hotelier*, reflecting both her professional interest in hotels and a personal one in the environment.

Paul is tastefully, but simply dressed, the only stroke of extravagance being the solitaires that flash tongues of blue fire in her ears. She is quite the cool, collected businesswoman, though a softer persona gleams through as she answers her cellular phone, that rings only too frequently. It's just friends calling to say "Hi", she offers.

If today this 30-year-old Calcutta girl—a Loreto House and La Martiniere product—is the youngest president to head a chain of hotels, then she was also perhaps the youngest general manager any hotel had known when she commenced her hoteliering career at the absurdly young age of 23. The Park hotels that she now steers are part and parcel of the Apeejay Surrendra Group, a diversified Indian industrial conglomerate that her father once headed.

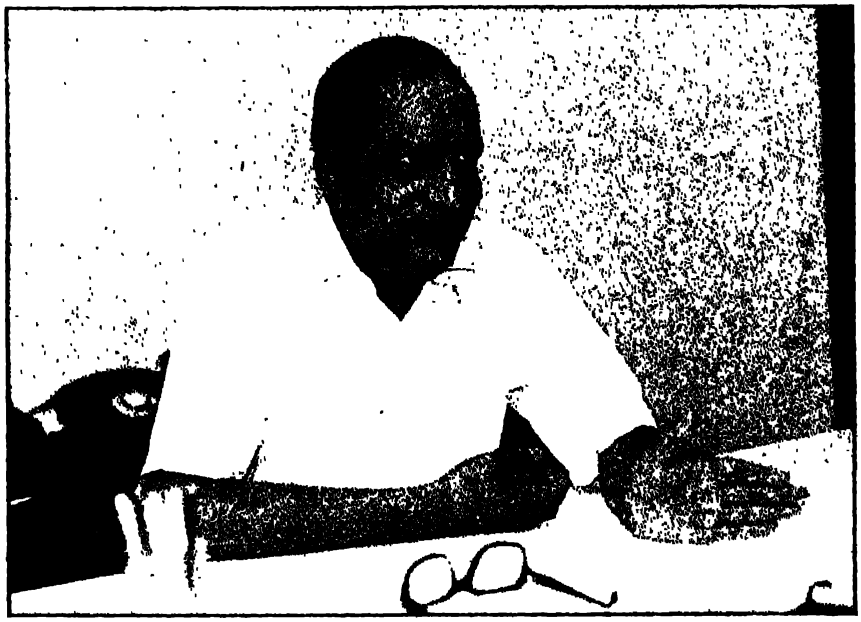
Today, the Apeejay Group which was started in 1910 has all too many interests: operations in steel, engineering, shipping, tea, confectionery, construction, real estate, international trade and, of course, hotels. And Priya's appointment as president, albeit because of providence, is much in keeping with the trend of inducting a new generation of young, professional managers who would infuse dynamism into a business enterprise.

Initiated into the hoteliering trade by her father, Surrendra Paul, Priya learnt the ropes at The Park hotel in Delhi, soon after her graduation in Economics from the United States. "The Park, Delhi didn't have a general manager in those days," she explains. "I took on my first job three days after I touched down in India as marketing manager, also doubling as its acting general manager."

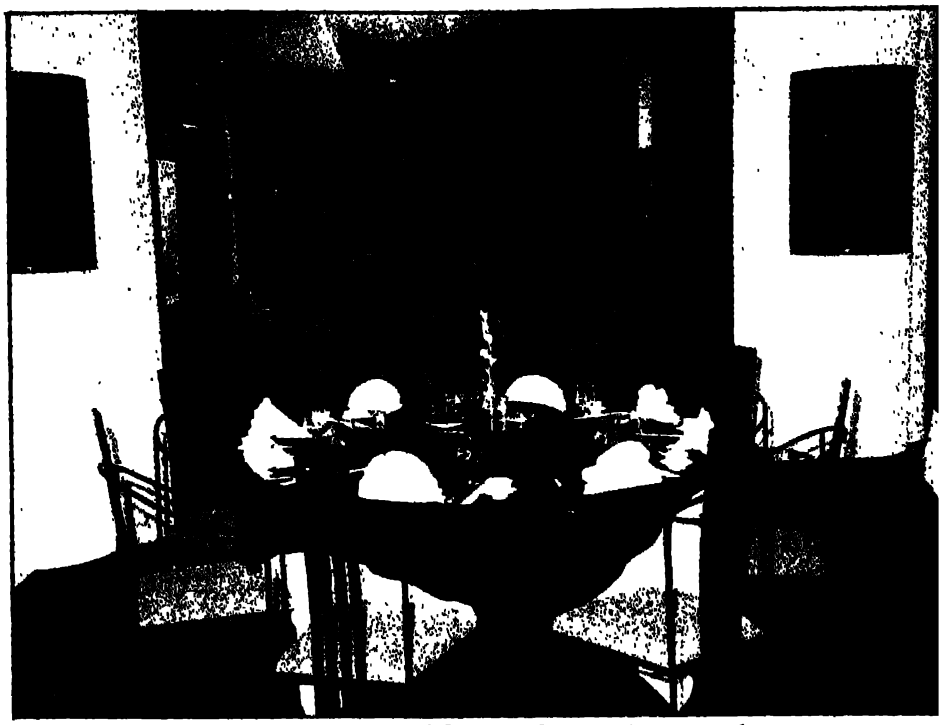
The plan was to let Priya learn the ropes of the family business from a relatively less important position of authority. But fate had other plans in store for the young woman. In 1990, her father was shot dead by ULFA militants as he toured his tea estates in Assam, and Priya had to grow up in a hurry. She was appointed president of Apeejay Surrendra Hotels, and was expected to take charge of the family's hoteliering empire.

Reminiscing about those days, Priya says thoughtfully, "Even though I was prepared to get involved with the family business eventually,

Surrendra Paul: His untimely death catapulted his daughter into the hot seat



New Delhi's Jantar Mantar



Zen serves both Southeast Asian and Chinese food at The Park, Calcutta

this unexpected responsibility after an upheaval in the family came like a bolt from the blue."

Thrust into the hot seat — with sister and brother helping her in the business — Paul found herself faced with a difficult task. The first problem that had to be tackled was the repositioning of The Park chain. When she took over, the properties — the chain's flagship in Calcutta, the Park in Delhi and the relatively unknown property in Vishakhapatnam — were not included in the upmarket and top-of-the-line category of hotels in India. All three hotels would have to be overhauled thoroughly before they could take pride of place in the Indian hotel business.

Now, six years down the line, Paul can look back at her work with satisfaction. All three hotels have been revamped thoroughly and re-launched as 'boutique' hotels: luxury five-star hotels rather than chain hotels in the Inter-Continental style. As she says proudly, "Today, the Park is a brand and has been consciously developed and marketed as such. It's a package of three boutique hotels, very five-starish and elegant."

But how did she manage to bring this turn-around in such a short space of time? After all, when she took over, The Park in Calcutta had gone to seed, engulfed in its old world aura. The six-acre prime property in Vizag hadn't been able to find its niche despite being opened way back in 1968. And The Park in Delhi was facing stiff competition from such other deluxe hotels in the capital as the Taj and the Oberoi.

In consultation with the hotel vice-presidents, Paul decided to embark on the master plan that her father had chalked out: to renovate — and practically rebuild, if necessary — all three hotels over the next five years and relaunch them as a contemporary chain of hotels. "We were firm on the fact that we had to establish or re-establish their positions in the local and international market by looking at a complete turnaround in their image," says Priya. "Today, I think we are pretty much on target."

A specific programme for the entire chain was then chalked out. That was when huge investments were planned and pumped in, renovations and refurbishments undertaken that would convert the dilapidated structures to trendy hotels. "The bottomline was to become the preferred choice amongst international business and leisure travellers and the obvious choice for Indian corporate travellers," says Paul.

In order to do this, it was necessary to infuse a sense of 'different-ness' by giving a contemporary feel to the hotel interior. Hence, a deliberate decision was made to go in for a liberal dose of stylishness, and a very 'young' look.

Repositioning the hotels was not an easy task. Though the properties had a lot going for them by way of their strategic location in the three cities, the customer didn't identify them with sophisticated luxury hotels So, a thorough overhaul was called for.

As part of this plan, The Park in Calcutta was practically built anew. Since 1990 nearly Rs 12 crore has been lavished on the hotel to give it a brand new personality, complete with such new restaurants as the Atrium, Zen and Someplace Else.

The Park in Vizag has soaked in an investment of Rs 2 crore giving 50 per cent of the rooms a fresh look, the lobby a facelift, a new restaurant and a spruced-up swimming pool. The current year and an additional Rs 3 crore will take care of the remaining problems. Besides giving the property a new look, the management is also trying to put the destination on the leisure and corporate traveller's itinerary

The Park in Delhi too bears a completely different look, beginning at the lobby level. You can't miss the Hemi Bawa abstract in glass as you enter (nor the loos that lie very conspicuously next to the elevators). Then, it's onto Lutyens Lounge on the exclusive deluxe floor with its panoramic view of Jantar Mantar and the newly refurbished banquet areas. The hotel has also opened yet another watering hole in the heart of Delhi: Someplace Else.

The runaway success of 'Someplace Else' a pub-cum-restaurant-cum-nightclub in Calcutta prompted The Park to launch a restaurant on the same lines in Delhi.

"It's not just a bar, a pub nor a club—it's all three rolled into one," Paul claims, with a smile.

So, if you're looking for favourites like steak and kidney pie, roast chicken, Fisherman's basket and London Mixed Grill in the capital you know where to head for. The outlet functions as a pub-restaurant during the day and a club at night when it is open exclusively to members and resident guests

To ensure that you have a swinging time you can also sing along on Karaoke on special days. For those who want to feel the pub atmosphere, the dartboard offers a favourite pastime. And these are but some of the refurbishments in the Delhi property, which have totted up expenses of over Rs 6 crore. Further renovations of rooms and addition of facilities are on the anvil during the current year, 1996-97.

The extensive refurbishments on the group's agenda for the hotels, says Paul, is a confirmation of their commitment to the market. She explains, "Though a lot has been done, the job is never really complete, what with renovations being an ongoing process at a hotel. Besides, what the turnaround has actually achieved is giving the properties one identity. They are no longer three hotels that guests look at in isolation. They are looked upon as a chain with streamlined procedures and strategies. All three offer an identical experience just like any other hotel chain of international standards. Today Park hotels are comparable with any other top-of-the-line hotels."

Having refurbished, the hotels are in the process of consolidating their position having already achieved a distinct customer profile. While the capital attracts a large part of the tourist segment, the Calcutta property fills up with business traffic to the tune of 80-85 per cent, while 50-60 per cent of Vizag bookings also come from the business traveller.

But how does this petite woman fit into the male-dominated world of Indian business? Well, if you must know, very comfortably.

According to Paul the travel trade accepts women a lot more easily than any other industry. "I feel that the industry is much more approachable and far more relaxed than any other male dominated field," she says, adding a moment later, "At the management level it really doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman. You could either be a good manager or a bad manager. It's performance and competence that really is the deciding factor and not gender."

However, while there are a considerable number of women in various departments of the hoteliering business like the front office, housekeeping, sales and public relations, Paul concedes that very few actually scale the top. She muses, "I really don't see too many women at the topmost or managerial slots. Maybe one in ten.

Someplace Else: Yet another watering hole in the heart of Delhi

Even the F&B department has fewer women than one could expect to find. I guess that is due primarily because of the hours and the pressures of the family that keeps them from greater involvement in the industry."

But as president of the hotel chain, Paul's own involvement is complete. As is The Park's involvement with the local activities of the city in which it is based. So every now and then there's supper theatre at the Park, with local troupes performing for the benefit of its guests, while celebrities in the capital are also invited for 'Going Public at the Park', a brainchild of Paul and her team of VPs.

'Going Public' is an exercise unique to The Park in Delhi, which was introduced to promote awareness on diverse subjects by way of regular public speaking events. The hotel offers eminent speakers a platform to share their views, knowledge and experience with the public at large, as attendance is open to anyone who is interested. As many as 13 speakers have gone public at The Park including Jatin Das, Salman Khurshid, Maneka Gandhi, Kiran Bedi, Subodh Bhargava of Eicher group, Ramesh Vangal of Pepsi Foods, Dr M B Athreya, management advisor and Shiv Khera a human resource consultant

Paul explains the other diverse interests of the group at large "The hotels have taken upon themselves to promote contemporary art and culture, and the performing arts We try and keep as active on the social scene as we can We have tried to include as many interesting things on the Park agenda as we can."

At the Delhi hotel, the seeds for another novel scheme were sown recently. A midnight art bazaar threw open its doors giving Delhiites an opportunity to view and buy from a collection of over 200 works of over 100 artists. The bazaar was enlivened with not just the works of young and upcoming artists from all over the country, but also such old masters as Ram Kinkar Baij, Jamini Roy, Abanindra Nath Tagore, M F Husain, Jogen Choudhary and Manu Parekh.

The bazaar had been visualised as a catalyst in the creation and enrichment of art by acting as a bridge between the artists and the patrons. Also, it helped focus on talented upcoming artists, giving them a platform to bring their works to art patrons at such a well-known forum.

Paul says that the bazaar "kept in mind that today people have very little time to actually spend browsing around at an art exhibition". The show was timed as an after-dinner, or late-at night event throwing its doors open to the public from 9pm to 2am The main attraction of the exhibition was that many of the works on display were available at very affordable rates. Besides, the visitors had a chance to interact with some of the artists who were present at the time the bazaar was in full form.

-Mangal Kumar

Explains Paul, "Sponsoring the art bazaar is an area we have gone into quite effortlessly keeping in mind the important role that art has played in the extensive renovations and repositioning of the Park hotels as the first chain of boutique hotels in India "

While the Park hotels in Delhi and Calcutta have grown to become pivotal points of the cities' social activities, the Vizag hotel is actively promoting the destination it is located in. An innovative tour package was thus introduced recently which attempts in packaging attractively, the destination and the hotel through a very attractive holiday scheme Valid till the end of September the Vacation Vizag Package offers a four days and three nights holiday that will take care of airport or railway transfers, all meals on all days, free use of the pool and sports activities on offer and even a half day sightseeing trip. All this for just Rs 5,555 (taxes included) for double occupancy. And children below 12 stay free. "We've met with mixed success but we are aware of the fact that it takes time to sell the destination But the hotel is showing signs of recuperating and tots up 50 per cent occupancy levels throughout the year," she explains

Like any other hotelier, Paul too is quite concerned about the paucity of hotel rooms in the capital and other metro cities "Perhaps the only positive fallout of the shortage of hotel rooms has been the fact that hotels are scaling high rates of occupancy even in the summer months which are traditionally off-season. This low season has actually shrunk to a bare two months!" she exclaims.

Paul reflects the concern of the industry regarding the fact that there is also a complete lack of mid-range hotel chains. She says, "There are not enough choices in the mid-pricing range And in the lower range of hotels, there is very little or practically no standardisation whatsoever At the end of the day the traveller ends up spending either a fortune or is compelled to put up at a hotel where his expectations are not met with "

So it's not surprising that the group is planning on expanding and in the pipeline is a 4-star hotel-cum-residential club at new Bombay with further plans to open up new resort hotels to cater to the growing tourism market. Further expansion is on the cards through the acquisition or managing additional properties

EXTRACT

The Name of the ROWS

***Jug Suraiya** writes on Mani Shankar Aiyar. Extracts from his new book*

Mani Shankar Aiyar likes to call things names. The first thing he called a name was me. In his column in *Sunday* magazine he called me a clown of *The Times of India*. The fallout was most gratifying; the Suraiya stock registered a marked rise on the sensex of public consciousness

People who hadn't called me anything or anywhere in years, not even to their second-best dinner parties, called me to inform me of my newly acquired celebrity status. Perfect strangers accosted me on the street to felicitate me on my achievement, and on my visits to the local *sabziwalla* I kept a sharp eye out for lurking autograph hounds behind the *bandh gobi*.

Chuffed as I was by all this attention, I couldn't help but wonder if it was entirely warranted. I don't know Mani personally, but I know him by reputation—as indeed who doesn't?—and I had this feeling that in the present instance he hadn't given it his best shot. Being called a clown of *TOI*—particularly by one who could be said to fulfil a similar function for a larger and more exalted entity, namely *GOI*—appeared to me to be a case of damning with faint condemnation.

At least if he'd called me a four-anna clown it would have been something. I wasn't entirely sure what a four-anna clown might be. But it is a matter of record that that quadruplicate coinage is an old favourite of Mani's, who used it with memorable effect to designate his political colleagues who he felt were shortchanging the Congress party rather than coming to its aid. If four-anna Congressmen were fit only to be consigned to the begging bowl of history as the loose and leftover change of a tender no longer legal, how much more dispensable a four-

***Extracted from** The Great Indian Bores*
by Jug Suraiya
Published by the UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd
Price Rs 120

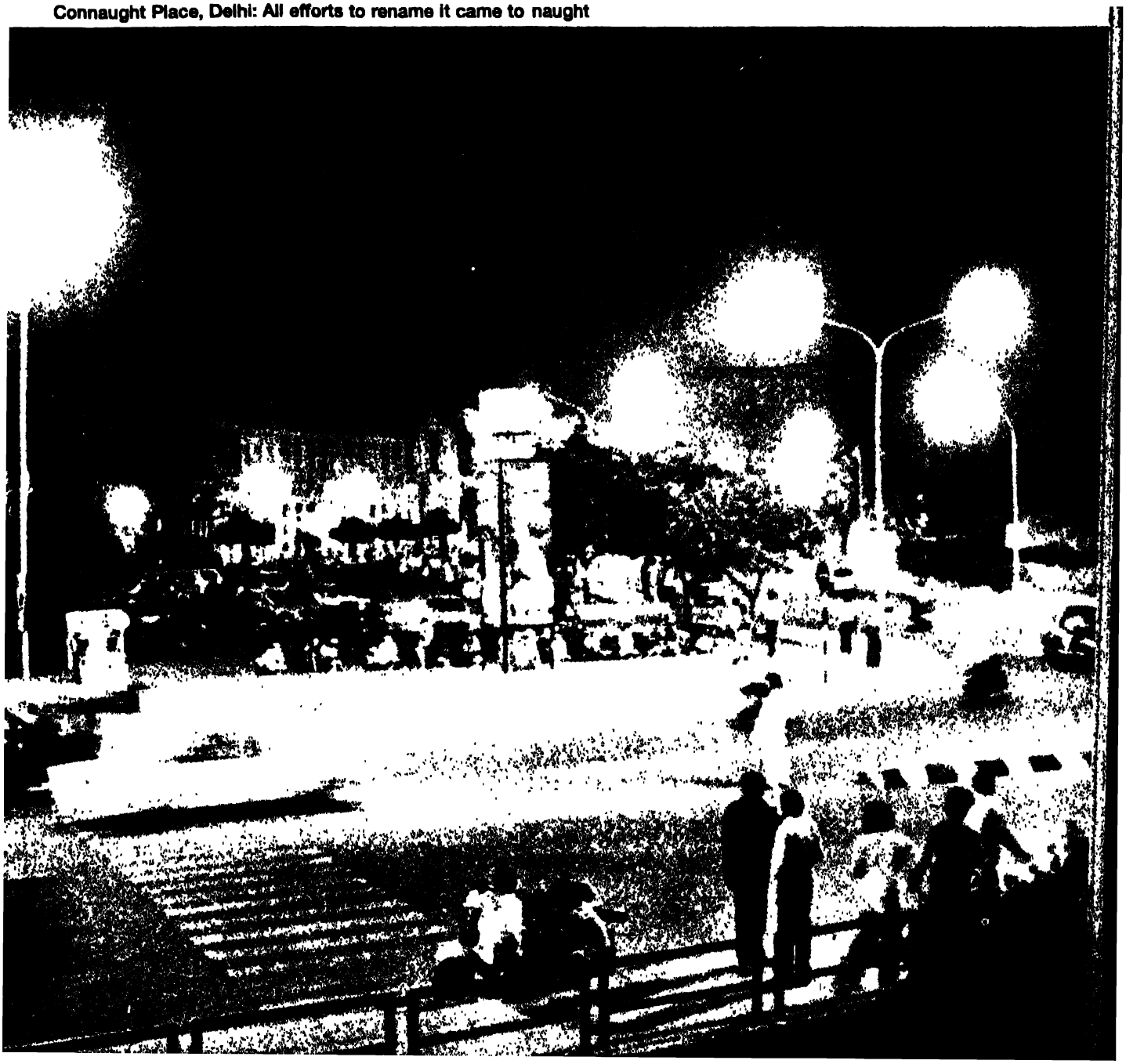
anna clown? Being called a four-anna clown would have suited me fine. But by his failure to add a denominational prefix to my clownishness, Mani had implicitly upgraded me to being a fully-capitalised 16-anna clown, an unremarkable species in Congress or other circles.

Still, one takes what one gets and tries to make the most of it. When the then deputy Prime Minister, Devi Lal, called the then editor of the *Indian Express*, Arun Shourie, a familiarly disparaging epithet, editorial judgment deemed it fit to record the episode for posterity on the front page of the paper, never mind that the term in question is in many parts of north India more in the nature of a salutation expressing fraternal camaraderie rather than opprobrium. But then, what can you expect from a chap who at best was—so to Mani-speak—an eight-anna PM?

Mani himself, however, is not an eight-anna anything. Indeed, if one gives him full marks, and annas, as both columnist and Congressman, he totals up to an impressive 32 annas. And from 32 annas one does expect a little more, even in these inflationary and decimalised times.

I don't know if one can get a thesaurus for 32 annas these days, but Mani could have borrowed mine. There, under clown (sub-division, fool) he would have discovered: buffoon, zany, ass, donkey, goose, cuckoo, idiot, natural, half-wit, mongol, cretin, moron, imbecile, silly-billy, stooge, butt, laughing-stock, twit, clot, bungler, birdbrain, feather-brain, dotard, ninny, simpleton, Simple Simon, tom-noddy, charlie, noodle, nincompoop, juggins, muggins, booby, sap, big stiff, poor stick, dope, jerk, gowk, galoot, goof, greenhorn, weed, drip, softy, sucker, dupe, gaper, gawker, dunce, dullard, blockhead, numskull, duffer, dolt, dumb, cluck, ignoramus, fathead, thickhead, bonehead, pinhead, dunderhead, blunderhead, chucklehead, jobbernowl, nitwit, dimwit, mutt, chump, clot, clod, oaf,

Connaught Place, Delhi: All efforts to rename it came to naught



booby, loon, bumpkin

Or—in keeping with my status as an honorary Bengali—he could have called me a nonsense. A nonsense is the ultimate verbal gauntlet in Bongdom, signifying full-frontal, eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation. When two Bongs prepare to cross dialectical swords—typically in a coffee house or a similar *adda*—the *jugalbandi* begins in low key, with both participants metaphorically clearing their throats as it were with a couple of muttered *bokas* and *baje kothas*. Then, in consonance with the Bong's bicultural credo that the Sun never sets on the British empire, the logomachy escalates into English, *Baggar* fellow! exclaims one duellist with a deadly thrust. *Raskal*, whyfore you are showing me red, red eyes? ripostes the other. Things are distinctly warming up now. Then comes the clincher, the final broadside. You nonsense! thunders one combatant, evoking shades of Surendranath Bannerjea denouncing the partition of Bengal. After that it's sleeve rolling up time, referees out of the ring and call up the stretcher bearers.

How Bengal slangs today, the rest of India will slang tomorrow. So Mani could have called me a nonsense with telling effect. Or, in view of the fact that I am a Punjabi-in-law through marriage, he could have called me *duddooaan di punseri*. *Duddooaan di punseri*, Bunny assures me, represents state-of-the-art north Indian invective; it is the Maruti Esteem of Punj malediction. Technically speaking, *duddooaan di punseri* means five seers of frogs, which sounds about as scurrilous as an indent for a biology lab or a French grocery list. But when the driver of a Delhi Redline bus leans out of his window over the scooterist who has had the temerity to make himself into tomato puree under the tyres of the bus without as much as a by-your-leave and hollers *Arre, duddooaan di punseri!* the two-wheeler*walla* knows exactly what the phrase connotes: You great slithery, suppurating, repugnant, vile, noxious, quivering lump of gangrenous toad flesh, how dare you besmirch my sight with your foul and loathsome presence!

Quite so. I could have lived with being called *duddooaan di punseri*.

Or, going back to his roots in Tamil Nadu, Mani might have lobbed a *savu krakki* at me. Apparently down South, *savu krakki* is the preferred form of address adopted by all good, patriotic, God-fearing citizens when referring to outcasts, pariahs, criminals, heathens, human excrescences and other Hindi chauvinists. *Savu krakki*, I am informed, means may you perish, and is obviously the Dravid counterpart of the Cockney perisher.

At a pinch, I'd have bought a Tam-Brahm perisher from Mani. But clown? Surely he could do better, given the right inspiration.

Reviewing the Booker prize-winning novel *How Late It was How Late* by James Kelman, a resident of Glasgow, a critic noted that the book contained 4,322 expletives undeleted, or roughly one fifth of the total length of the work. The Booker is worth 20,000 quid, excluding royalties from the sale of the book. Which means the author got 4,000 pounds for saying precisely sweet *eff* all. No doubt about it, there's cash in cussing. And what a Scotsman can do, a 32-

Rajiv Gandhi: Part of the Dosco class of '60

Sonia Gandhi: Could have had Janpath renamed after her

anna columnist-cum-politician can certainly do better, particularly with an eight-anna Bong-cum -eight-anna Punj to help him

Mani and I might never win a tandem Booker But between us we should certainly be able to bag an invite or two to a couple of four-anna dinner dos So lay on, Macduff --and literally damned be him that first cries. Hold, enough!

Unfortunately, Mani did not take me up on my offer I figure he felt he had graduated to bigger and better things than calling me names. He decided to call Delhi's Connaught Place and Connaught Circus names instead. He called them Rajiv Chowk and Indira Chowk, respectively. This caused a bit of a kerfuffle

The mammoth public rally organised to felicitate the man who had delivered the bold and decisive *coup de grace* to history—that conniving and insidious tool of the ragtag opposition comprising everyone and anyone from the British raj to the Sangh Parivar — regrettably misfired It came to naught, or, more precisely, it came to Con-naught, the con having been performed by the new nominal Lutyens of the Capital, who in a midnight tryst with the Union home ministry had had the place renamed

Take me to RC, said a would-be rallyist, using the new abbreviation for CP *Aho, ji!* said the auto rickshaw driver with alacrity You are too much liking RC? All good gentries too much liking RC these days, said the driver approvingly, causing the would-be rallyist to reflect on the innate political rectitude and sense of civic duty of autorickshaw*wallas* as a tribe.

The would-be rallyists' faith in the innate political rectitude and sense of civic duty of the autorickshaw-*wallas* was somewhat shaken when the fellow pulled up in front of a booze shop. This isn't RC, protested the wannabe rallyist Take me to RC! Shaking his head in resignation at the wilful dimwittedness of some of the *pussinjers* he had to carry, the auto*walla* hauled the other out of the vehicle and dragged him to the shelves stacked high with RC, which as all auto-drivers in their innate political rectitude and sense of civic duty know stands for Royal Challenge whisky, on-spot commission payable to anyone who brings a cash-paying customer to the counter

Similar scenes were being enacted all over the city, resulting in total chaos and unprecedented sales of Royal Challenge. Commenting on the unfortunate episode on the following day, a correspondent to the 'Letters to the Editor' column pointed out that the confusion could easily have been avoided had greater care, planning and observance of the due properties gone into the renaming of CP. The correspondent noted that while the person responsible for the renaming had genuflected deeply in memory of the illustrious leader, he had not genuflected deeply enough Rajiv Chowk? Who did the fellow think he

was that he got off calling Rajiv Rajiv and not—as befitted the finest traditions of indigenous culture, civilisation and sycophancy —Rajiv*ji*? The renamed Rajiv Chowk should forthwith be re-renamed Rajivji Chowk, or RjiC (pronounced RGC) for short.

In response to this inspired suggestion, a massive public rally was planned for the next day at RjiC The massive rally turned out to be not quite as massive as planned as a large number of would-be delegates went air-dashing off to Calcutta, home of the RGC, as in Royal Golf Club This confusion regarding the venue, whether it was Delhi or Calcutta, was compounded by the fact that Delhi was no longer Delhi but Rajivjigaon

At the depleted rally that was finally held in RjiC, it was decided to re-re-rename the re-renamed RjiC to RjiCji, on the sound principle that Rajivji's name could not possiblybe associated with a common or garden chowk, as were the names of hoi polloi, but should be yoked to an appropriately elevated Chowk*ji* After a quick look-see through dictionaries, encyclopaedias and atlases to make sure there was no pesky RGCG to cause more problems of mistaken identity, the motion for RjiCji was carried, *nem con*

A dissenting note, however, was struck in another quarter A morcha was taken out by those who wanted to know why, when Indira*ji* and Jawaharlal*ji* had been duly honoured for their familial proximity to the Great Leader, they, who were linked to Rajiv*ji* with a tie thicker than that of blood, namely the old Doon School tie, had not been similarly commemorated. The Dosco class of '60 took to the renamed streets demanding that something, anything be renamed after them as well

Faced with this new crisis, the *naam ke-vaste* master replanner of Delhi dashed for high-level consultations to 10 Janpath, on the way quickly renaming Janpath Soniajipath before someone else thought of that wheeze. The discussions ran into an unexpected snag when it was discovered that there was nothing left in the city to rename So how were the Doscos to be accommodated, not to mention the Indian Airline pilots who were threatening to start a similar agitation?

How about renaming Sulabh Shauchalayas after Doscos? suggested someone. Trouble was there were more Doscos than there were Sulabh Shauchalayas. Couldn't we build some more? another suggested Problem was that after repainting all the renamed street signs and changing the addresses on the official stationery there was no money left to build anything, not even *janta* loos

It was then that the master replanner of Delhi had his master stroke: Why restrict oneself to renaming inanimate things? Why not go the whole hog and rename animate things as well?

And so it came to pass that those permanent fixtures of the Capital, the bulls and cows who decorate the streets of Delhi in inexhaustible abundance together with their daily produce, were suitably rebaptised. And as a fitting tribute to himself, the master renamer renamed himself as well: Mani Shankar Ayah, self-appointed nanny of the Nehru-Gandhi legacy and all its attendant *baba-log*.■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says the full moon activates your work angle, be it a job, business, profession, and here, you make headway and inroads into the territory of your rivals. Obviously, sparks will fly. You do make big plans on Tuesday and Wednesday Execute them now

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

A fine opportunity to go ahead, travel, take chances in an enterprise Also, a time to gallivant and have some fun, say by Thursday and Friday July 6 is particularly promising for fun, promises loans and funds Venus ensures comforts

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Mars Venus duo both help you to win favours, be assertive, win friends, influence people, get your hands on money and look up to someone for love July 3, 4-6 are your best bet for romance, finance and a chance to make things happen July 6 is ideal for get togethers

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Mercury in your sign from July 2 favours news views, ideas, endeavours, opinions, messages, calls, correspondence, contacts and travel Surely, all this is a tall order for just one week, but that's the way it is going to be You will be hard put to cope with demands

Leo
July 21 — August 21

A quilt of expenses and hardwork with patches of passion best describes this week Luckily, these expenses could well be for house and health of family members You will be meeting your full share of people and could be hard put to cope with it Problems of adjustment arise

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Love will play its harp in your heart and you will swoon, in ecstacy It is most certainly a time of creativity. children, prayers, tantra mantra, hobbies, home, decoration, renovation, buying, selling, trade and travel In others words, many things will happen simultaneously

Libra
September 23 — October 22

The home and the outside world converge beautifully in a delightful manner Beauty will be your birthright and you shall have it Expect visitors, foreigners, and strangers to participate in your life, says Ganesha This is an ideal week to try out the new and different

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

With effortless ease you will move and monoeuvre, thus proving yourself as a master strategist A crash course in studies, business, home, interior decoration, law and international trade should be right up your street This is a time to move mentally and physically

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

This is a period of journey, money and strong attachments as well as repulsions. Therefore powerful likes and dislikes will be at work and you should be careful of what you say and do Curb the impulse to be outspoken or it could lead to legal action

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The full moon in your sign makes you impetuous, daring, romantic and quite a grabber of the goodies of life A time to marry, get engaged, collaborate and step out in style There could be confrontations and health hazards, but that's all part of the game Money prospects brighten

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Complete secrecy is the key to success, be it an affair of the heart, easy money, a job-switch, funding, investment, buying, selling, shopping, writing, composing or starting a new venture While your health is a little suspect, your creativity will be outstanding

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Responsibilities and rights go together That is what you will really discover this week By the week's close, matters will be resolved, making for well earned sleep and rest Changes in the home front are almost certain Children, education and weddings make you comfortable

IRTHDAYS

June 30: Moon-Mercury opposition suggests that you should be careful in the messages you give, the ideas you offer and the things you say.

July 1: Ganesha says this full moon is ideal for engagement, marriage, links, ties, trips and conferences. It is an image building birthyear.

July 2: Moon sextile Saturn-Pluto helps in long range planning which will result in lasting benefits, be it children, property, shares and stocks.

July 3: Moon trine Venus-Mars is excellent for those in business, public trusts, advertising, communications and trade. Children give satisfaction. Money and popularity [illegible] you to soar.

July 4: Sun opposition Jupiter signifies [illegible] sure of where you are going and [illegible] your heart away. An exciting birthyear. [illegible] publicity and [illegible] moves are clearly foretold. [illegible] you different. Chances can be taken. Love will be your pal and [illegible] with you. This is an excellent year for profits and pleasure.

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GOA					
GUWAHATI					
HYDERABAD					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
IMPHAL					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
MUMBAI					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
AMSTERDAM					
BANGKOK					
BUCHAREST					
CHITTAGONG					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG 697	1855	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0910	4 5
BG 092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG 091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC 723	1300	1, 3 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5, 6
BG 094	1905	1 2 3, 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2040	1 5
DOHA					
Q7 061	1000	3	Q7 060	1230	2
DUBAI					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0230	7
KATHMANDU					
IC 747	1035	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1450	1 2 4 6
RA 214	1525	2 6	RA 213	1120	2 6
LONDON					
RA-142	2115	3 7	RA 143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU 558	2100	4	SU 557	0920	1
PARO					
KB 109	1105	1	KB 108	0310	7
KB 109	1125	5			
SINGAPORE					
BI 102	0640	7	BI 101	2000	6
SQ 411	[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ 196	2240	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	2	[illegible]	1640	4
TOKYO					
AI [illegible]	1910	[illegible]	AI 301	1810	6
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7	[illegible]	1915	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** ModiLuft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **S2** Sahara India Airlines ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **4S** East West Airlines ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways ● **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
3311	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	3312
3005	19 25	**Amritsar Mail**	[illegible]	3006
3003	20 05	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	15 05	3004
2301	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & [illegible]	16 15	2302
2303	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tue [illegible] Arr Mon Thurs [illegible]	16 15	2304
2301	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Thurs Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tue [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thur & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
2307	23 30	**Jodhpur Express**	[illegible]	2308
2019	5 20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
3073	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
2045	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	[illegible]	2046
5049	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
5047	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 20	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 40	**Udyan Abha Tooran Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 50	3050
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
5659	17 25	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 50	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8 15	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6 40	3032
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 30	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20 35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4 15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5185	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	[illegible]	**Madras Mail**	[illegible]	6004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	[illegible]	8003
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 [illegible]	2859
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Saturday	21 [illegible]	2022
8033	[illegible]	**Ahmedabad Express**	[illegible]	8033
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8024
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	2841
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	19 40	7004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	[illegible]	6311
[illegible]	17 40	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8111	[illegible]	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	[illegible]	8112
2006	20 55	**Titlagarh Express**	5 00	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	5 10	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
[illegible]	19 00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 25	8110
8251	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	2802
8045	[illegible]	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	[illegible]	8046
8011	[illegible]	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Monday Arr Except Sunday	11 35	8012
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	-
	[illegible]	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday: 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

STREET SMART

With fashion going cheap on the pavement, that's the only way to be, says ***Manisha Gulati***

The relationship between street fashion and fashion designers has been well documented. The most obvious example of this symbiotic bond can, of course, be found in the collections of the British designer Vivienne Westwood, the inventor of punk fashion. Westwood found inspiration in the whacky, eccentric clothes worn by English teenagers on the high street, and created an entire new look around them. Her clothes, whether it was the leather mini-skirts or the dresses held together with safety pins, owed as much to street fashion as it did to the designer's own imagination.

And nor was Westwood the only one to rely on the street. The French designer, Yves Saint Laurent most famously proclaimed, "The street and I, it's a love story." Saint Laurent considered 1971 to be the most important year in the history of fashion because fashion finally came down to the street. What the designer didn't mention was that the street had always left its imprint on haute couture.

Even today, such internationally renowned designers as Jean Paul Gaultier and Gianni Versace present us with their own take on high street designs every time they show a new collection on the ramp. And if rip-offs of their pret-a-porter collection find their way to the high street sooner rather than later, then that's only fair. After all, the street is only taking back what it inspired in the first place.

In India, the concept of street fashion took shape with the export boom in the Seventies. There were numerous fashion export houses trying to cope with the demand for Indian ready-mades. And not all of them managed to meet the deadlines or the strict quality control standards that were in effect. Result: these "export rejects", as these clothes came to called, found their way to the pavements, where they sold for dirt-cheap prices.

Each city had its own place for these cheap but chic outfits. In Calcutta, such outlets as Guys and Dolls and Gokuldas opened to meet with the demand for these inexpensive but trendy clothes. In Bombay, they retailed on the appropriately-named Fashion Street. And in Delhi, Sarojini Nagar and Janpath became the new centres of street fashion.

Street fashion, as sold in Sarojini Nagar and Janpath, was once the best-kept secret in Delhi. Today it is a veritable institution. And caters to every demand: from suits for the working woman to stretchy fabrics which will fit beautifully on the beautifully proportioned bodies of high society women to the trendiest cottons for men. These bazaars don't just have a faithful following; they have assumed the status of a cult with the hordes of customers who patronise them.

Ever since busy fashion fanatics have discovered the time and

money saving chic of street fashion, dressing by catalogues, labels and money has become less mandatory With more than 50 shops and over the same number of designers to choose from, women can buy everything from headbands to high heels simply by paying a visit, browsing through heaps and the most essential word word, bargaining.

It has often been said that the concept is inspired by the street scene in Paris . hence the short little trench coats, cotton-satin zip-front jackets, and body hugging suits that Parisians are currently wearing from the Bastille to the Champs Elysees. If the clothes have a retrospective feeling—they were probably seen on models wearing designer labels And why not. The collection actually consists of the rejected pieces of clothing from exporters and manufacturers that are not sent all over the world due to small defects like a button shift, increase in length by 1 inch, or a round collar instead of a pointed one

Designers abroad send in their patterns to India where they are manufactured in bulk, sent abroad and get the appropriate labels

slapped onto them Jayant Sahni, fashion coordinator at Otto, India, says, "Westerners are very finicky when it comes to designs. Even a 19-20 difference from the sample is enough for them to reject the whole pile. These are then sold here for Rs 20 instead of $20 Once when I was in London I bought a t-shirt for my neice for $35. It's only later when I got it home that I saw the 'Made in India' tag on it. I felt like such a fool. They would think I bought it here form Sarojini Nagar."

Sizing problems notwithstanding, the pleasure of getting the latest fashions dirt cheap has touched the most sophisticated big-city trend-setters. Not surprisingly, today's bargains are a lot more in tune with hip ready-to-wear silhouettes than they were five years ago. Witness the new at-home-on-the-range offerings. They're right on target for this years' fascination with all things Western, including some pretty wild stuff : soft, supple fringed satin jackets, pallazos and tops in various shades of tobacco, sage-brush and sandstone

While some shops fill their hangers with glitz and glamour, several take a more relaxed approach with casual wear You can get almost impeccably cut, seamed and fitted clothes that hug the body like a film. This season specially, hemlines have gone higher, dresses have scooped out or squared off necklines The long numbers are flared or cinched in at the waist

Madhoo, a Sarojini Nagar regular, gushes, "They're audacious They put more outrageous things on your bodies than any designer. The other day I was wearing this top and matching pants which I had got from Sarojini Nagar months ago and my boss asked me 'Are you wearing David Abraham?' And then went on to tell me that David Abraham had come out with this new

monochromatic collection which he thought I was wearing. I wanted to tell him David was a year too late."

Comfortable, wearable and most often durable, the men's collection focuses more on form and styling details, that give it a fashionable handwriting, than on fabric and quality. The clothes tend to be hybrids. A natural earthy palette--browns, sands, olive, greens, greys--is accentuated by the use of textured fabrics--corduroy, brushed cotton. The baggy, bulked out look is made of thin cotton, crushed cotton and blends. All in bright colours, plains, stripes, plaid checks and psychadelic patterns. Styles vary according to taste - sharp man-about- town, notched or peaked lapels, no lapels, casual or formal buttons.

The collections' simplicity ensure that the clothes will not date rapidly. It's sensible, and it's civilized. Which is just what you'd expect for a hundred bucks. Bunny says, "It's a modern collection, not a classic piece." Agrees Patel, "It is a light-hearted and down-to-earth approach to shopping."

Down-to-earth is right. Sandwiched between a vegetable market and and all-goods market, Sarojini Nagar is quite a levelling experience. One bag contains the latest denim bustier and the other has a sprig of *dhania* leaves popping out. Quaint too are the little carriers you can get for the whole shopping expedition for Rs.5. The little girls carry your bags and see you through the rigours of bargaining with non-stop banter and sometimes a tip here and there about what is in and which shop provides it.

Janpath is infested with the regular tourist crowd. Connaught Place is famous for. Needless to say, prices vary for the white-skinned and the not-so-fair. Flanked by a row of cosmetic shops and the famous Deepauls with their more famous cold coffee, Janpath is a great rendezvous joint for the youngsters in the mood for a little look-see and with little purchasing power. The heaps of clothes on 'sale' if you can call it that--prices come down from Rs.50 to Rs.20--have an incessant screaming shopkeeper saying *ek ke do*.

Part of the pret-a-porter gang are also the lingerie shops located just next to the outer-wear department. The latest designs and the most bright colours, they're an absolute eye-stoppper, specially the corsets and the g-strings. Be forewarned though. They look better than they fit.

Astounding looks and maverick style apart, a selection of the latest costume jewellery is also available at the most cost-cutting prices. For all those perennial favourite outfits, jeans and a white shirt, a classic trouser suit, a sweater dress, a black polo-neck or a black evening dress--you simply have to select a few key pieces to update your wardrobe to the hottest new fashion styles.

The must-haves are matte gold or silver pieces, diamante' type sparklers, silk cords worn with pendants, extra long strands of metal beads, ethnic beads worn multi-layered, ornate metal amulets and cuff links. The designs look as hip on the streets of Delhi as they do in New York, Milan, London, or on the streets of Paris. The new trend is to make one bold impression with your chosen piece worn on an otherwise simple but fashionable outfit.

And now for a summary of what is popular on the streets of fashion for this fall :

Legs, the longer the length on display, the better.

Silver, whether it's necklaces, bracelets or belts, shine on for 1996.

Red, that is the colour of the season, no matter what you're talking about--trousers, skirts, dresses, shirts or suits.

Pop art ideas. Sixties' inspired silhouttes and prints move into the Nineties. Colour has made a comeback. Pucci print leggings are already as popular as black ones were a year ago.

City quilts: quilted outerwear goes urban.

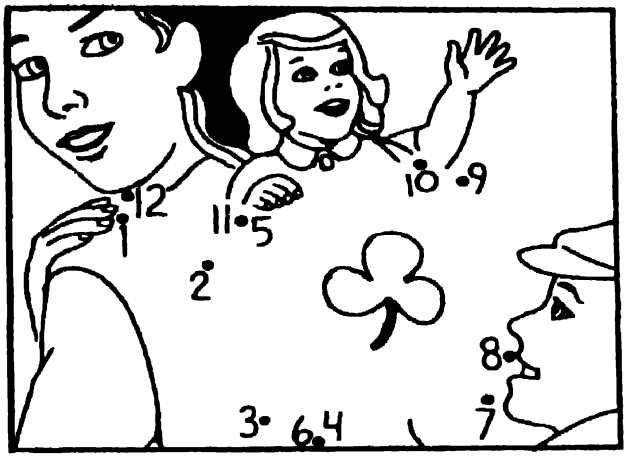
Colour clash, surprisingly brash tones team up.

Fur trim: the fake stuff on blouses, skirts, satin jackets is the new in thing.

Graphic patterns: look great in black, white and red.

But if you want to be a true forerunner of the revolution that is taking place in fashion, choose your garment according to your personal style. Because as they say 'you are what you wear'. And we wouldn't want an identity crisis here now, would we? ■

JUNIOR WHIRL ☘ HAL KAUFMAN

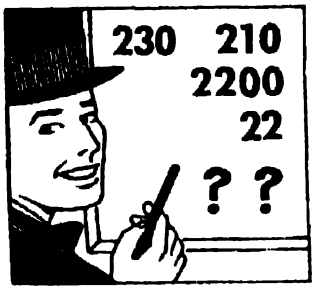


WAY TO GO! Move along, Mom, we'll be late for the parade. Draw connecting lines dot to dot to complete the picture.

WHO SHE? "Gina is my niece," said Georgina to her brother George. "But she is not MY niece," said Georgina. How can this be explained? Answer in one minute.

Gina is George's daughter

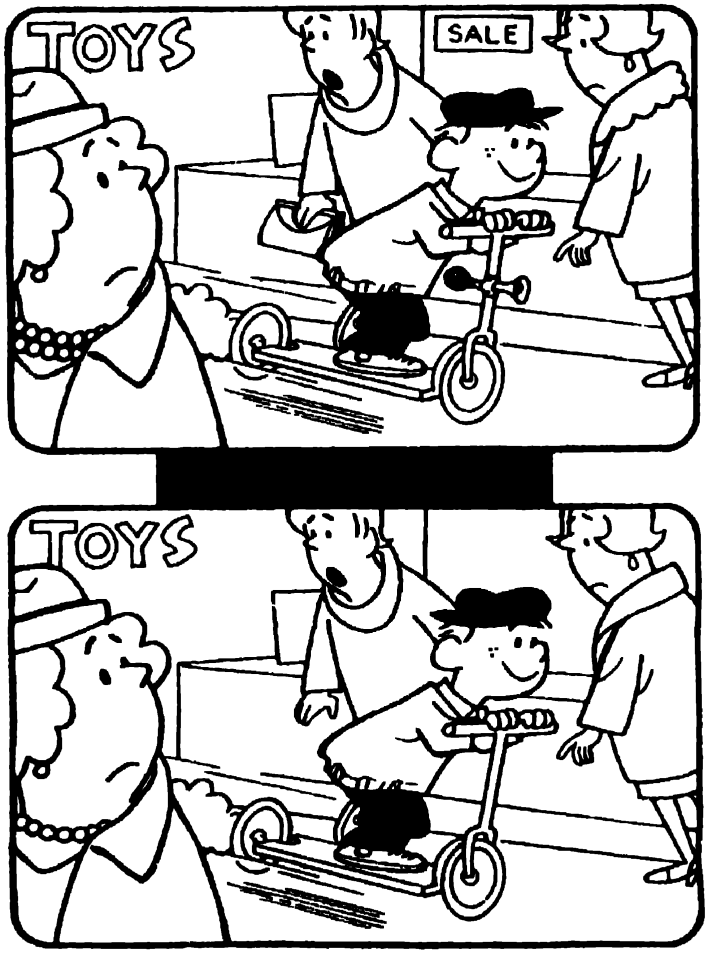
TEN COUNT! Note amounts 230, 210, 2200 and 22 on the blackboard in the diagram at right These are results obtained when a certain number is multiplied by 10, divided by 10, increased by 10, or reduced by 10, but not necessarily in that order.



You are asked to determine that certain number
Hint: Answer has three digits
Remember, amounts on blackboard represent results of four different computations.

Number in question is two hundred and twenty

HOCUS-FOCUS



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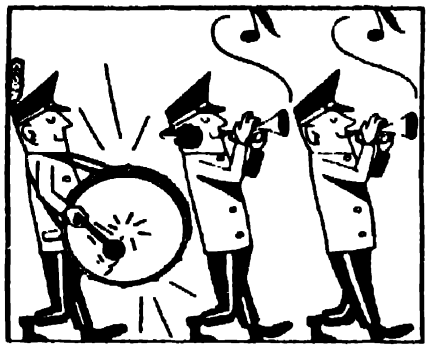
Drawings by Henry Boltinoff

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences 1 Beads are missing 2. Purse is missing. 3 Sign is missing 4 Cap is reversed 5 Horn is missing 6. Collar is different.



MUSICAL MIX-UPS TO PONDER

There is a mix-up of sorts in the drawing at left - one of the musicians is out of step. And there are mix-ups aplenty among names of the 15 musical instruments below.

How quickly can you rearrange letters to identify instruments?

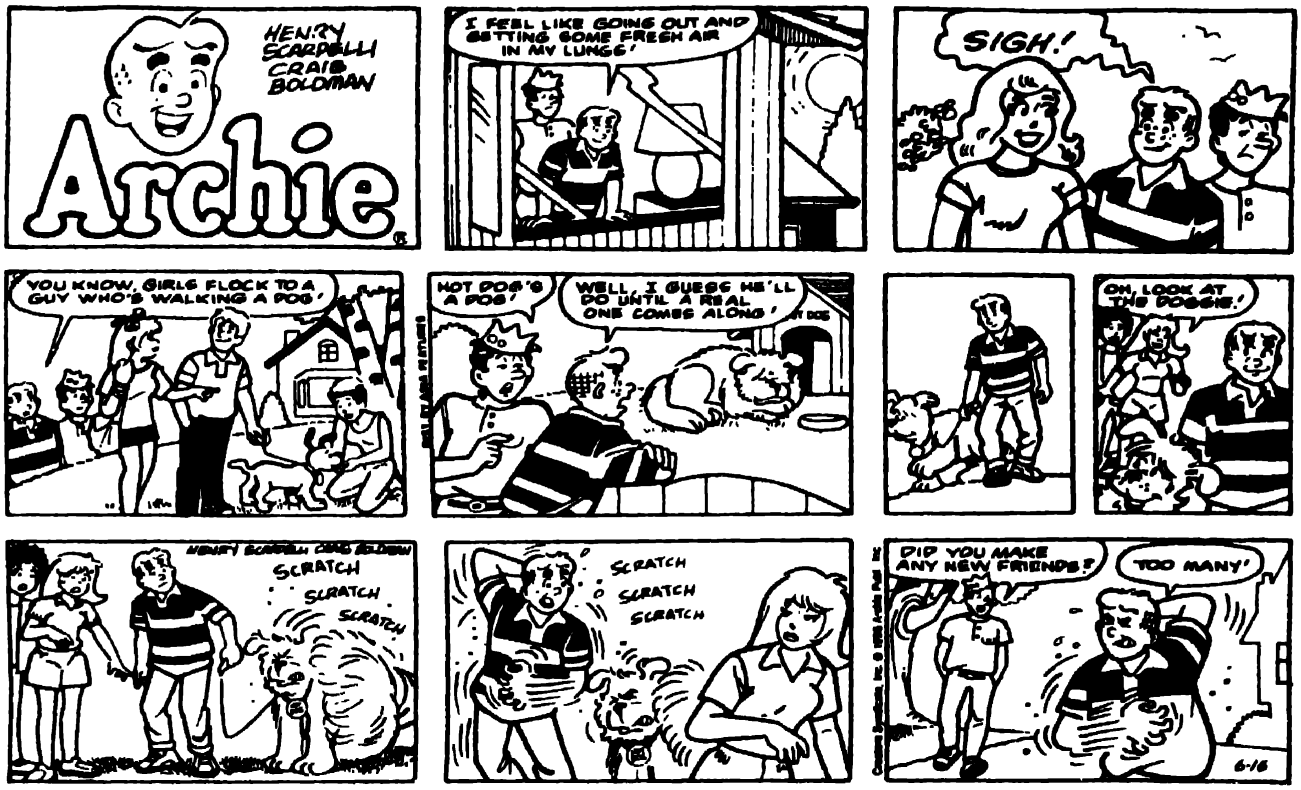
1. Buta **8. Etonborm**
2. Napio **9. Lufet**
3. Locel **10. Pumtret**
4. Urmd **11. Snobaso**
5. Eboo **12. Belug**
6. Arincelt **13. Inovil**
7. Locopic **14. Scyblam**
15. Phaxsoone

See if you can unscramble at least ten of them.

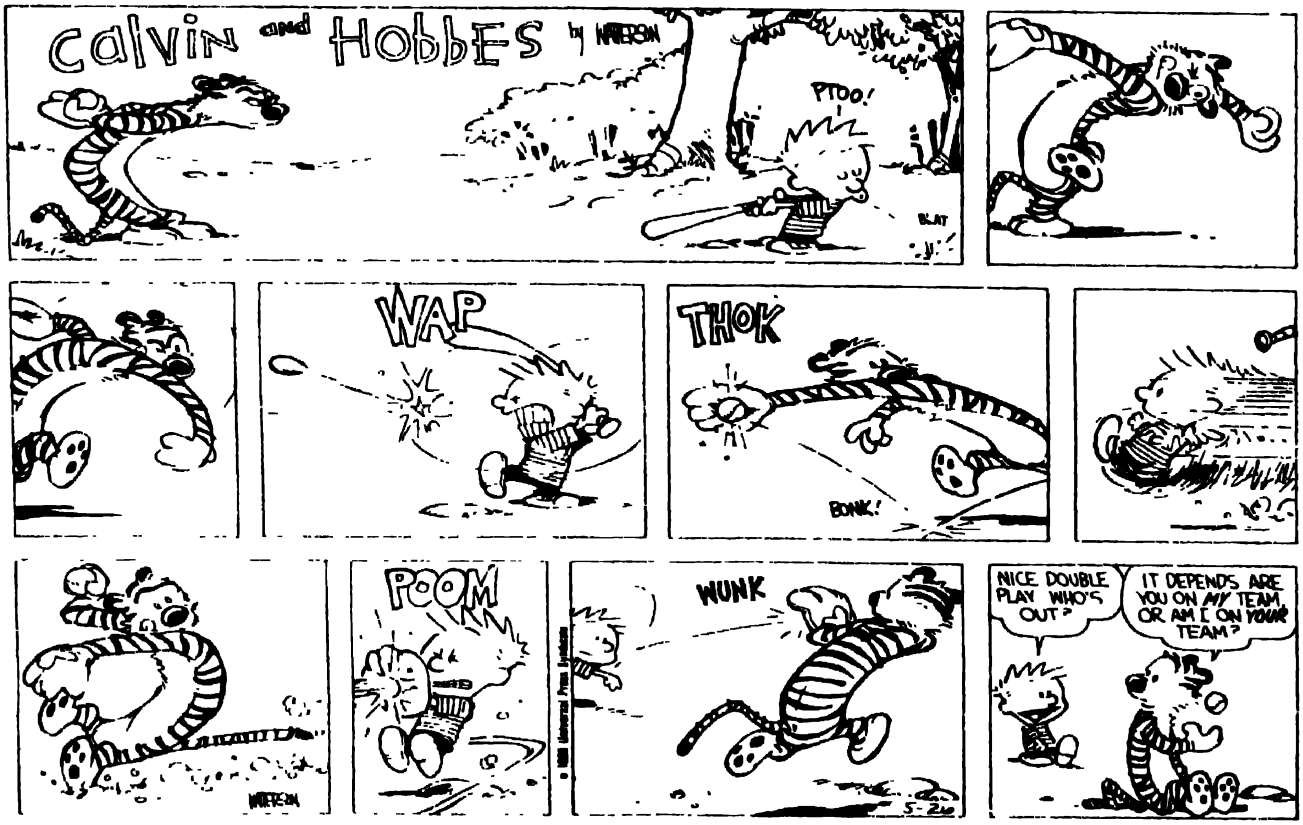
1. Tuba 2. Piano 3. Cello 4. Drum 5. Oboe 6. Clarinet 7. Piccolo 8. Trombone 9. Flute 10. Trumpet 11. Bassoon 12. Bugle 13. Violin 14. Cymbals 15. Saxophone

COMICS

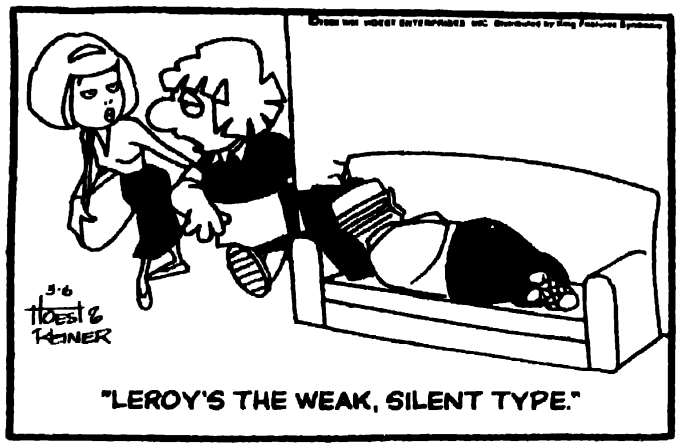
ARCHIE

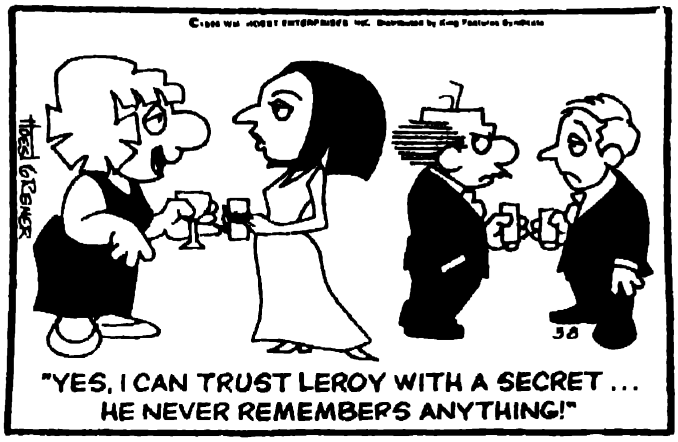


CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

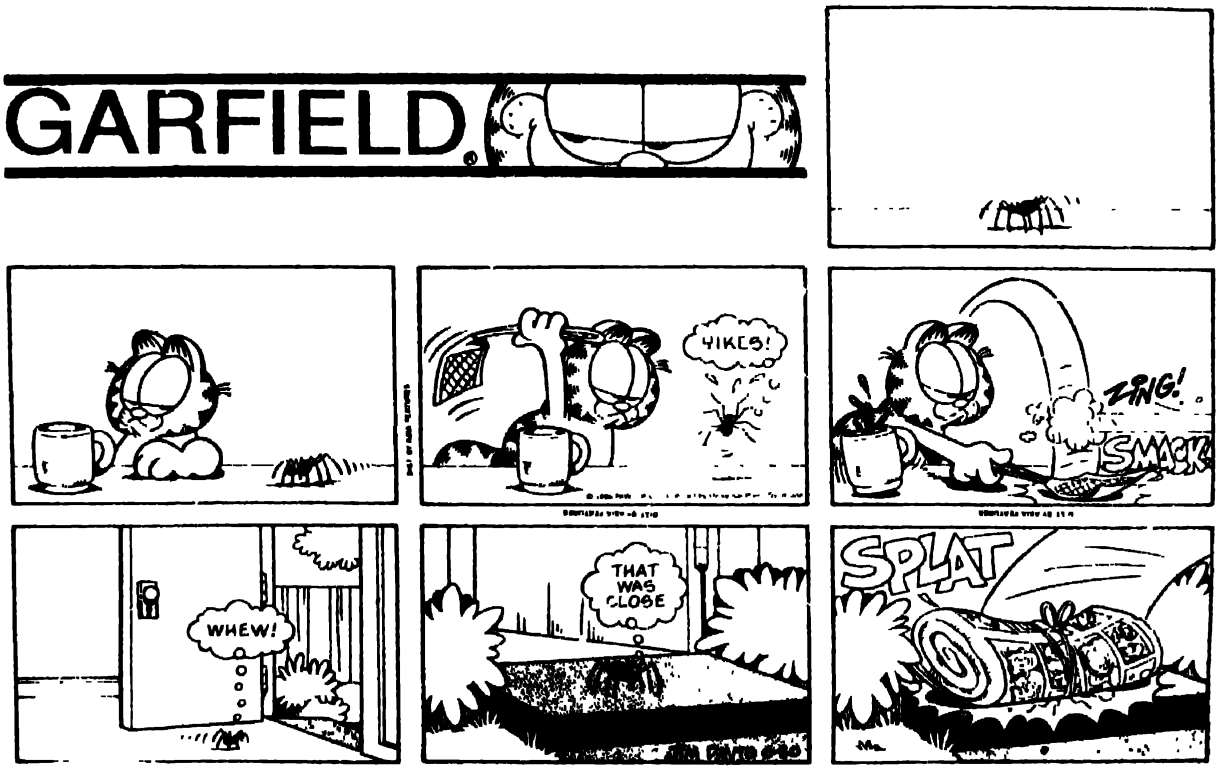


THE LOCKHORNS

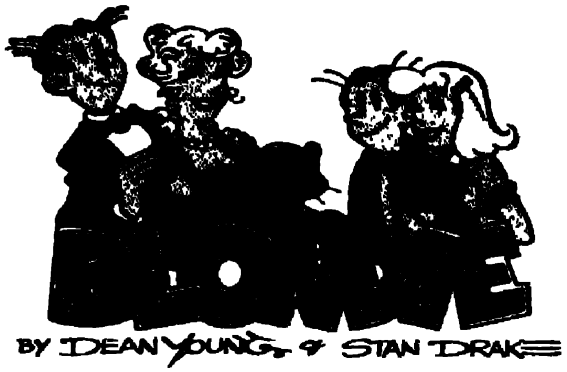


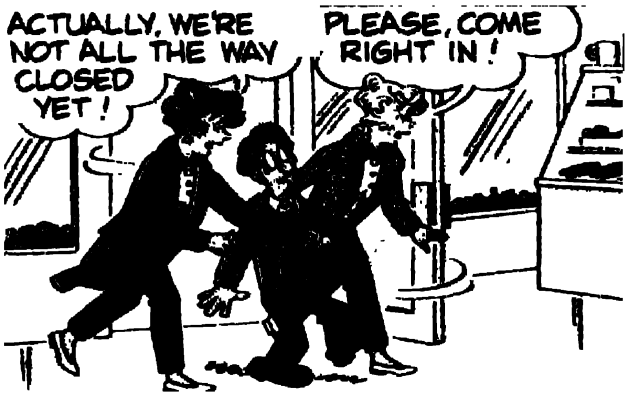


GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP





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Amit Saigal: Happy that his dream came true

Rock Around the Clock

With Amit Saigal, editor-publisher of India's first music magazine, The Rock Street Journal. ***Manisha Vardhan*** *reports*

There isn't much that makes him stand out in a crowd Not much at all, if you discount the shaggy ponytail, sprayed carelessly with splashes of grey, the soft hazel eyes, and the sudden smile that illuminates his face.

But what really does set Amit Saigal apart is that he is a dreamer. Not your usual run-of-the-mill kind of dreamer. But one who dares to realise his dreams. That, in the end, is the most compelling quality in him.

Thirty-year-old Saigal's story and that of his dream-child, *The Rock Street Journal*, begins in the north Indian town of Allahabad. A town still languishing in the slower lane of life, in one small quiet corner of which lives a rock music aficionado, who tries to share this consuming passion of his with others around the country through his magazine.

But even in Allahabad, Amit

Saigal is far from being a household name. Ask about him, and his magazine, and you will encounter blank, uncomprehending looks. And it takes a lot of persistent questioning to finally track him down.

Born into a conventional Punjabi family, Saigal's initiation into the world of music was just as conventional. Typically his first encounter was with Hindi film music. "We grew up listening to the likes of Manna Dey and Lata Mangeshkar," he says. "The result is that today I find myself viving to all kinds of music."

But Hindi film songs soon gave way to Western music. Amit thinks he was in class X or XI when he heard his first live rock performance. "It was the first time that we saw a performance we could relate to. They were a group from the Agricultural Institute and called themselves 'The Agies'" he recalls, with a laugh

The spontaneity and the instant magic of a live performance worked its charm on the young and impressionable mind of Amit and his friends

So it was not long before Amit and his gang got together to form a four-piece band and did the usual circuit of college festivals for six years.

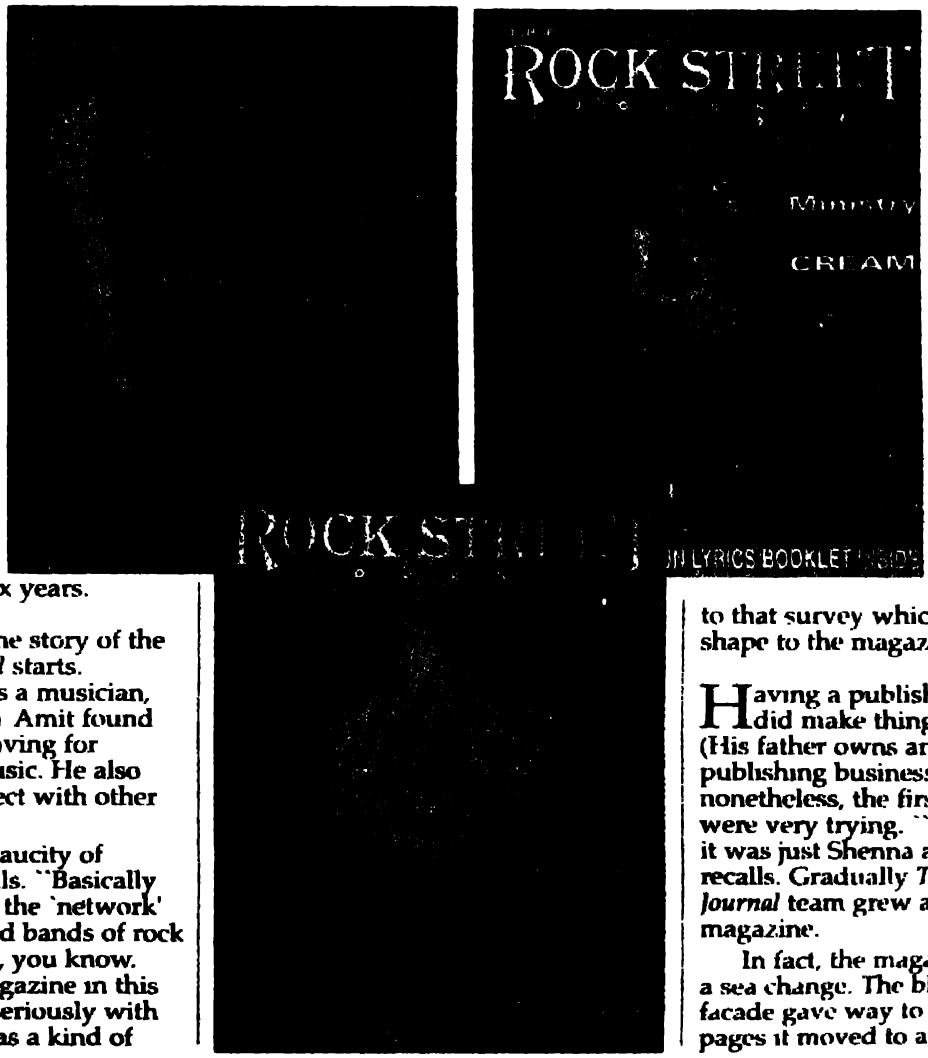
And that's where the story of the *Rock Street Journal* starts.

During his days as a musician, (he played the guitar) Amit found himself constantly craving for information about music. He also felt this need to connect with other music lovers.

"There was this paucity of information," he recalls. "Basically we had to depend on the 'network' (the small but die-hard bands of rock freaks in the country), you know. And there was no magazine in this country which dealt seriously with rock music." There was a kind of void which was looking to be filled up.

The ground for the birth of *The Rock Street Journal* was laid in these years as a struggling musician. In fact, so obsessed was Amit with his 'magazine' that he flooded his girlfriend Shenna, during their courtship years, with dummy layouts of the magazine rather than corny greeting cards. Crazy, and witty, these have been preserved carefully to this day by Shenna.

'We grew up listening to the likes of Manna Dey and Lata Mangeshkar', Amit says. 'The result is that today I find myself viving to all kinds of music.' But Hindi film songs soon gave way to Western music. And Amit thinks he was in class X or XI when he heard his first live rock performance. 'It was the first time that we saw a performance we could relate to'



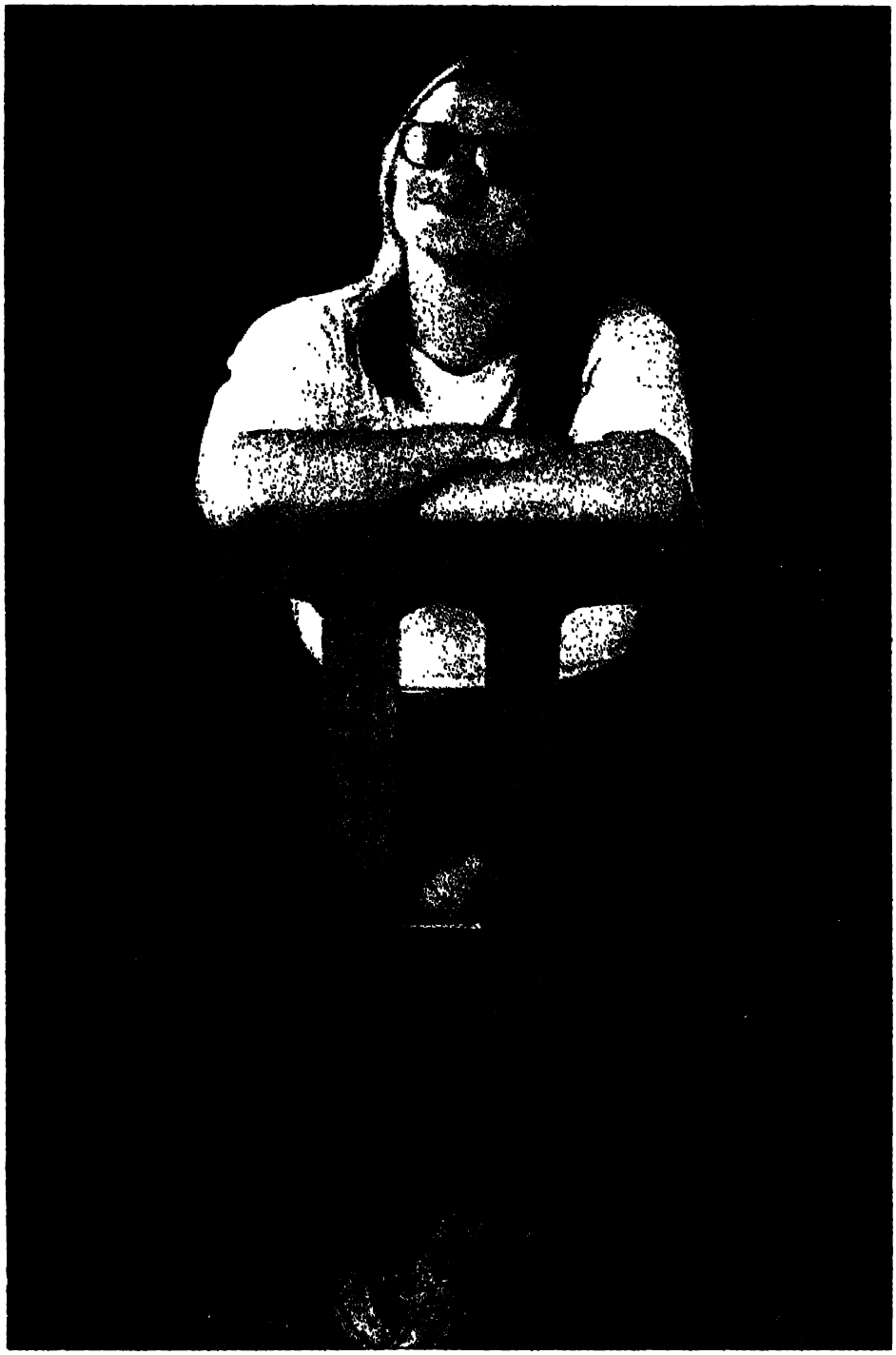
But bringing out a magazine was easier said than done. It was in January 1993, that Amit and wife Shenna launched the first edition of the *Journal*. Nothing fancy. Just a black-and-white self covered issue of 34 pages.

Amit wryly recalls the crazy gimmicks that he resorted to in an effort to get the magazine off the ground "It was at a LSR (Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi) fest that we decided to launch the magazine. In between programmes, we were making announcements about this great magazine going for just Rs 12 We had installed a stall where we were trying to cajole people into buying. We even offered heavy discounts." This was no crazy, impulsive venture into printing. Amit had approached his dream project in a systematic fashion. He conducted a survey at the Pilani festival in October '92 "We circulated a questionnaire. We were trying to find what it was that young people wanted to see and read in a music magazine," he says today It was the overwhelmingly positive response to that survey which gave final shape to the magazine

Having a publishing background did make things much easier. (His father owns and runs a publishing business). But nonetheless, the first six months were very trying. "In the beginning it was just Shenna and me," he recalls. Gradually *The Rock Street Journal* team grew as did the magazine.

In fact, the magazine underwent a sea change. The black-and-white facade gave way to colour. From 35 pages it moved to a glossy of 40

So obsessed was Amit with his `magazine' that he flooded his girlfriend, Shenna, during his courtship years, with dummy layouts of the magazine rather than corny greeting cards. Crazy, and witty, these have been preserved carefully to this day by Shenna



Amit: In love with music

but no pop, please."

But the story does not quite end here. In fact, Amit would not allow it to do so. There is a lot more that he wants to do. His real interest has always been the Indian music scene, and he is intent on creating a platform for budding Indian bands.

And for this, the magazine was not enough. So, Saigal organised a talent search last year, where up-and-coming musicians sent their demos. The result was an album called *The Great Indian Rock*.

Even though there are no big names featured in the album, what it reveals is the enormous depth of raw talent waiting in the wings to be discovered. And this album has given all of them an opportunity to be heard.

Says Amit, ``I want to make this talent search an annual feature. Besides, I'd like to organise a festival of Indian rock bands some time in the future."

The magazine may have been Amit's dream, but wife Shenna has pitched in gamely to make it her's too. Working behind the scenes, helping with lay-outs and publicity and ``doing all the dirty jobs in general," as she wryly puts it. ``I am not really into rock music, the way Amit is. But it's been an enjoyable experience," says Shenna .

``What I have really relished is the opportunity of playing godmother," she says, referring to the album that she helped bring out.

``It was never just a magazine for me. What I really wanted to create was a forum, an atmosphere of good music," Amit explains seriously. One look at the sincere expression on his face, and you believe in him and his dream.

And trust him to cherish and nuture yours, like the young groups featured in *The Great India Rock* did. And like his faithful band of 30,000 subscribers do. ■

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Milind Soman

Best known for: Draping himself around his buck-naked girlfriend, supermodel Madhu Sapre, for a commercial featuring Tuff shoes and a python. Yes, both the snake and Soman were naked as well.

Did the shoes sell?: Who can tell? The ad was yanked out of the papers in record time, and both Madhu and Milind had to appear in court on charges of obscenity

How did they plead?. Not guilty, of course. They came to court looking suitably shame-faced, and said that they hadn't known they were breaking the law. They were merely following orders on just another photo-shoot (talk about a Nuremberg defence!).

Did this bring them closer together?: Well, by the look of things, the pair appears to be surgically joined at the hip. But all is not well in paradise, if Madhu's interviews are anything to go by. The lady never loses any opportunity to point out that Milind is an arrogant sod, who is only too aware of his good looks, and is spoilt silly by all the attention lavished on him because of them.

Milind's reaction: Is to grin shyly, and say, "But, you love me, Madhu." And such is his charm, that Sapre gives in to it time and again.

Milind Soman and Madhu Sapre: The inseparable couple?

So, when do the couple plan to get hitched?: Neither of them is willing to say. According to Milind, he has proposed to Madhu on countless occasions, only to be turned down by her. Sapre is, apparently, quite content with the status quo.

Doesn't familiarity breed contempt?: Not with Sapre, evidently. The lady is happiest with the devil she knows best. And that's as true of her professional life as it is of her personal. Some years ago, Madhu went off to the West to try and make it in modellling circles there. But she was back in a matter of months, having missed India too much. Well, that, at least, was Sapre's version.

Was there any other?: Isn't there always? Sapre's detractors had it that Madhu had failed to get much work in the West. According to them, Ms Sapre's backside was far too large by foreign modelling standards, and she had been turned down by most important clients. So, rather than be relegated to the second — or even third—division, Sapre had decided to come back to *amchi* Mumbai.

And Milind?: He remained back in India, joining Madhu only for the odd holiday. Clearly, he didn't think that the girls—not to mention the model agencies—in London and Paris would go a bundle on his brand of dark good looks.

Future plans: Include making it in the movies (these days, Bollywood appears to be the next port of call for all models: look at Aishwarya and Sushmita, for instance) Madhu and Milind were, in fact, signed up by Dev Anand for his next movie. But those plans came to naught, and Anand announced that he was dropping the pair. Apparently, their *nakhras* were too much for the veteran director to stomach.

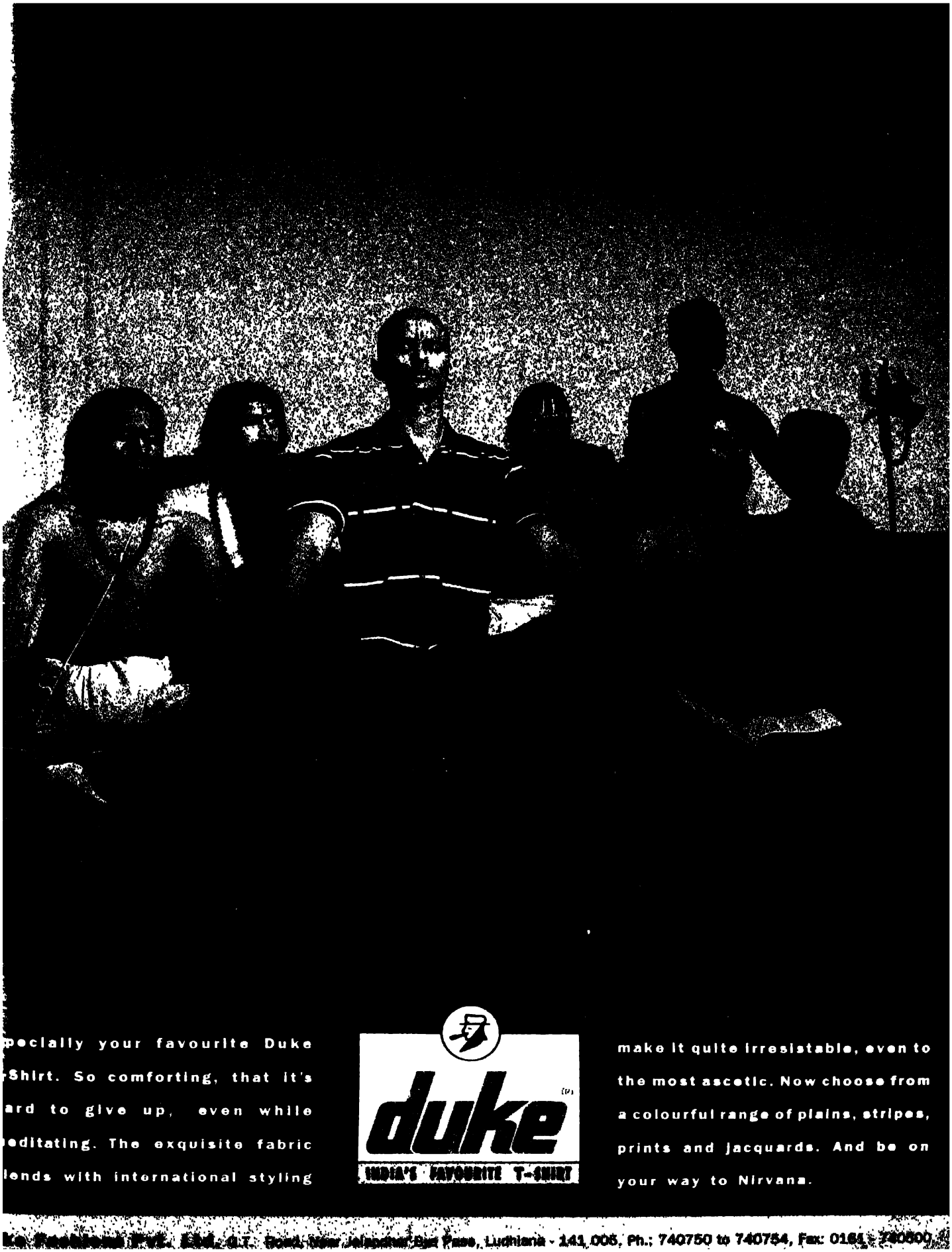
Bye-bye Bollywood is it?: No way, this couple doesn't give up quite so easily. Both Sapre and Soman are trying hard to land another film. But much to their horror, they are not being offered hero and heroine, but villain and vamp And nobody's throwing in a python for good measure, either. ■

What is your favourite word?

Peace

What is your most precious possession?

My baby pictures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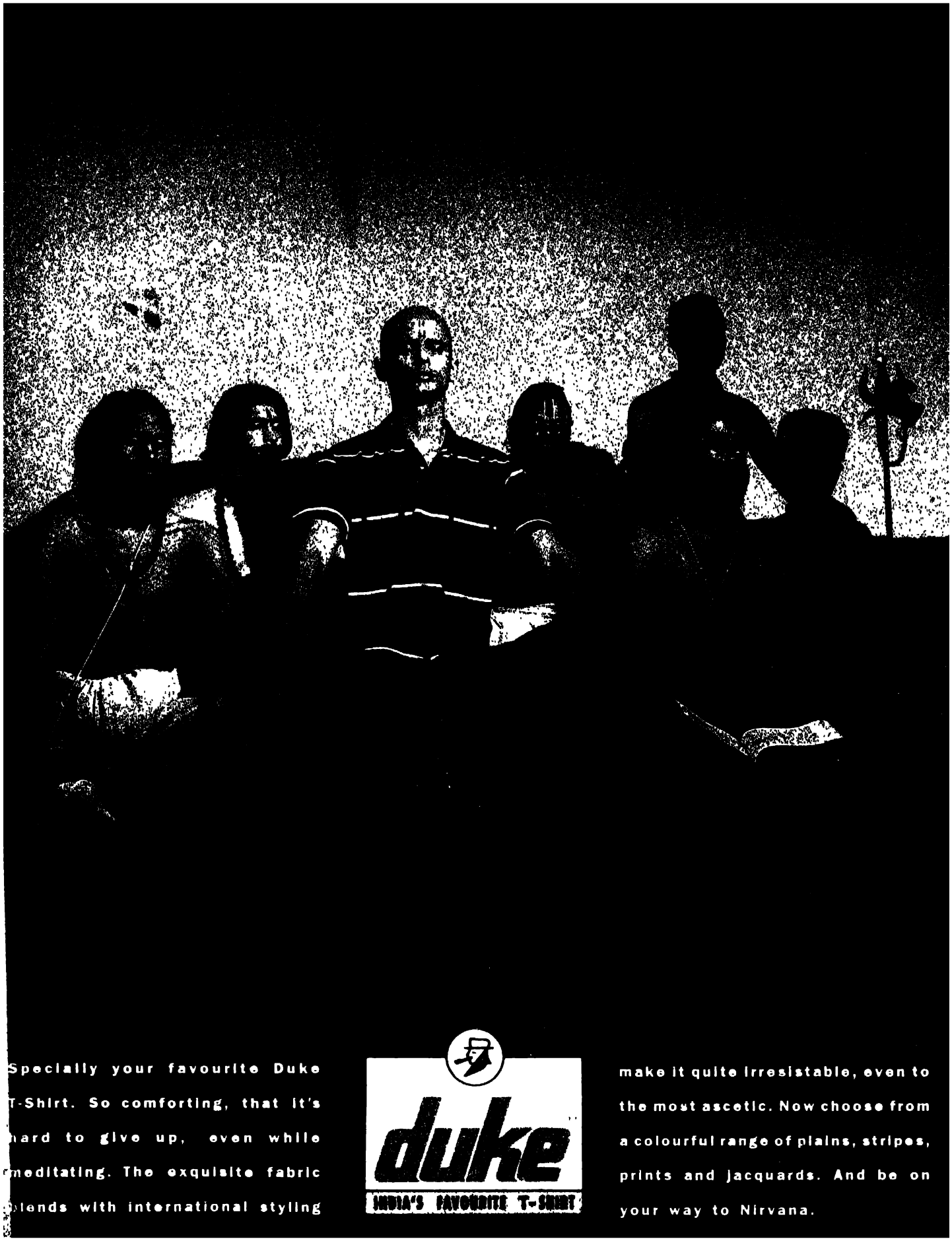
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The Telegraph

7 JULY 1996

POST MORTEM

Sibling Duo

■ It was great reading about the Mukherjee siblings making it big in the Hindi pop scene ('Siblings Score', May 19). Despite being the children of a well known music director, Manas Mukherjee, they did not use their father's name and chose to work their way up.

We feel quite proud of them and hope their musical career will have a happy ending unlike the fate of the other brother-sister duo—Nazia and Zoheb Hasan.
MunMun Chakraborty
Calcutta

■ At this moment Shaan and Sagarika require a godfather like Biddu who can give the right break and add his Midas touch to their numbers.
Partha Pratim Modak
Howrah

■ It was a refreshing change to read about Shaan and Sagarika's meteoric rise to the top of the Indian pop. I had the opportunity to hear them live in Calcutta and they definitely have what it takes to become present day popstars.

But they should concentrate on composing original scores rather than belting out old Hindi film hits.

Singing techno-mix numbers will not help them go a long way in the highly competitive world of pop music.
Shome Mukherjee
Calcutta

Shaan and Sagarika: Making music together

■ These new kids on the block did not deserve such coverage. Their music will not be able to stand the test of time. Can anyone recall any of their numbers which remained popular for more than six months? Perhaps, there is a specific clan of fans for such 'six-month-wonders'.
Arta Mishra
Cuttack

■ It is encouraging to read about such upcoming pop artistes like Shaan Sagarika in your magazine. But there are several competent exponents of Indian classical music who performed with great success in India and abroad only to be neglected or ignored by the media. They too deserve the attention and respect due to them.
Santosh Kumar Sharma
Kharagpur

New Feluda

■ Sabyasachi Chakrabarty is a talented actor and is best suited to slip into Soumitra Chatterjee's shoes as the new Feluda. Chakrabarty has already performed credibly in tele-serials, plays and films like *Sueth Pathurer Thala* and *Kakababu Here Gelen*. He should have no problems in enacting the feats of Feluda.

Sandip Ray, after balking Feluda fans by presenting a bulky Shashi Kapoor, has finally made a commendable choice.
Arnab Banerjee
Calcutta

INSIDE

Deepa Kalyan Chowdhury

PAGE 4

LUKE KENNY, the celebrity veejay, talks about Calcutta, the city of his birth and his life at large

PAGE 26

WHAT'S 'IN' this summer: Fashion designers unfurl their season's collections

Luke Kenny

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
20 INNER EYE
22 COMICS
26 FASHION
30 FIRST PERSON

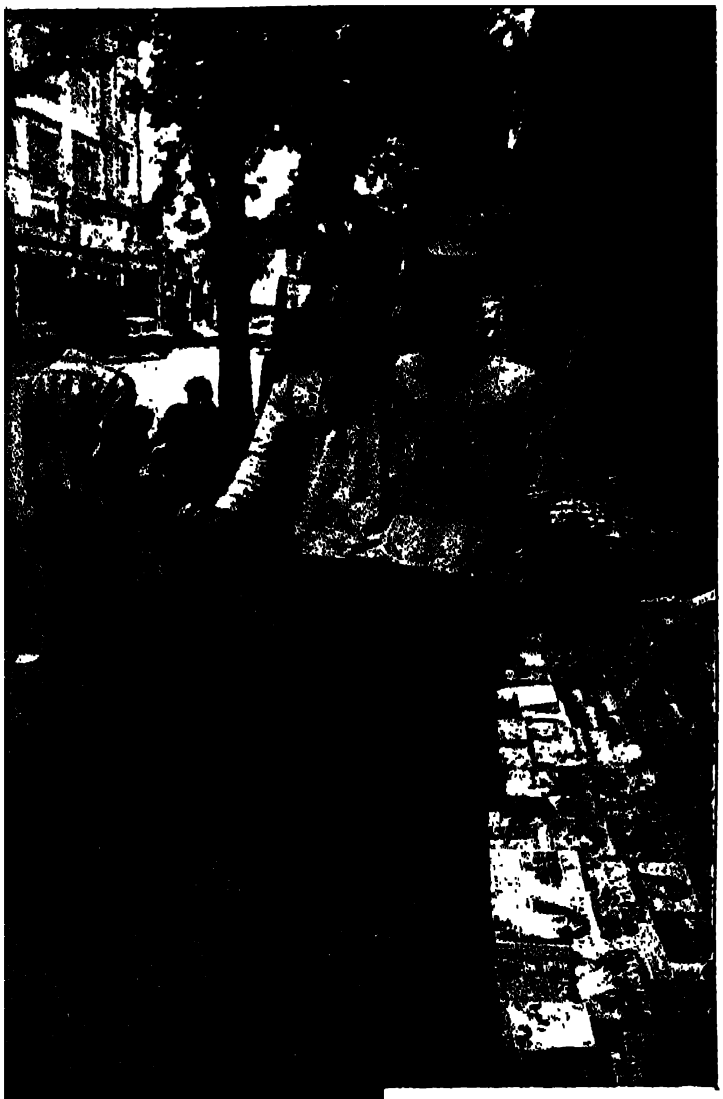
Cover: Deepa Kalyan Chowdhury

COVER STORY

LUKE WARM KENNY

The Channel V veejay is hot stuff, reports ***Susmita Banerjee***

Photographs by Deeha Kalyan Chowdhury



Walking the streets of Calcutta and (left) the long-haired veejay in a serious mood

ALL OF INDIA MAY BE IN LOVE WITH LUKE Kenny; well at least those under 21. But Kenny himself is in love with Calcutta. The long-haired blonde veejay was born in this city of joy, and even though he left it after a mere four months, he still has a special place in his heart for it.

What he didn't like was Roland Joffe's portrayal of it in his movie, *The City of Joy*. "It was all trash," he says angrily about Joffe's take on the city. "I think Calcutta is a lovely place," says Kenny, "It's cool and not the black hole that it is dubbed overseas."

Foreigners may be discouraged from visiting Calcutta, but Luke enjoys spending time in this city. And he particularly likes the vintage aura surrounding the city. "It's got both the colonial and the native blend," says Luke. "When you walk down some of the roads in Calcutta, you have this feeling that the days of the Raj are looking down on you." At the same time, says Kenny, the city is very vibrant and modern in its tastes in music, fashion, films, and even architecture.

Strolling down Bentick Street on a lazy afternoon, Luke is taken aback when a school kid stops in his tracks and asks him, "Hey, aren't you Luke?" Television has made him a celebrity, and he's probably recognised all over the country. But being recognised in the city of his birth, Calcutta, holds a special thrill for him.

Luke was born in Calcutta's Rippon Street to Irish-Italian parents who moved out of this city to settle in the showbiz town, Bombay. But Luke can never forget his Calcutta connections.

"I wish there was someone who could show me the house I lived in as a child on Rippon Street," he says wistfully. That's, of course, assuming that the house even exists today. It's quite likely that a highrise building is now in existence on the site, and that every sign of the Kenny household has been wiped out.

Luke's memories endure, though, based on the tales of Calcutta he heard from his grandmother. Tales of pheaton rides and gas lights,

Caught in his tracks: Young fans gaping at the icon

and of a far more elegant age. But today's Calcutta of the sleek Metro system, the swanky Marutis and the monster mini-buses doesn't exactly tally with the fairy stories of grandma. But Kenny is fascinated with this new face of the city as well.

"It is incredible," he marvels, "the way Calcutta manages its transport system: the buses, the trams, the Metro, horse-drawn carriages, human-drawn carriages, you name it and they're vying for a space on the road." The veejay loves Calcutta's trams the best, as they are the city's hallmark. "The government should do everything to preserve it," he says. "I think it is the best form of transport; maybe not as well maintained as those in France and Hong Kong, but they are great survivors."

Clad in faded jeans, knotted handloom top and boots, his blonde tresses caressing his shoulders, Luke Kenny looks like just another *firang* tourist loitering on the streets of Calcutta. The Gandhi sunglasses complete the look, but the image is destroyed the moment the veejay opens his mouth. He speaks English and Hindi without a trace of an accent, as he browses through a book shop on Park Street, and asks the sales assistant how much certain books costs.

Luke loves to talk, and when he does, you can't help feel that he always thinks that a television camera is focussed on him. Yes, he is is always performing, whether it's talking nineteen to the dozen, throwing his arms about, jumping up and down to emphasise a point, or even cracking the odd joke or dropping a one-liner or two. It's only when somebody comes up and whispers urgently in his ear, "Luke, we are late for the shoot," that you realise that he's not on camera as yet.

Channel V's hottest veejay on the block, Luke is definitely different from his ilk. A foreigner born and brought up in India, who proudly claims that he is a Bhartiya. He does not roll his 'rs' to get that typical American twang while

LORD OF THE RINGS

Luke Kenny's fingers can do with some checking out

Once Luke folds his hands and gets veejaying, making those quick movements of the head and waist, don't miss the rings that he sports on his fingers. There are eight of them! Made of dull silver and picked up from such varied places as Bombay and Delhi, or gifted by friends and near and dear ones.

"There is a philosophy attached to each of these rings," explains Luke, "in the signs they stand for. I believe in them." There's the ring that preserves his father's memory; a bloodstone set in silver; a sign of peace (he wears a similar sign hung from a long golden chain round his neck); the two faces of Gemini (his Zodiac sign); one with Buddhist scriptures inscribed on it; a Shiv lingam; an eagle; a woman; and the sun.

The sun and the eagle, symbols of power, fascinate the young veejay. Power is something which everyone likes to achieve at some time or the other in one's life and

Luke's collection of rings: Each has a tale to tell

Having his cake and eating it too?

Luke is no different. And as an 'Indian' he never forgets to stress on the point that he believes in all religion and hence the Buddhist script and Shiv *lingam* adorning his fingers.

But what about the woman residing on one of his fingers? But Kenny's take on women is rather more complicated. "I think they are great politicians. Ever since creation they have proved it. Men think they rule the world, but they don't. It's the woman who controls the universe," is his philosophical response.

The last time Luke was in Calcutta for the Channel V Road Show, he looked around a few shops on Chowringhee for a couple of quaint rings but he did not like the ones on display. But Kenny hasn't lost hope as yet. "I am told that in New Market there is a shop which specialises in silver baubles and antique jewellery," he says. "The next time I am in Calcutta I must pick up a few rings from there."

veejaying, as his co-hosts and hostesses do even if they haven't been further west than Dadar. Nor does he use Americanisms to get his point across. Kenny's English is that of an upper middle-class Indian, and his Hindi is completely authentic. And why not. For, as the veejay emphasises, "I am an Indian."

In a sense, Luke has stood the conventional wisdom — as far as Channel V went — on its head. It had long been accepted (from the days of MTV Asia, in fact) that the veejays of Western music programming should be Western not just in their looks, orientation, reference points but also in the way they spoke. It helped, of course, if they looked Indian so that the audiences could identify with them

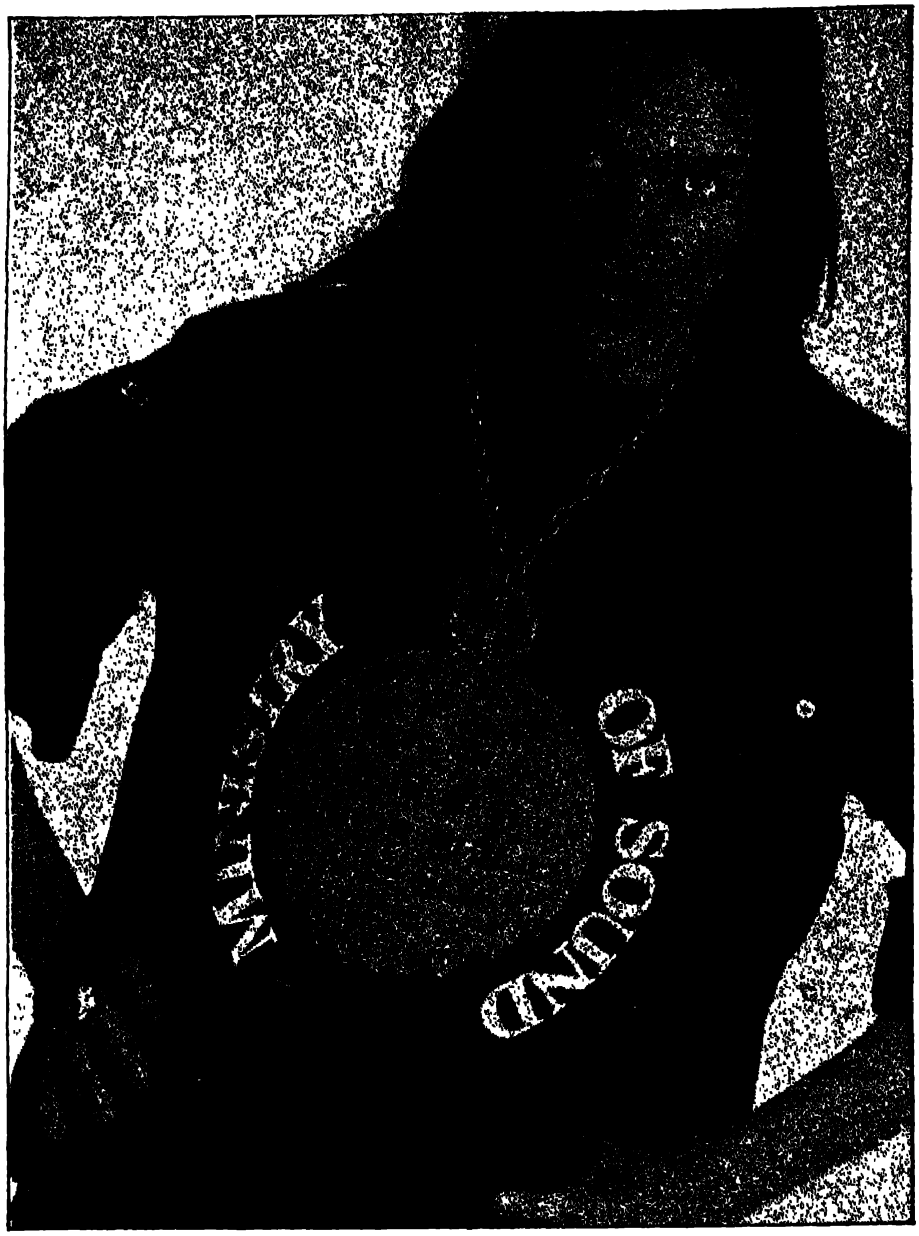
So, a perfect compromise was struck. The music channels took Indian — or half-Indian — boys and girls who had either been born and brought up abroad or had spent a lot of time on foreign shores and made them into veejays. This strategy had its advantages. Not only were these people familiar with the Western music scene having grown up with it, but they also spoke 'foreign': a quality that most Indians are impressed by.

Thus, the Indian television screens played host to Ruby Bhatia (who had been brought up in Canada), Sophiya Haque (born of a Bangladeshi father and an English mother) and Kamal Sidhu (another Canada-returned beauty queen).

But then, along came Luke Kenny, and changed all the rules. Despite his Irish-Italian lineage, and his *firang* looks, Kenny had the appeal of — and sounded like — the boy next door. He used Bombay Hindi as part of his TV patter, his English was unaccented, and his performance was completely natural.

Today, when you walk down the streets of the city with Luke, you realise that he's a bona fide celebrity. Not only is he continually haunted by autograph hunters, even those who don't approach him nudge each other and go, "Luke, Luke, isn't it?" And like most other celebrities, Kenny gets his share of perks. media attention wherever he goes, lots of crazy admirers, good money, and a new flat in Versova.

But then, even when he was a child, it was obvious that Kenny was headed for the big time. The boy, who was born



with the proverbial gift of the gab and a talent for histrionics, was always doing something in school, "either acting or singing" quite the best training for someone who would grow up to be a veejay

Kenny, however, entered the world of television quite by accident. The garrulous 20 year old (he's now 24) was deejaying at a private party in Bombay, when he was singled out by a Star TV official, who had been quite taken in with his performance. And the rest, as they say, was history.

It was way back in the Fifties that Luke's grandparents came to India His grandfather began working as a jazz drummer in Calcutta, and the Kennys took up lodging somewhere in Rippon Street. Nearly a decade later, diners at the Blue Fox rocked to the tunes of Luke's father's guitar. It was the Sixties and rock 'n roll held sway and this small Irish-Italian family merged with Calcutta's cross culture; where the rich and the fashionable dined out every single night and patronised musical bands in restaurants.

After Luke was born, the Kennys shifted to Thane in suburban Bombay. Thus, little Luke grew up in a cosmopolitan, middle-class atmosphere, playing in the locality park and shattering the glass panes of his neighbours with his wild sixers. "I was a terror in the neighbour hood and everyone called me the monkey boy," he reminisces. It was only a matter of time before Kenny was speaking perfect Hindi, which he learnt from his friends, and had become as Indian as them: only his light skin and golden locks set him apart. "I've always had long hair. I allowed it to grow till I would be caught in school and thrown out," recalls the veejay with a chuckle.

His grandmother doubled as his mother (who died when he was just seven) and had a tough time bringing up the mischievous brat. There would be complaints from the neighbours, as well as from the principal of Luke's school. Luke hated studies and if he could help it he would stay away from classes every day. "I was never an outstanding student, but just about managed to scrape through." But a stickler for discipline that she was, Granny Kenny made sure Luke completed his 10 years in St John the Baptist.

"Then," confesses Luke, "I joined Elphinstone College but dropped out before the H.S. examinations." "Tell me," asks Kenny in his next breath, "does education serve any purpose in this country? Look at the people running this country, are they educated?"

It's not necessary to be a good actor to be a good veejay, runs the rule. Fluency, ready wit, and a good script can see you through the programme. But Luke is also a good actor having performed in school plays in his student days and having worked in the productions of Burjor Patel and Bharat Dabholkar in his youth in Bombay. Some years ago Calcutta theatre lovers will remember seeing him perform in the English play, *Carry on Bindas*, at Kala Mandir. With his fluid Hindi diction he was also featured in a Hindi/English three-act play, *Partner*. But Luke wouldn't like to pursue a career on stage for, as he says, "I like to act now and then and more so in musicals, but I am not so serious about it".

He loves the camera and the idea of it following him to exotic locations while he chats with his audience through the lens. But talking to the camera can be boring unless enlivened by anecdotes and jokes and some light chatter. "You have to do a lot of reading also to keep yourself up to date on the music," says the veejay. And Luke is a voracious reader: from films, music, fiction, non-fiction, you name it; he has them all. Once shooting is over and he has finished his hot *chai* he will settle down in his favourite chair and thumb through the pages of a classic.

"You must be clear about what you are saying before the camera and be as

A natural performer

much yourself as possible," says Luke. But isn't there a chance of certain amount of boredom setting in, as the veejay becomes repetitive?

"No," comes the emphatic response, "first of all there is a script written by someone else although most veejays do not strictly follow it. Secondly, each programme has a different theme and mood and there is only a five per cent chance of you repeating yourself," Luke points out. As far as Luke is concerned, for most of the time the script is forgotten and he packs in his own words into the show. "It comes out wonderfully," he says in his usual modest fashion.

Growing up in Bombay on a diet of Amitabh Bachchan blockbusters, Luke always wondered how it would be if he too could grow up to be a superstar like his matinee idol. Films became a passion with him and whenever there was a little time and some extra pocket money he would sneak into a cinema hall.

Steven Spielberg opened a wide new world of wonder before him; he fell in love with David Lynch; he saw *Gone with the Wind* four times and never felt satiated; *Cassablanca* had him in tears. He started buying all kinds of books on films and spent hours devouring them. At one stage he found he was spending more money on books than on his food.

At 24, Luke still dreams of becoming an actor on the big screen. With his Bombay style English, fluency in Hindi, and 'foreign' looks he could make a place for himself in tinsel town's formula films. And Kenny is quite confident of doing so. "In three-four years' time I'll do something in films: either before the camera or behind it," he says, with quiet confidence. Would that be an English or Hindi film? "The language is not important," says Luke, "but I can assure you it will not be a formula movie but something you will all enjoy." And where will he shoot it: in Hollywood or Bollywood? "That's again not important," comes the dignified rejoinder.

The road from Rippon Street to Versova hasn't been exactly tough going for Luke. And there's no reason why the road to Film City — and from there to Hollywood — should be strewn with thorns either. After all, haven't things always come remarkably easy for Kenny?

Despite that, the Channel V veejay has a remarkably cool head screwed on firmly to those slender shoulders. He's not a prisoner to his celebrity status, he's quite happy walking down the streets in his comfortable jeans and funky shirts. He doesn't smoke, he doesn't drink, and he is a strict vegetarian. And despite being one of India's most eligible bachelors, he doesn't have anyone special in his life at the moment.

But then, the veejay doesn't believe in the institution of marriage, either. "What is important is that two minds meet," he says, "and does that happen in all marriages?" Perhaps not. But we can think of millions of girls who would give an arm and a leg to try, when it comes to Luke Kenny. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, the personal and the professional, do mix this week. All the action you want will be from July 9 to July 12. Work, home and all practical affairs will be slanted. The elderly, as well as relatives and even your boss, might need your care and attention.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Do watch your step, literally and otherwise. Expenses could multiply, though for a worthy cause. It could well be travel time for business and for welfare or others and yourself too. July 9-11 will be important for family and work. Your colleagues and pets will demand attention.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

The week accentuates your job, profession and business. A good time to give/receive favours. Be generous. At dinners and parties, your luck will hold. Try to have your moments of stillness amid all the hustle and bustle. Within your limitations, you will have choices.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The sun-Mercury conjunction on July 11 makes you bold and adventurous. Be so by all means but also remember to be practical and worldly. There's much unfinished business to be done and that will require the best you are capable of.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

The middle of the week is ideal for buying, selling, shopping and trading. Yes, your sources of income do increase, and by September you should have the spin-off, a good one, of the efforts you do put in, now. Journey, celebrations and expenses make a trio.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

This is a good time to mend your fences, heal yourself and others and that's not easy and simple. It is time for you to clear away the inessential and make life simple. The paradox is that love will find a home in your heart. But it will not be a simple affair. A little care of health would help.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

People may not see things your way, but communications, travel and a good time make it worthwhile. A little tact will help. This week is a medley of work and household affairs. It is certain that you will be slogging it out at work. Expect happy results in the next two months.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

"The child shows the man, as morning shows the day" and this is a time for memories and flashbacks from the past, assures Ganesha. Meditation, travel and health safeguards should see you through safely. You will certainly meet a few interesting people. Be systematic in your work.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Love, feelings, spontaneity will activate you. While this could create complications, rest assured that's the real you and therefore there is no shame in being what you really are. Meeting and breaking of minds and hearts is more than possible. July 11-13 is action time.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

While pressures will build, you will be alert, your antenna vibrant and ready to receive all messages and hints. Clashes and cooperation go together. While finances will continue to be important, you will look to the subjective side of your life including the home and the family.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Alliances and meetings, home and family members, contacts and consequent contracts is what the week is all about. Also, there will be a strong emphasis, once again, on job, work, loans, investments and health hazards and that will apply right upto July 22. Week of changes.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Finances and emotional bonding make your life. Reserve your best shot for July 10-11. Your creativity will be at a high pitch of excellence. Children, hobbies, pastime, fun and games is how it will go with you. On and after July 15, you should have a happier time of it. Even if hurt, try to be polite.

BIRTHDAYS

July 7: Moon sextile Venus-Mars will provide, claims Ganesha, help and relief despite difficulties. This is a good time to ask for favours.

July 8: Moon square Neptune assures a pragmatic, no-nonsense approach. You could be caught in the cross-fire of making crucial decisions. Do leave a margin for delays.

July 9: Moon trine Jupiter means time to travel, romance, collaborate and round off business deals. A goodly measure of success is foretold. Your social life will be great.

July 10: Moon sextile sun-Neptune marks one of the finest years ever, specially if your personal chart is also strong. Money, position, communicative skills, sincere friendship and elation, publicity and popularity could all be yours.

July 11: Sun-Mercury conjunction enables you to be at your brilliant best in writing, teaching, healing, predicting, acting and a business contract is definitely on its way.

July 12: Moon conjunction Venus-Mars means excellent time for actors, entrepreneurs, importers and exporters, travel agents, producers and those in the media.

July 13: Because there is no strong formation, you will be free to go your way. Expect help from various quarters. The blessing of Ganesha means protection.

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CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Kalpana Lajmi is all set to film the story of a hermaphrodite and his ageing actress mother. ***Vaishali Honawar*** *profiles the director*

Her office in Bombay's Natraj Studios is full of portraits and memories of the long-gone past when other members of her family were making their presence felt in India's film world. But Kalpana Lajmi herself lives in a world that is as modern as the computer on her table. For, how else could the woman have made such a pathbreaking film as *Ek Pal*.

For years this niece of film legend Guru Dutt has voiced forthright views on her lifestyle and single status, and her unconventional ideas have found reflection in the unusual films she makes. Her first film, *Ek Pal*, made in 1987, brought her acclaim and is certainly one of the more memorable movies of the period. It told the story of a married woman who renews an old affair while her husband is away and even gets pregnant.

With *Rudaali*, which was released in 1994, Lajmi once again reiterated her position as a film maker of substance, wowing the critics and pulling the audiences into the theatres to watch a "morbid" story that had been told differently.

Now, after a longish gap of over two years, she's ready to go on the floors with her third film, *Darmiyaan*. Says Lajmi, "I take a long time between films because I prefer to do everything myself. I also research my subjects in depth and get all the details right before I begin shooting." Extensive rehearsals and dancing classes for the entire cast "to make their bodies supple" have also been in progress. "After all, I cannot afford to keep shooting retakes with the kind of budget I have," Lajmi laughs.

There have been several setbacks since she first began the project. Dimple Kapadia and Shah Rukh Khan, her first choice for the roles of the protagonists, an actress and her hermaphrodite son, backed out. Paresh Rawal, who was also

Kalpana Lajmi: Forthright director

approached for the eunuch's role, signed the film and then went on to do a similar role in Mahesh Bhatt's *Tamanna* a fact Lajmi is still bitter about. But she has managed to get past the hurdles and shooting for *Darmiyaan* will begin in August.

Sitting in her office one rain-specked afternoon, Lajmi appears pretty relaxed, though one can sense the energy bubbling away in the strong voice that makes its point articulately and minces no words. Her bio-data tells you she's 42 but nothing about her gives that away and despite her ample build it's not difficult to believe that she's the woman whom Dev Anand once offered Zeenat Aman's role in *Heera Panna*.

The memory makes her laugh delightedly. But there are no regrets over that lost chance to become a Bollywood star. She did love acting, she says, and even played major roles in some plays. But it was cinema that beckoned in a stronger voice until one day she just barged into cousin Shyam Benegal's office to beg for a job.

"He was finishing *Ankur* around that time and I became one of his assistant directors," she recalls. "I had to practically start from scratch." The 12 years she spent with him were a vital education in discipline rather than film making per se, she says, which stood her in good stead when she decided to strike out on her own.

Lajmi has since proved herself as a director of substance several times over, both on television and on the big screen. After the critical success of *Ek Pal*, *Rudaali* fetched as many as 30 national and international awards, "though not a single one for director," she says with an exaggerated sigh.

Perhaps it's a lapse she can correct with *Darmiyaan*. The film with its unusual storyline should certainly make people sit up and take notice. Produced by R.V. Pandit, the film's story revolves around the relationship between a fading film star and her only child who is a hermaphrodite. The beautiful mother, who abhors the freak child, faces a dilemma: she cannot bring herself to accept the child, nor can she give him away.

Thus, like both of Lajmi's earlier

Rakhee and Dimple in *Rudaali*: 'Morbid' tale

films, *Darmiyaan* too is an exploration of the woman's psyche essentially that of the ageing actress "Even the central character, the hermaphrodite, has all the trappings of a woman," she says. Women and their problems, she feels, make interesting subjects though she adds that she doesn't go out looking for women's subjects when she makes films.

For her research Lajmi studied the life of the eunuchs in Bombay over a long period "It's a very sad life," she says about them. "It's terrible to be pushed to the periphery of society the way they are."

The story weaves its way through the film industry of the Forties and the world of street eunuchs in the Fifties "It's a tragedy" says Lajmi, "with the protagonist striving to be accepted as a normal person by society and not succeeding It is the story of an individual who is different and his problems in surviving in this sort of world."

A rank newcomer, Govind Menon, will now play the role of the hermaphrodite while Kiron Kher will play his mother "After Dimple and Shah Rukh backed out, I decided not to hunt around for other stars but take fresh faces instead because it is easier for them to be accepted in unusual roles than it is for stars," says Lajmi

She picked Menon, she says, not because she thought he was a better actor than the others she had screen-tested, but because when she dressed him up as a woman he appeared the most feminine "I thought then that he would blend into the film Even in trousers and a shirt Govind has this androgynous quality," she says

Govind Menon: Plays the hermaphrodite son in *Darmiyaan*

with a difference

But she's not yet confident about whether he can carry off the difficult role "We'll just have to wait and see," she says. "After all, it is not easy for a normal person to bring out the walk and gestures of an androgynous person naturally And unless it's done really well, the character can become a joke." In that sense, *Darmiyaan* is a "tightrope walk" for her, says Lajmi, and one of the most difficult films she's made.

Even the rest of the cast comprises newcomers with the exception of Tabu who makes a small appearance to inject that vital dose of glamour A *thumri* singer, Rita Ganguli Kothari, and television actor Shahbaaz Khan make up the remainder of the main cast.

The film has been written and scripted by Lajmi herself, as all her films are, and the story, she says, was inspired by an article Mahesh Bhatt wrote a couple of years ago in *Screen* where he spoke of a star of the so-called Nazneen Begum and her hermaphrodite child, Tiku. "I liked the idea and developed it," says Lajmi.

The story will be told in an operatic style and Lajmi is visibly excited about the film's music. *Darmiyaan* has a huge array of songs composed by Dr Bhupen Hazarika with whom Lajmi has had a long and steady association. The songs have been penned by Javed Akthar and eunuchs have been roped in to sing some of the group songs.

At the sets of *Darmiyaan*: Shahbaz Khan, Kiron Kher, Dr Bhupen Hazarika and Sudesh Bhosle

"Bhupenda has used authentic instruments belonging to the era in which the film is based," she says, adding that she expects the music to be even better received than that of *Rudaali*

Lajmi admits that while the film has a rather morbid storyline, she plans to handle it in an entertaining manner *Bombay* and *Bandit Queen* both balanced the commercial aspect and the reality factor very well, she points out, besides being marketed excellently by ABCL.

Lajmi does not belong to the tribe of serious filmmakers who insist our audiences are just not ready for good cinema. The audiences are there, she says, but you need to first get them to realise that you're going to tell your story interestingly and differently

This, she says, is one major reason why she uses stars in her films Working with stars helps me reach out to a wider audience, because the subjects I tackle are not going to go down very well with a mass audience Also, using an experienced actor helps, in that, even if he/she can't give a felt performance, he/she can give a trained one "

But working with stars, she admits, has its problems too " It's difficult to tell them what to do. A director can, in that sense, differentiate better between the personal and the professional than an actor can, I feel."

Her relationship with Dimple during the filming of *Rudaali*, Lajmi admits, had its shades of grey. "We had a great rapport on screen but off screen I always wanted to be very friendly while Dimple was not so," she says "I later realised that it's because she's a very reserved person "

Also, she points out glumly, established stars are never too keen to experiment with different types of roles. For example, she says, any Bollywood star would not agree to play a eunuch because it would go against his 'macho' image. "I keep telling them that when they act, they portray characters that are not themselves. That's what acting is all about But they just don't seem to understand "

Coming as she does from a family of filmmakers, each noted for his unique style of creating cinema, one wonders if Lajmi too felt the need to be different to prove her worth as a filmmaker

But she is quick to point out that while her films have always dealt with off-beat subjects, it's not as if she consciously makes the decision to be different " I feel that if my voice can be heard through my medium, then why not highlight areas that have not been explored?" Kalpana explains.

Among her other forthcoming projects is a film where she plans to cast Madhuri Dixit "She's read the script and appeared quite excited, I hope she'll do it," says Lajmi and a serial based on Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, titled *The Awakening*, which will be telecast on DD. "It's a love story based in the Northeast" is how she describes it. But she's not yet sure when it will be on air

Darmiyaan too should be ready for release by the end of this year, she says. And while it's been a long wait since *Rudaali*, with Lajmi one can at least be sure the film will be well worth it. ■

EXTRACT

Man About The HOUSE

Tara was happy and it showed in many different ways, in the involuntary smile that lit up her face from time to time, in the numerous out of key tunes she hummed softly to herself, in the little dance steps she could not resist and in her hands as they deftly and with practised ease busied themselves with the cooking The kitchen was her sanctuary and in its environs she found an enveloping peace It was warm and welcoming and pleasing to the eye, with its rust coloured mosaic tiles, vegetable patterned wall paper and plants perched atop cupboards and hanging from the ceiling. There was an old fireplace besides which were two worn cushioned chairs in a cheery chintz print, a vivd rug with an Aztec motif and lots of dried flower

The author, Kusum Sawhney

Extracts from ***Kusum Sawhney*** *'s book of short stories*

Extracted from *Wych Stories* ***by Kusum Sawhney Published by Har-Anand Publications Price Rs 95***

decorations. The kitchen had a farm house feeling that relaxed those who entered its portals.

Jars of all kinds of condiments, jams, amd spices were neatly laid in rows and the fridge was always well stocked with grapes, melons or whatever be the fruit of the season. Here Tara could immerse herself in the preparation of a favourite dish; dwellling on each ingredient, feeling their magic with her hands, inhaling the aroma and closing her eyes in ecstasy as if their very aroma reached some part of her soul. And they had to be fresh. Anything less would not do. Thus the packaged variety was never seen in her kitchen. Checking and rechecking each item and then losing herself so completely in her most treasured hobby that cooking invariably took longer than it ought to. But it was always worth the wait. The dishes that were presented ultimately were both a work of art to behold and the taste was indescribably delicious --a connoisseur's delight.

In the kitchen Tara cut herself off from the rest of the world, any problems or worries sorted themselves out as her hands worked magically and her thoughts moved on to other realms. Not that she was a day dreamer but just that she liked to do her thinking in an atmosphere that was of her own choosing. Tara somehow did not belong to this world. She lived elsewhere, in her mind, in a place of her own choosing, only venturing now and then because she had to.

Tara was a little woman, no more than four feet and ten inches, and a real beauty. A small retrousse nose, perfectly arched eyebrows that owed nothing to artifice below which were eyes, the colour of the sea. At times blue and green, at times brown but always wide and luminous, innocent and childlike. A wide forehead and welll defined lips completed the picture. But apart from being such a refined beauty Tara was a lovely person, a trifle shy but affectionate and full of warm feeling for everyone. This was apparent in the joy others took from seeing her and invariably some friend or the other dropped in to have a chat. Maybe it was her small frame, her defenceless look, her innocence, or then again may be it was all three. But whatever it was, she inspired deep protective instincts from those who loved her.

Today, she had decided to cook fesanjun, a winter Iranian dish she had learned from a close Persian friend when her husband had been posted in the country. It was a very special dish, for it brought back countless happy memories of their stay there, that were startlingly vivid. ..like the warmth of shared meals, of dropping by accidentally and still being welcomed. Memories of winter nights and warm fires, and exchanged confidences. The smell of the barbecue and much laughter. A cherished time, yes, a very special time.

Tara had become something of an expert at this dish, having mastered it authentically and in the process it had become a popular meal with the family. First she grated the onions, tears, rushing to her eyes as the acidity from the onion juice stung. and Nayantara, her daughter entering the kitchen at just that moment, rushed to her side in concern.

"Why didn't you call me to grate the onion, look at your eyes, mama. you just sit down and relax, you shouldn't be doing this, please listen to me. Sit down, sit down and let me do it quickly."

Nayantara was as ugly as her mother was beautiful. A broad flat nose dominated her other features which were so unremarkable that the only thing people noticed was the nose. All her life she had lived with this handicap, more pronounced when people stared disbelievingly at her mother. It had forever, produced no grudge or resentment in Nayantara. On the contrary, she idolised her mother.

Her mother's pretty looks and delicate mien had developed in the child feelings of protection. As far as she could remember, she had always wanted to look after her mother. It had a lot to do with the early morning and late night rituals of bedtime stories and being told you were loved. It was demonstrated in affectionate cuddles and much hugging and kissing. And Nayantara blossomed under such love. And though the bedtime stories had changed to shared confidences, the tucking still remain and the kissing still continue with Nayantara more of the protector and her mother the recipient.

As Nayantara tried to take the grater from her mother's hands, she protested gently, "No you listen silly" laughing lovingly, "do not fuss so. I am making fesanjun you know, your father's favourite dish, and I want to make it all myself."

Then scooping the grated onion into the deep pan, she failed to see the look of concern and odd side

glance her daughter gave her.

"Oh?" was all Nayantara could say in a seemingly nonchalant manner

"Now let me cook," her mother said looking at her affectionately, "it is getting late and your father will be here soon."

Tara seemed to forget about her as she immersed herself in the cooking. Nayantara stood looking at her mother She had lost a lot of weight, she noted, she had dark circles under her eyes which she had made an attempt to hide with a foundation cream that stood out a mile and her collarbones were jutting through her blouse She made an incoherent sound and bit her lips. She stood at the entrance of the kitchen for a long while with a strange look on her face and then rushed out abruptly but Tara, sublimely unaware of anything except the food preparation in front of her failed to notice her daughter's tense departure

Soon the chicken was frying on a low heat while Tara got the sauce ready It was a sweetish mixture of pomegranate concentrate and walnuts In no time, the ingredients were all heaped together and the sauce was bubbling gently She then put the soaked rice on a slow fire and left to have a shower

An hour later, looking incredibly pretty in a peach cotton saree with a purple border and patterned blouse, she set the table and called out that dinner was ready and they would be eating soon. On hearing her mother's dulcet voice, Nayantara entered the room with a look of apprehension The dining table was transformed from its usual everyday look to one of festive elegance She saw that the special damask tablecloth had been used and the Venetian crockery was laid out which was something very rare It was only used on special occasions when they had something to celebrate The table was dominated by a vase of spectacular irises, the profusion and abundance of the yellow and purple colour adding a vividness to the setting Seeing her mother's smiling face she pulled together and sat down ready to eat.

"Okay mother, I am ready for the great dish," she said

"But," Tara protested, "we must wait We can't eat now, your father is not here yet."

Nayantara stared at her mother in total amazement "Why did you call me then? You just said dinner was ready" Her mouth stayed open and she wanted to say more but no words came out With a slight shake of her head she changed her mind and said instead, her tone terse. "Papa is always late on Tuesdays, you know that, he wouldn't want us to wait for him"

"I know, I know," said her mother. "But let us wait just a bit, you know how your papa likes eating with us And you'll be able to talk to him also That would make him very happy," she said pleadingly

Then catching sight of her daughter's strained face she quickly added, "but if you are very hungry maybe we should start Nayantara seized her chance and agreed at once, "Yes, let us"

Still, her mother hesitated and much to her chagrin asked her to be patient and wait just a while longer Nayantara grimaced in response but decided to humour her mother They waited for over an hour Tara sat calmly and happily humming to herself. Nayatara tried to kill time by flipping through a magazine but she put it down after a few minutes without reading a word Then she looked through her CD collection to put on some music but out of the

hundreds of CDs she could find nothing for the moment She switched on the television but each programme seemed more inane than the other She was becoming more and more tense and agitated and finally no longer able to contain herself she shouted in frustration.

"How can you sit there waiting for someone who is not going to come, you know Papa died a year ago, he's dead, he's dead, don't you understand, he's dead, so stop kidding yourself It is time you faced reality so let's just get on and eat," she sobbed tearfully

Tara was aghast She stood up drawing herself to her full height and shouted back, "Have you gone mad, have you lost leave of your senses Whatever is the matter with you, how can you bring yourself to say such pernicious untruths, such blasphemy, such horrible lies."

She shook her with all her strength "I could slap you for saying such a vile thing about your father." Then seeing Nayantara's tearful face, she took her gently in her arms and questioned sadly, "my darling what has upset you and made you say such vile things. It is so unlike you How can you yo say such a grotesque thing like this? And that too about your own father. I just cannot believe it This is too much, just too much "

It was Nayantara's turn to stare at her mother in disbelief. She couldn't believe what she was hearing but decided to hold her tongue and refused to say anything further, but just wept miserably into her handkerchief

Tara looked at her daughter helplessly. "Sometimes I just don't understand you," she said in exasperation, "but you are right it is late " she hesitated for a few moments we won't any longer, we'll leave the food for your father in the kitchen, he can heat it when he comes home later."

They ate in silence broken only by the occasional sounds of laughter from outside The fesanjun looked extremely appetising, lightly brown with the pomegranate seeds shining through and the walnuts adding to the crunchy texture It was delicious but both their appetites had waned. The exchange earlier had left them dispirited with the result that they both toyed with their food, eating little

Nayantara was tired and upset. Her mind was whirling with a multitude of thoughts rushing at her from all sides, pricking her mind like thousands of little needles She felt

confused and uncertain. When would her mother face the truth And she wondered for how long she could keep up with this, this act of deception She was not sure how long she could keep up a brave face

Her mother lost in her own thoughts said very little The meal was over soon and they cleared the table together each in their own separate world. By some unspoken mutual consent they decided to retire early

Nayantara found it difficult to sleep The electricity had gone off and she could feel the sweat trickling down her back and her knee joints. She tossed from side to side wondering how long the power cut would last. "It could last the whole night," she said out loud. And it probably would, she thought in anger. Didn't it go every night She hadn't had a decent night's sleep for the past week and she felt miserable and irritated. She should be used to it by now.

Having tossed about for another hour she decided to have a glass of cold milk

On entering the kitchen, the first thing she saw was a plate set on the sideboard, filled with rice and fesanjun waiting to be heated for her father She couldn't believe it, it was like some horrible nightmare. Oh dear God. When was all this going to end? When would the denouement take place? What was wrong with her mother, her dearest most precious, beautiful and gentle mother?

In pure frustration, she found herself sobbing gently, half laughing at the ridiculousness of the situation, half in pain and despair How was she ever going to convince her mother that her father was dead For how long could she exist in a world where he was always on business, hence the reason why he was never at home. The third Friday of every month always brought this emotional upset. It was, in fact, the day he had died in the car accident. But that fatal day seemed to be erased from her mother's mind. Instead, he was not seen by others but existed only in the world of her mother's making. Knowing no one was going to eat the fesanjun, Nayantara opened the fridge and put both the rice and the fesanjun in their respective dishes and washed

the plate.

Next morning she awoke to the fan whirring above her. She couldn't remember when she had fallen asleep but it had been after hours of deep thinking and staring at the ceiling above. Thank God, she thought, as she heaved herself out of bed. Her mother's louder than usual humming, struck her as unusual. It was not the soft under the breath humming she was used to hearing. It had a lilt of happiness that was unexpected after yesterday's events and that was most unlike her mother. "Did you see your father," Tara asked her daughter as she entered the room. Nayantara shook her head wearily, oh no she thought, not again. It only happens on Tuesdays. Why has she lapsed so soon.

Her mother took no notice of her silence. "Your father arrived late last night, he slept in his spare bedroom so as not to disturb me. He ate all his fesanjun and even washed the dishes," she chirped happily. "I think he went out for a walk but he should be back in time for breakfast. I miss him so much," she broke for a moment, tears smarting her eyes and her voice wabbled dangerously, "I wish he could stay home all the time." Then she brightened up, "but he is here now and I had better go and get breakfast ready."

Nayantara looked at her mother. Here was a different person from the one she had left the night before. Before her stood a woman who was positively glowing. For her everything was in its place as it should be and as far as she was concerned her husband was alive and well. She seemed convinced of that fact. It was all too much. It was just too unbelievable. Nayantara opened her mouth to speak and then shut it again. What could she say. Was there any point in saying anything. That she had put the food away last night and washed the dish. No, her mother would not believe her, worse it would upset her again and Nayantara could not bear that. She would just have to keep quiet about the dishes. She turned away in utter despair. What should she do. In frustration she put her knuckles in her mouth and chewed on them. Would she believe her or even listen to her if she told her mother?

But it was wrong...It was wrong to let her mother live like this, in total ignorance of reality and really, anyway, for how long would it last. How long before she came to her senses and realised what the truth was. By then maybe the reality would be too much for her to endure. What if...what if the shock of it all became too much for her. What would happen then... ? Yes, she realised she had to make her mother understand now. Right now. In fact, it was imperative she do so before something terrible happened that was irreversible.

She turned back towards her mother dreading what she had to say but knowing she had to tackle the problem headon. Her voice was flat and intensely compulsive.

"Ma, listen to me, and listen to me clearly. Please try and be brave and try and understand, truly understand what I am about to say. Papa is dead. He died last year in a car accident. Don't you remember, you were with him... we bother were. .look, look at your hand," and she pulled her mother's arm forward, "look, look at the mark you've got in the accident," pointing to the ugly gash that would always remain. "Do you remember now, do you?"

Her mother moaned. But remained silent and just looked at her daughter with sad eyes overflowing with tears. Nayantara could not bear the agonised look that had replaced the smile on her mother's face. She felt her heart twist inside itself and rushed to put her arms around her and hugged her hard.

Determined to do what was right she took her mother's trembling hands in her own and holding on to them tightly said, "You must face the truth. There is only both of us left now. But don't worry, I'll always be here to look after you. Always." Her voice faltered for a few seconds but then took on conviction that came through in the confident manner in which she said, "always".

It was her mother's turn to take her in her arms and rock her gently. "Oh, my love, my child, my dearest child," she said painfully, "when will you understand, when will you understand?"

A few minutes past by with mother and daughter wrapped in each others arms. The silence was broken by a slamming door and then a familiar manly voice from upstairs floated down ..where are my slippers.. Tara....did I leave them downstairs again? ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press, one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
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DIBRUGARH					
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DIMAPUR					
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GUWAHATI					
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HYDERABAD					
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Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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IMPHAL					
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TEZPUR					
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VISHAKHAPATNAM					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

AMMAN					
RJ 182	1440	4	RJ 184	[illegible]	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL-876	0125	7	KL 875	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
KB 10[illegible]	0850	2 [illegible]	KB 106	[illegible]	[illegible]
			KB 108	1430	5
IC 731	08[illegible]	[illegible]	TG 314	1440	1 3 6
			IC 732	1505	2 [illegible]
IC-8[illegible]	1125	4 [illegible]	IC 856	1740	4 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1825	[illegible]
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2100	[illegible] 7	RO 075	1100	5 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 222	0700	1	IC 226	0920	1

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1730	2 7	BG 697	1650	2 5
DHAKA					
BG 092	0850	4 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG 092	1150	1, 2 3 5 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3, 6 7
IC-724	1300	1 3 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG-093	1825	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
DELHI					
Q7-061	1000	3	Q7 060	1230	2
DELHI					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC 747	1035	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1350	1 2 4 6
RA-214	1525	2 6	RA-213	1425	2 6
LONDON					
BA 142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU 538	[illegible]	4	SU 537	0930	4
PARO					
KB 106	1105	4	KB 105	0810	2 [illegible]
KB-106	1125	[illegible]			
SINGAPORE					
BI-108	0830	[illegible]	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	[illegible]	SQ 416	2230	2 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	2110	[illegible]	AI-305	182	[illegible]
YANGON					
IC-[illegible]	1530	4 [illegible]	IC 238	1955	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **S2** Sahara India Airlines • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **4S** East West Airlines • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways • **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express via [illegible] Dep. Wed. [illegible] Arr. [illegible] Wed. & Sat.	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible] Dep. Mon. [illegible] Arr. Mon. Tues. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express via [illegible] Dep. Mon. [illegible] Wed. Fri. & Sat. Arr. [illegible] Tues. [illegible] Thurs. [illegible] & Sat.	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express via [illegible] Dep. Thurs. & [illegible] Arr. Wed. & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express via Wkly Dep. Tue. Fri. & Sat. Arr. Tues. Wed. & Sat.	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express Dep. Wednesday Arr. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express Dep. & Arr. Thursday	11 35	5959
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express Dep. & Arr. [illegible] Mon. Wed. & Fri.	1 50	5948
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express via [illegible]	7 00	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	15-30	3050
3019	21 05	Kathgodam Express	11 55	3020
3021	16 05	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	5 00	3022
5653	17 35	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	6-30	5690
3312	6-10	Black Diamond Express	21 25	3-18
3039	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	16 50	[illegible]
3016	18 29	Asansol Express	8 4[illegible]	3046
3031	21 05	Danapur Express	6-50	3032
3073	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	1.0	3072
3015	9 55	Santiniketan Express	15 40	3016
1159	15 25	Chambal (Gwalior) Express Dep. Mon. Tue. & Thurs. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Fri.	7 5[illegible]	[illegible]
1171	15-25	Shipra (Indore) Express Dep. Wed. Sat. & Fri. Arr. Sat. Wed. & Sat.	7 [illegible]	1172
[illegible]	14 30	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	1 [illegible]	3328
1161	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express Dep. Friday Arr. Tuesday	7 [illegible]	1162

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19-15	Darjeeling Mail	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20 35	5658
3153	22 00	Gour Express	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	Katihar Express	4 15	5664
3151	11-20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15 50	3152
3133	20-55	Mughal Sarai Express via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10 25	3104
5185	12 40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express Dep. & Arr. Tues., Thurs. & Sat.	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

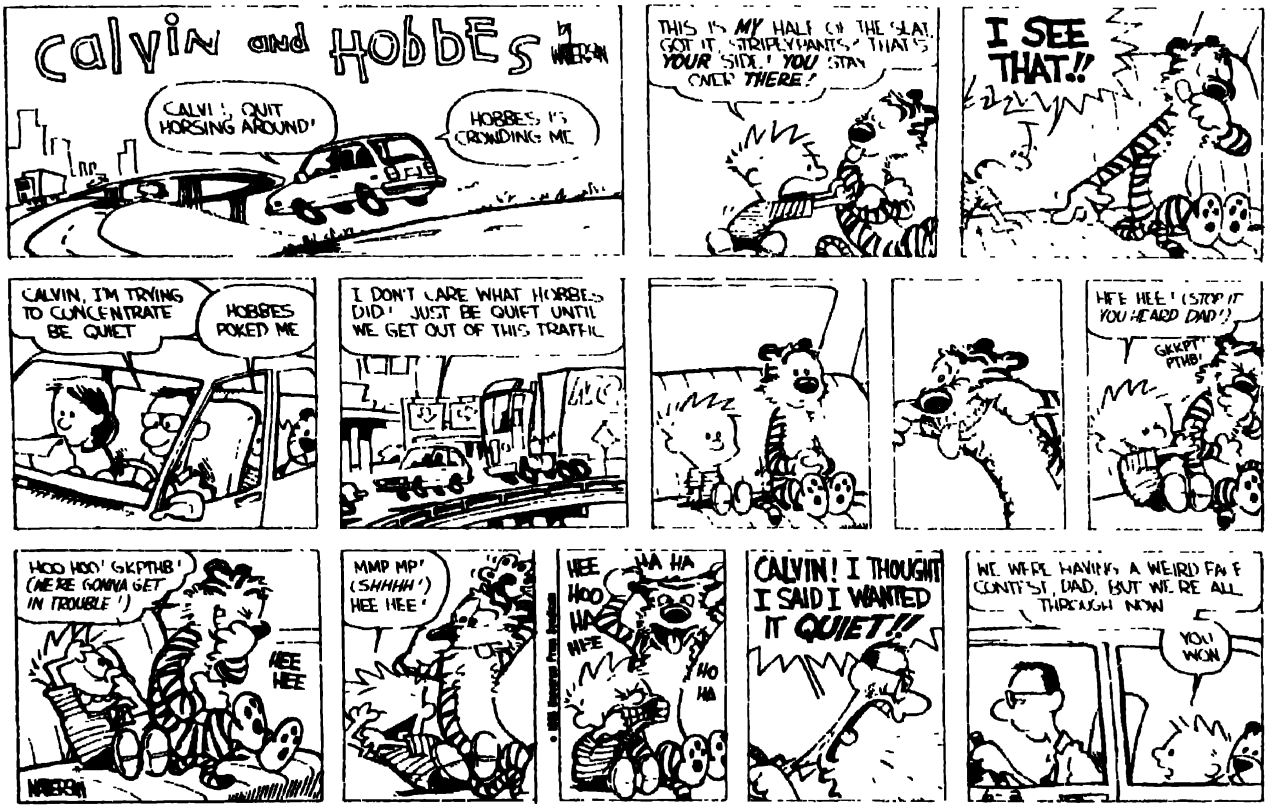
Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	6004
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via [illegible]	[illegible]	6003
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	15 25	2850
[illegible]	6 30	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday	21 00	2022
8034	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	5 15	8033
8030	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	11 20	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	12 05	2842
[illegible]	8 10	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express Dep. [illegible] Tues. & Fri. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Sat.	19 40	7004
6311	[illegible]	Bangalore Express Dep. Sunday Arr. Sunday	14 45	6312
8013	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	10 [illegible]	8014
8113	5 00	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	21 [illegible]	8114
8005	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	5 00	8006
8015	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	6 10	8016
8007	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	5 40	8008
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	6 25	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	22 05	2822
8045	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	15 10	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express Dep. Except Saturday Arr. Except Sunday	11 35	8018
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express Dep. & Arr. on Sunday	[illegible]	1029
[illegible]	16 40	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via Howrah Sunday only	16 10	
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via Howrah Saturday only	10 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express Monday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express [illegible] only	13 45	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via Howrah & Vriddhachalam Monday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Vriddhachalam & Howrah Dep. Tues. & Fri. Arr. Tues. & Fri.	[illegible]	[illegible]
6720	22 35	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
-	14 05	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	13-45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computarised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

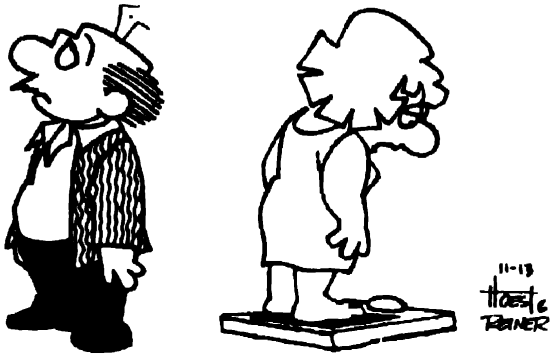
COMICS

ARCHIE

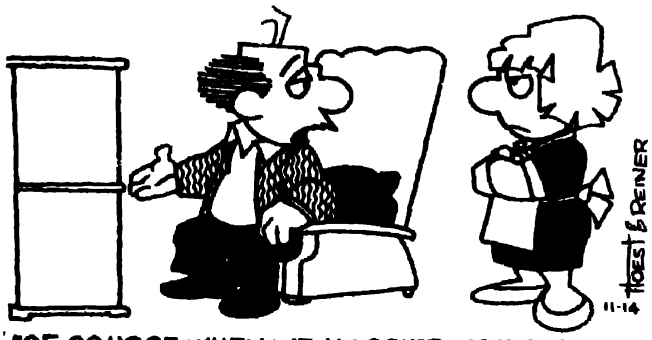
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



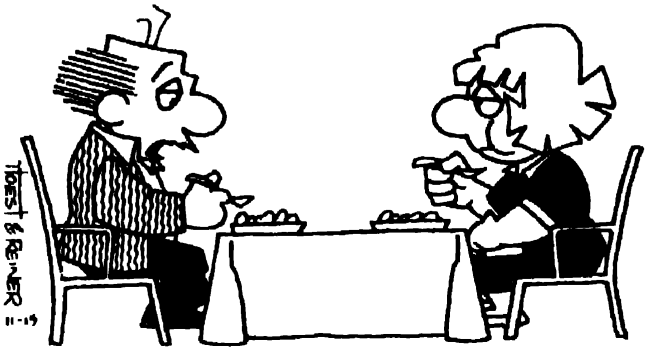
THE LOCKHORNS



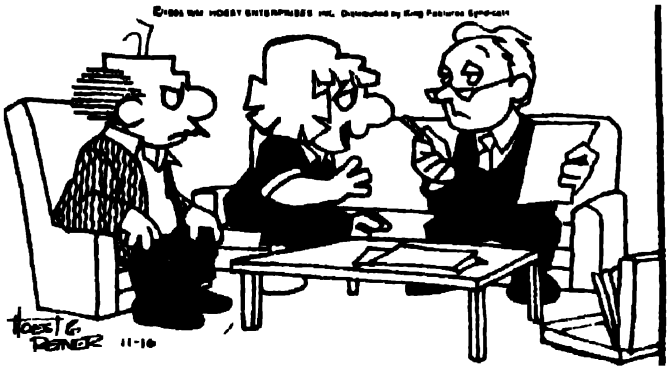
"I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO LOSE, NO MATTER HOW MANY FAT-FREE COOKIES I EAT!"



"OF COURSE, WHEN WE MARRIED, YOU DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE WATCHING TV EVERY NIGHT. BACK THEN, THERE WASN'T ANY TV."

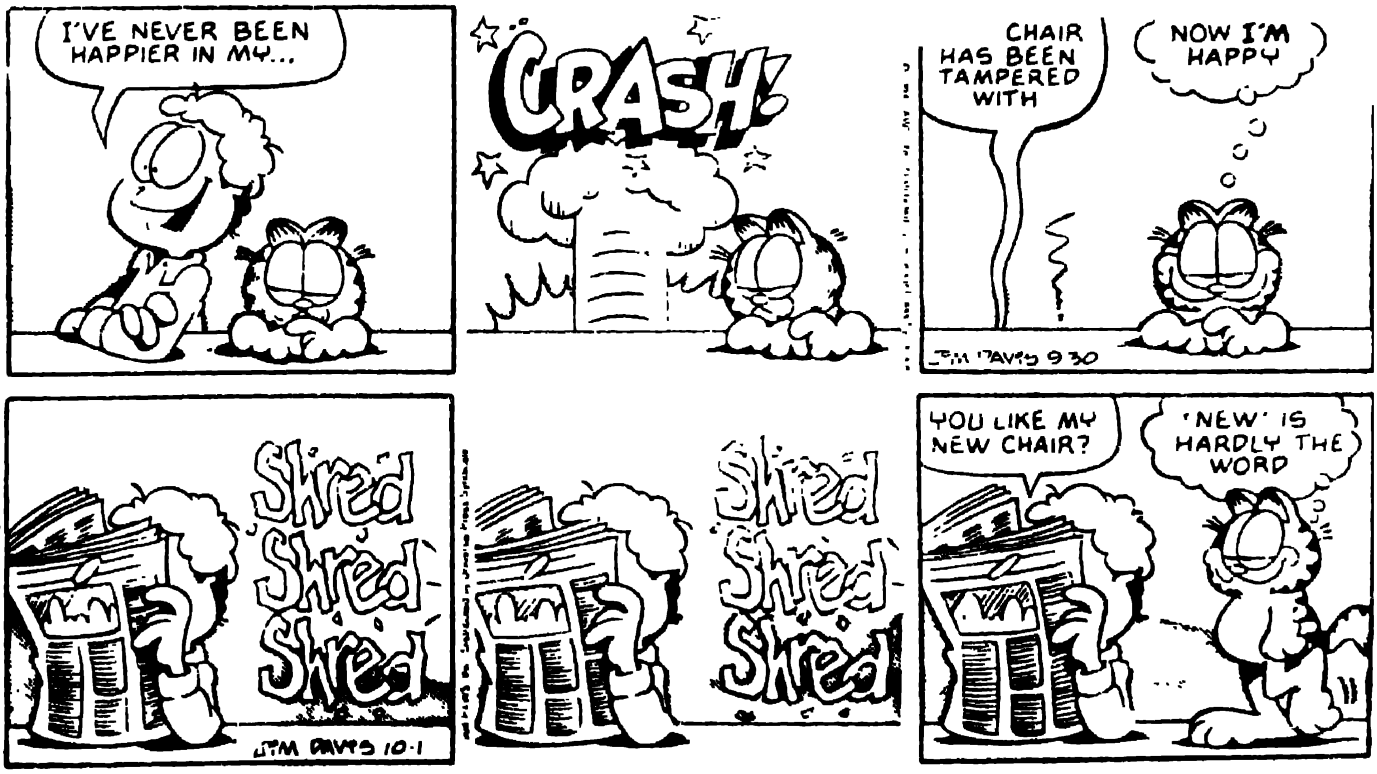


"IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YOU MADE THIS WITHOUT THE USE OF A CEMENT MIXER."

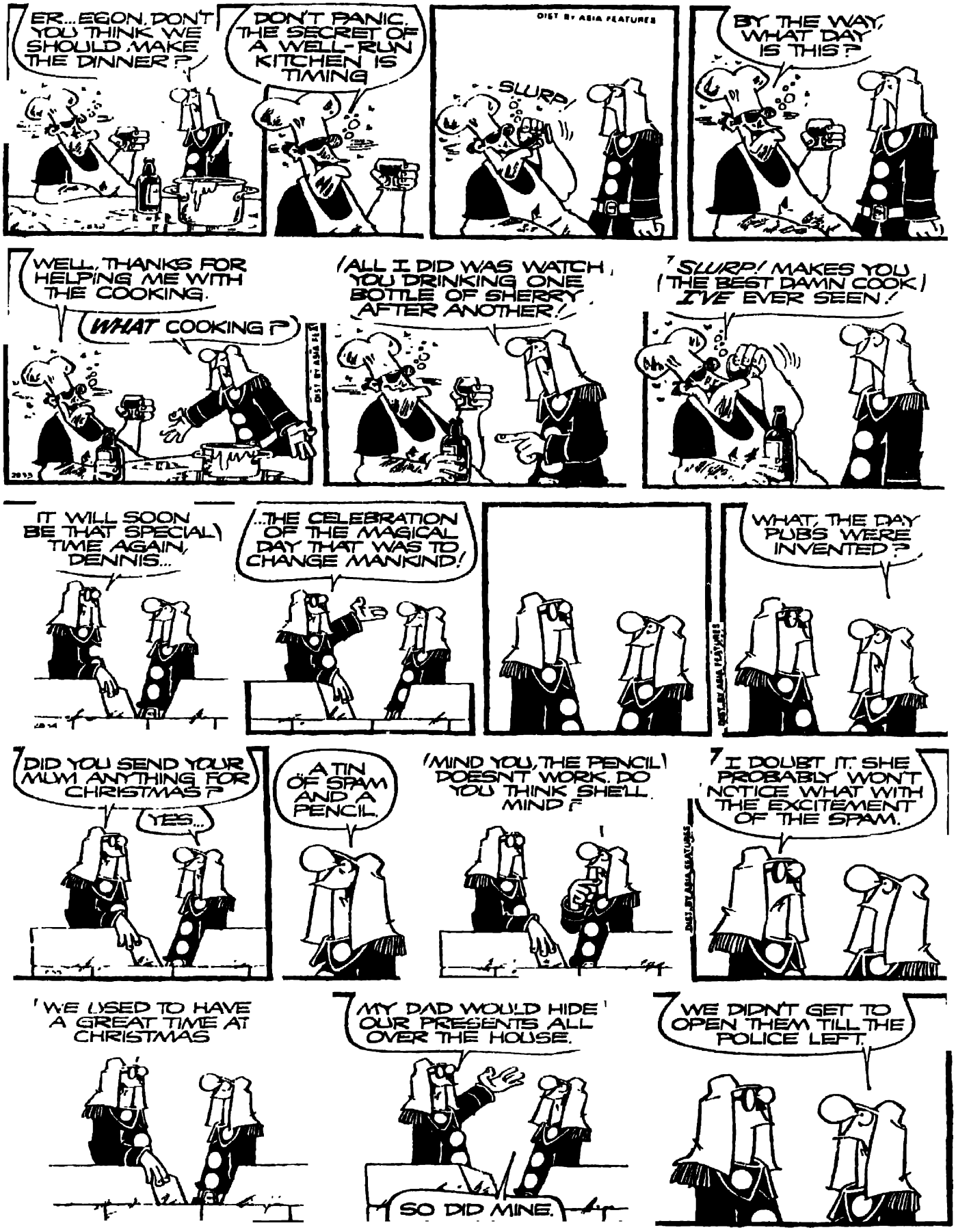


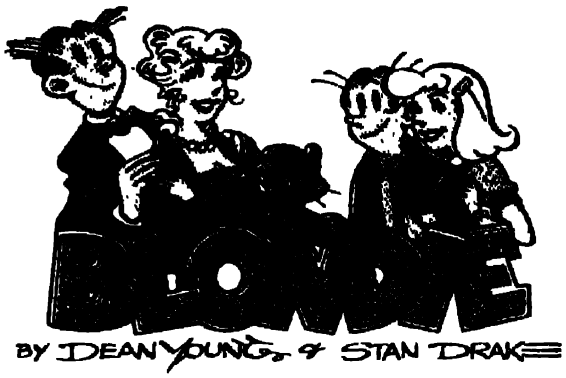
"I LIKE THE DOUBLE INDEMNITY PART. WE'LL TAKE IT!"

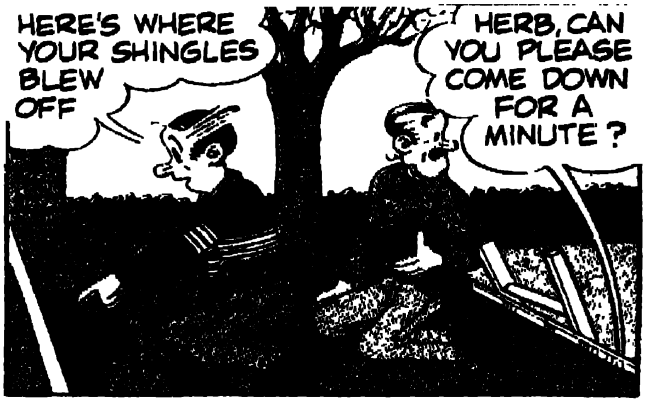
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

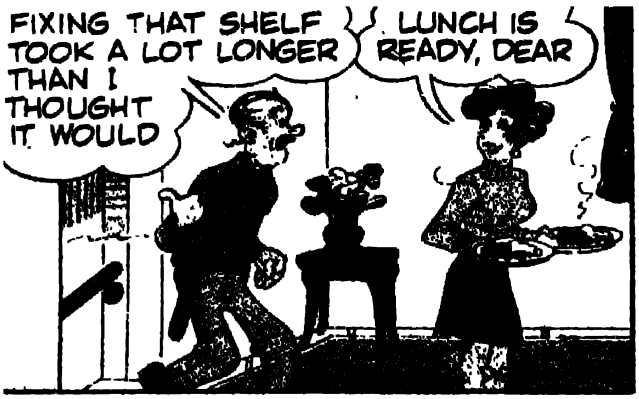


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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BEAT THE HEAT

In high fashion, as Indian designers come out with their summer collections. ***Samita Bhatia*** *reports*

There is one designer, at least, who appears bored stiff of being asked about the direction fashion trends have taken this sultry summer. Blinking languidly in the Delhi heat, J.J. Valaya drones in response: "What's in, what's out? Nothing, absolutely nothing."

But push him a little further and he gets more assertive. "It's your individual, personal style which is really the 'look of the season'. No major fashion dictates happen in summer, and collections are launched by designers at this time of the year basically just for the sake of doing a 'line of the season' The collections don't make a fashion statement nor do they reflect any concrete trends," he says

This matter-of-fact statement is corroborated by other trendsetters in the world of Indian haute couture. Pose Ravi Bajaj the same question, and he says: "What is in is what you are most comfortable wearing. But technically, it's linen, cotton and viscose in medium to pale colours."

Pale colours? You can say that again, going by what's available off the shelf today The designer palette has indeed gone wan and the most popular colour this season is lime green

Valaya has gone for pristine white delicately tempered with the blue of Ming pottery from which a part of his collection takes inspiration. His Russia-inspired designer outfits are in shades of peach, light green, lemon and cream. While the colour schemes border on the pallid, the look is unrestrictive. Broadly speaking, designers like Bajaj have adhered to "a loose and flowing silhouette, open shoes and minimal jewellery." The fuss and frills have been kept to the minimal with wearability being

J.J. Valaya's Russia inspired line

the bottom line .

While the Indian fashion pundits have not really stuck out their necks to set a pace for the coming months, it is quite obvious that they are treating comfort as the key element, with emphasis being laid on a soft structure, very subtle colouring and extremely fine fabrics. For the spring-summer collection of '96, the designers have focussed on fabrics and colours interplayed with embroidery, neither taking away from the other but harmoniously blending together to create the ideal summer ensemble.

While Valaya's last collection emphasised on cottons, he has discarded the material this summer for a more fluid look that can be bought for anywhere between Rs 6,000-20,000. Explains Valaya, ``The look that I was interested in creating was free flowing as opposed to being restrictive." So, it was out with the cottons and organzas and in with the chiffons and georgettes, delicately embroidered upon with silken threads

If Valaya's inspiration has been the blue pottery of the Ming dynasty and Russia, and Ravi Bajaj's is ``as always —quality", Geetanjali Kashyap's imagination has been fired by the Indian bride and a colourful palette. ``Colours are an unending source of inspiration for me," says Kashyap, who has concentrated on bridal wear suitable for the sweltering summer months. No longer need the bride be heavily attired in crimson; Gitanjali has other plans for her this summer. If the JB adds goes, 'Tradition is not what it used to be,' Kashyap, can't agree more.

``The colours for this year's Indian summer fall in two broad categories—dusty pinks and peach for the bride and a contrasting group of true to life non-colours for the family. Antique, washed out, very subtle and subdued. These tones of muted greens and beiges, the softened shades, accented with brilliant embroidery, create an exciting mix in the collection," she says.

The fabrics are chiffons, organzas, net, tissue and cotton silks from Banaras, the garments thus giving a distinct feel of transparency and translucence while the tissue lining these sheer fabrics lends it a subtle and delicate finish

Embroidery is in as well, without ever having been out (Indian designers just love embellishment) Kashyap's collection too includes

Ravissant summer design from Ravi Chawla

Ritu Beri's summer line

THE HIGH STREET OPTION

A cheaper way to update your wardrobe this summer

Not everybody's wallet extends to buying enormous quantities of designerwear And even those who live in haute couture don't want to play in it. Hence, the importance of high street fashion

These days, Indian men and women have an increasing number of options when it comes to casual wear in summer. There was always Wearhouse, Weekender and Benneton to fall back upon, but now the more stylish— and far richer — can opt for Color Plus and Walter Johnson as well (though the latter likes to slot itself as a designer label).

The Calcutta branch of Wearhouse may not have as great a range as the shops in Bangalore and Madras, but you can still take your pick of the bermudas, cotton shirts, skirts, trousers and dresses on offer. The rates at Weekender are slightly steeper, but if you want well-cut trousers and linen shirts, then a visit to this shop may not be a bad idea.

For the more fashion conscious, there is Color Plus It's not exactly cheap, with linen shirts being priced between Rs 1,000-2,000, but the cotton stuff is cheaper. And the loose pyjama-type trousers that they retail here are the best bet for a hot summer day, or even for partying late into the night with friends. Color Plus also has more dressy options on offer if your lifestyle includes a great deal of socialising

At Walter Johnson you can either go for the tailored look (with loose trouser suits and fitted jackets that can be worn with loose pants) or the more casual approach to dressing up (cotton and linen shirts and trousers that will become the most hard-working separates in your wardrobe). But be prepared to drop a couple of thousand bucks at this store; its styles don't come at throwaway prices.

But if all you need is casual trousers, cool shirts and the odd dress to take you through the hot months, then street fashion is not such a bad option. In Calcutta, you have Gokuldas, while those in Delhi and Bombay swear by Janpath, Sarojini Nagar and Fashion Street respectively. The clothes here come cheap; in Rs 2,000 you could buy a whole new wardrobe.

Of course, they might not last for more than a couple of months; the colours will run, some of them will shrink, and they'll probably fall to pieces after a few washes. But who cares? After all, by the time the

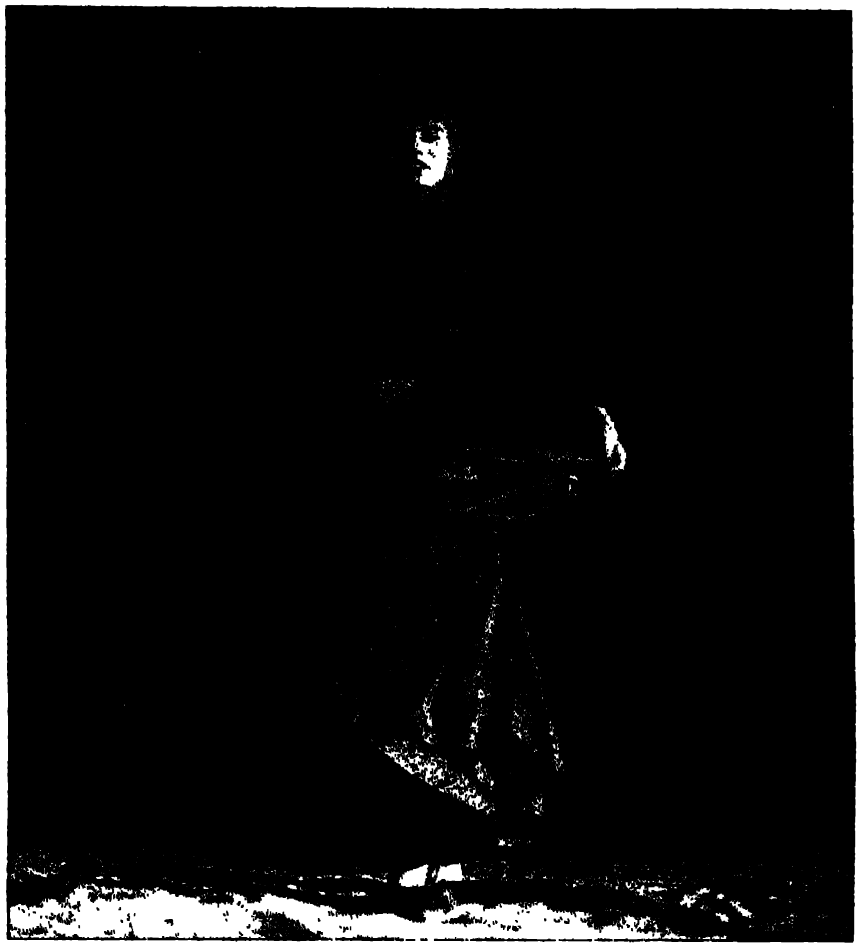
A striped outfit from Ritu Beri's collection

different styles of embroidery' The fabrics are intricately embroidered with typically Gujarati sitara and dori work and some exquisite dull hand cut sequins The motifs are geometric and cover the fabric entirely To bring in an element of freshness I have used contrasting colours for example using detailed silver embroidery done on a gray base for a rust kurta which in fact, highlights the workmanship, explains Kashyap

Imagine a sheer net organza in a single tone, rich embroidery in copper on deep grays cut in a very evening silhouette Close to zardozi in its visual appeal, yet different in technique, it bestows the ensemble with a sensual perfection The zari and embroidery are not very bright, but dull silver, and dull gold almost beige to go with the subtle colours of the fabrics This gives the outfits a touch of elegance and exclusivity in terms of colour and pattern

If a loose silhouette is in so is a layered look Kashyap has used three to four layers of chiffon in each outfit the lehangas being double layered, first with net and then with tissue The highlight of the bridal collection is the 'farshi lahenga, that as the name implies, sweeps the floor

Geetanjali s lehanga collection has introduced yet another approach



A striking dress from the Ravissant collection

to wearing the garment by the innovative use of two dupattas instead of one with each attire. This has already been done by the Bombay designer pair of Abu Jani and Sandip Khosla, but Kashyap puts her own spin on the idea. The light manageable net dupatta is designed specially for covering the bride's face, as tradition dictates. A designer who, on the other hand, has done away with `lehangas' altogether this summer is Valaya who has instead gone in for the ever popular churidar.

The Indian summer collection from Kashyap includes blouses of two different kinds. The first is inspired by the traditional choli from Rajasthan and UP which is short and fitted to the body. The other is the kurti which ends just below the waist and has small side slits. The designer's second line this summer is the ready-to-wear range in two contrasting looks. In the first all-white section, Gitanjali has made her entire statement in crisp, cool fabrics like chiken, mixed with hakoba and hand-made lace. The other part of the collection has woven checks and stripes —in a medley of dominant whites, exuberant greens, indigo and blacks.

And as an in-between choice to the heavy bridal outfits and the casual ready-to-wear range are the evening ensembles. Chiffon straight pants, lehangas, kurtas, dupattas once again in pastel greens, sky-blues and dusty pink.

Another designer whose summer collection is really, really cool is Ritu Beri who has attempted to craft real clothes for the real woman. ``It's fashion for a more private woman," explains Beri. And in her quest to create an antithesis of the busy, fussy and frilly look of the last year, Beri has found that women are more keen to be stylish than trendy.

There are a lot of straight lines with block printing that brims over with a youthful attitude. Short and long dresses for all times, feminine wrap blouses that embrace summer's upbeat mood, and long, flared, bell sleeved tunics with fine embroidery. And then the omnipresent flowing silhouettes, layered look, adaptable to different looks in any number of variations for each and every occasion. If the floor price of the outfits is just under Rs 1,000, the steepest could be Rs 18,000.

In Beri's collection bright, fruity primary colours make a comeback. So there's a kaleidoscope of cream, olive, maroon, black to brights — orange, red turq and blue ... and of course, green, white and pristine white.

The chiffons and georgettes in the Ravissant collection, too, are cut for comfort. Ravi Chawla has gone for the very basic, no fuss, simple contours while the colours range from the light pastels to bright acids. Additionally, there is the traditional Ravi Chawla black and white range in geometric, clean and bold prints There are checks and stripes which are fast becoming the Ravissant hallmark. ``A lot of the Ravissant designs are created for the working woman who travels a lot. Thus the cut must be simple, so she's comfortable wherever she goes," explains Chawla.

While Chawla watches out for international forecasts on the trends in haute couture, so does Ravi Bajaj. He explains, ``Since we only make western clothes, it is imperative for us to keep in sync with international trends, as a typical Ravi Bajaj client is familiar with other top international brands and trends."

Well, in this age of satellite television, so is the entire Indian middle-class, But that, as they say, is another story. ■

PAVAN MALHOTRA, *seems to have hit the limelight ever since he was cast in the popular tele-serial,* **Nukkad,** *and more recently, in Mahesh Bhatt's* **Zameen Aasman.** *Unknown to many, this Delhiite actor has played the lead role in two award-winning films,* **Saeed Mirza's Salim Lange Pe Mat Ro** *and* **Buddhadev Dasgupta's Bagh Bahadur.** *His recent lead role in* **Brothers in Trouble,** *a BBC II film has won him rave reviews at international film festivals in London and Berlin.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Even an imperfect happiness will do.
What is your greatest fear?
That the TV horror shows will get even funnier.

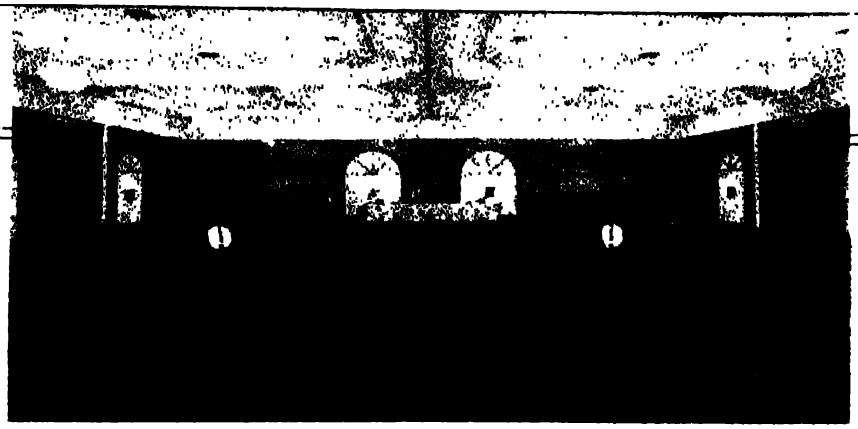
> **What is your greatest fear?**
>
> That the TV horror shows will get even funnier

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
That which has made me feel a little smaller, a little humbler.
What do you dislike most in others?
That which I like most in myself — laziness.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
That which I like most in others —recklessness.
What is your most precious possession?
I am still treasure hunting.
What objects do you always carry?
My ice-box to stay cool!
What makes you most depressed?
That one has to still hope not for an equal society but for a less unequal one.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
That with my height I have to look up to so many idiots.
What is your favourite word?
I am often left speechless.
What is your favourite journey?
Going on location shooting.
What is your favourite dream?
Anything short of a nightmare.
What is your nightmare?
That my wild dreams may just about come true.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
I am married. Do I have a choice?

What is your source of sustenance?
Diet food.
On what occasions do you lie?
The going never gets so difficult that one has to lie.
What is your greatest regret?
That my parents are a part of my memory—not of my today.
What has been your happiest moment?
I am blissfully unaware of it.

> **What or who is the greatest love of your life?**
>
> I am married. Do I have a choice?

What brings tears to your eyes?
"THE END".
How do you relax?
By growling and snarling at my wife.
What do you envy most in others?
Ki unka gussa mere gusse se kam kyon
(That, why his anger is less than mine).
How would you like to be remembered?
Mine was not a tall story...but you can't cut it short either.
How would you like to die?
With the heart beat slowly receding.



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The Telegraph

21 JULY 1996

POST MORTEM

The Good Hostess

■ Thank you for the cover story featuring the delicious beauty, Sanjana Kapoor ('Hostess with the Mostest', June 2). With her *firang* looks and Western accent, she cuts an interesting figure on television.

The third generation of Kapoors has not been very successful in their careers except of course the evergreen Rishi Kapoor and his niece, Karisma Kapoor. Kunal and Karan, Sanjana's brothers, could not make much headway in tinsel town although they started off with a bang. They were big flops on screen. Sanjana also failed as a cinestar.

Among the other Kapoors, Randhir, Raj Kapoor's eldest son, could never establish himself as a saleable hero and after some time tried his hand at direction. The youngest, Rajeev, also could not make a place for himself in films and is now trying to establish himself as a director with *Prem Granth*.

Sanjana, in comparison to the women directors and actors, who, with her, last has made a name for herself in the world of show business.

D. Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ Hailing from a family of actors, Sanjana Kapoor with her charming personality and acting has found a new role for herself as the anchorperson of Star Plus's Aaj Ki Shaam.

With the name of Kapoor on her shoulders, Sanjana Kapoor is definitely on the road to success.

Sanjana in her blood is fast all her family members, not on the professional and amateur scale, are linked with the arts and drama. Coming up as much as everyone, since it would have looked incongruous had she also not been an actress.

As Shashi Kapoor's daughter, she takes an active interest in the affairs of Prithvi Theatre and I believe that her efforts will pay off. Prithvi she will go a long way.

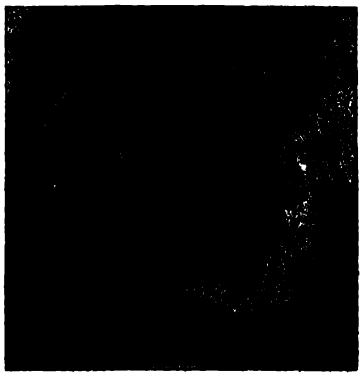
B.N. Bose,
Calcutta

■ Sanjana Kapoor may not be as famous as Karisma Kapoor, but she is more dignified and talented and does not have to resort to cheap gimmicks to gain popularity. Eventually, it is talent that matters and she will overcome [illegible].

Manas Acharya,
Calcutta

Sanjana Kapoor: A fine actress from the Kapoor clan

INSIDE



Madonna: Jatin's favourite

PAGE 4

JATIN KOCHHAR takes the liberty to comment on the wardrobes of some of the celebrities.

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INTERNATIONAL LABELS become the new status symbol.

SECTIONS

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30 FIRST PERSON

COVER STORY

Shooting His Mouth Off

*Fashion designer **Jatin Kochhar** spares no one as he holds forth on celebrity dress sense*

Jatin Kochhar: Hitting below the belt

Wearing black and white trunks and a charming smile, fashion designer Jatin Kochhar wrings his hair, gives his wet, wet, wet body a thorough towelling, rubs his hands in glee and sits down to tear celebrities —and their outfits—to little shreds.

Here's Jatin at his bitchiest best (or worst), holding forth on famous fashion failures and victories.

Sylvie
Celebrity hairdresser -- and cross-dresser

He's got the courage to be what he wants. But rather tacky and too loud for my taste. The concept of dressing is very good: micro minis and long ball gowns. But wearing that he goes off into the men's loo and abuses in Hindi!. His elaborate hairstyles leave me cold.
Rating as a man: can't recall him looking like one, never seen him in pants.

Rating as a woman: 5.5/10

Sushmita Sen
Model, former Miss Universe and aspiring actress

Can't get any better. Very glamorous with a brand new pair of t___. Before she made it she was disastrous. But finally she's convinced me she's hot. She knows what to wear and when to wear it. She's an experimental dresser. Her favourite seems to be no bra, huge neckline and her breasts popping out.

Rating: 8/10

Sushmita Sen: Experimental dresser

Akshay Kumar: Looks great in jeans

Akshay Kumar
Actor

Very sure he needs a new designer. And his present designer needs major help. He's a disaster with a name like Rocky. Reminds me of my long-lost dog.

I like the way Akshay's jeans fit him though. But he doesn't have a personal style. Always looks like a last minute put-together dresser. Would probably be lost without his lousy designer.

Rating: 6.5/10

Rekha
Actress

Time she dressed her age. Could sober down. Could do away with her p-caps and elaborate headgear. She's quite with-it but someone should tell her chains are not happening anymore. Simplicity rules the runways now. But she was brilliant in *Umrao Jaan*. And I'll rate her on the basis of that.

Rating: 7/10

Rekha: Hooked to head gears and chains

Aishwarya Rai: Plastic beauty

Aishwarya Rai
Model, former Miss World and aspiring actress

Plastic looking. Very proper. Very boring. So sweet she gives you diabetes. Not a versatile dresser. Very jacket oriented, always covered up.

Michael Jackson: Should think twice before taking off his shirt

Michael Jackson
Singer

He needs help. God bless him. He's got some audacity to take off his shirt with that flatland inside. Should get his body polka-dotted. I'll do it for him.

Rating: 3/10

Rishi Kapoor
Actor

If he stops wearing sweaters woollen shops all over the world would go out of business. And only he can wear yellow pants and multi-coloured sweaters. Anyway, it's time he launched his son into movies and lived happily on his pension.

Rating: 3.5/10

Malini Ramani
Delhi socialite

Very funky dresser, Don't know what she'd look like in a sari or Indian clothes. But it would be nice if there was more to her than clothes.

Rating: 6.5/10

Raveena Tandon
Actress

I'm indifferent to her.

Rating: 5/10

Trey
Channel V veejay

I like his style of dressing. He's really cool.

Rating: 7/10

Rohit Bal: Versatile dresser

Rohit Bal
Fashion designer

Versatile dresser. Can be very formal or very *junglee*. His dressing is never offensive. Can carry off his whacky metallic gear.

Rating: 5.5/10

Trey: Whacky sense of clothes

Madonna: Really cool in her ways

Madonna
Singer

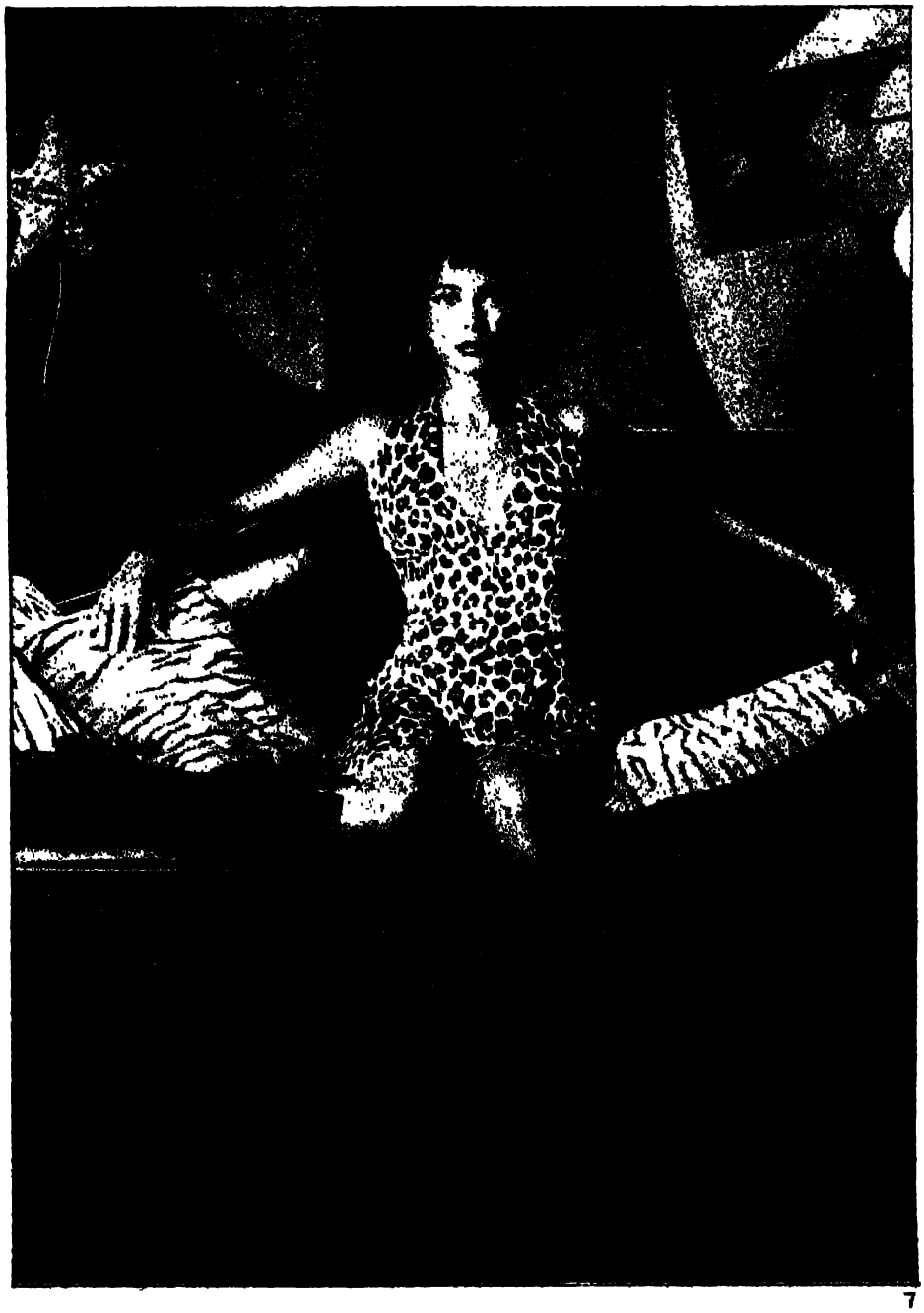
Someone who can say "I don't care if I have a boy or a girl as long as my child is bisexual" is really, really cool. I like everything about her—the way she talks, walks, takes off her clothes, wears them, takes them off again and what she wears.

Rating: 9.5/10

Anu Kutoor
MTV veejay

Hot! Really hot! Love the way she dresses. What does she wear? Nothing. Nothing much. Doesn't like wearing many clothes. One of the few Indian models who possesses foreign designer clothes and can carry them off.

Rating: 7/10



Anu Kutoor: Hot, hot, hot!

Madhuri Dixit: Desperately needs a new wardrobe

Madhuri Dixit
Actress

Can go to the dogs. Needs an image\wardrobe\make-up consultant to start with. It's time she started spending some money on her grooming.

She had used this outfit and shoes of mine for a shoot and after it was over she sent me a note saying that she really liked it and could she keep it. I asked her to pay for it and that was the end of her interest. Anyway, she desperately needs a new wardrobe. And please she should stay away from those atrocious blonde wigs.

Rating: 1.5/10

Chunky Pandey: Not good, good, not..

Chunky Pandey
Actor

In the filmi sense, not good. In the non-filmi sense, good.

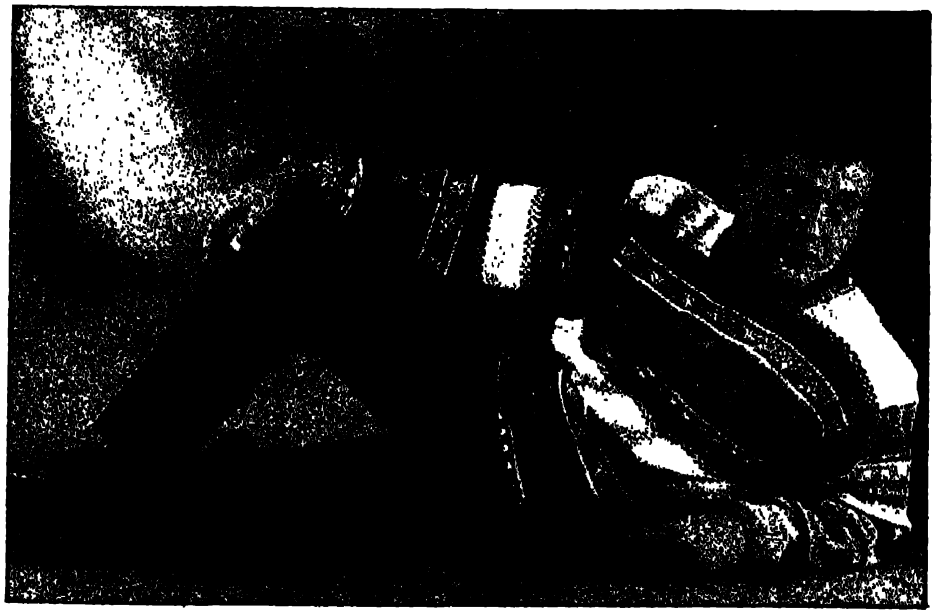
Rating: 6/10

Govinda
Actor

Minus clothes he has no personality. They do wonders for him. Represents the entire cartoon community. Great entertainer. So bad that he's good. And fiercely honest about the fact that he's a *ganwar*. His clothes go with him, literally.

Rating: 6/10

Govinda: More of a man in his clothes



Alessandra
Channel V veejay

Very cool dresser. I like everything about her. She looks good in anything she wears. She's happening.

Rating: 7/10

Luke Kenny
Channel V veejay

Should get rid of his *mangalsutra*. Time he got his hair permed.

Rating: 4.5/10

Suman Ranganathan
Actress

Hot Indian beauty. Nice dresser. She could eliminate bodysuits from her wardrobe, she's too busty for them. She needs to lose weight on her hips too, but now that she's in Hindi films I guess she's okay for them.

Rating: 5.5/10

Madhu Sapre: Looks great with an orange tan

Madhu Sapre
Model and aspiring actress

Quite hot as a model. Looks great with an orange tan. Cool clothes. No one in India can wear a shorter skirt than her and get away with it. She looks great in them.

Rating: 6.5/10

Tara Deshpande
Model and MTV veejay

She has a scooter tyre on her waist. She could lose a lot of weight, narrow her 40" hips and not insist on wearing 36" skirts. She's also a bit of a *behanji*, you know, a little behind the times. Likes to wear oxidized silver earrings with a swelte mini skirt that I had designed for her.

Rating: 4/10

Mayuri Kango
Actress

Very frocky.

Rating: 3.5/10

Jasmine Barucha
Singer

Needs to come to terms with the fact that she's not tall and there's nothing wrong with it. Neither am I. She doesn't have to always totter around in 8" heels. And it's okay if she wants to wear deep necks. But it shouldn't be neck-less, so that her breasts fall out and she has to keep putting them back in.

Jasmine Barucha: Nothing wrong in being short

Rating: 4.5/10

Bobby Deol
Actor

He has the greatest collection of sunglasses. He knows what he looks good in. Typical Aquarian in his way of dressing, which means that he's particular about what he wants to project. Though he can wear any colour and look good in it, black and white are his favourites and he's almost always in a blazer. But he's got his own personal style and I like that.

Rating: 7/10

Sweta Shetty: Very international dresser

Sanjana Kapoor
Actress and television hostess

Very artsy style of dressing. The kurta, jhola, loose clothes type. Doesn't look sexy. Rather like a pair of kolhapuri chappals.

Rating: 4.5/10

Sweta Shetty
Singer

Good, star-like dresser. Buys a lot of my clothes. Very international in the way she dresses, presents herself, socialises. Has big hips but can't really do anything about it, she's big-boned.

Rating: 6/10

Rahul Khanna
MTV veejay

A complete pyjama. And wooden at that. He's not so fat, why is he forever after loose t-shirts?

Rating: 3.5/10

Rahul Khanna: Too fond of loose T- shirts

Jatin Kochhar (on Jatin Kochhar)
Fashion designer

I'm into undies. Black is my favourite, so is black and white. But I hate plain white underwear. Matte gold and silver look good too, but I can never get my size. They're always too big. The waist, that is. I have Calvin Kleins, Hom, Alex and the Indian Jockey Speedo Really, I'm no hot -shot! ■

EXTRACT

For Better or for WORSE

Extracts from ***Ghulam Abbas'*** *book of short stories*

When he first learnt that his wife had left him, he was completely taken aback, because they had been married less than a year, and he found it very hard to believe that she was gone. He went to her room a few times, to reassure himself that she was no longer there. All her things were gone, too, including that picture which used to sit on her table showing her as a child holding a pigeon. And she had even taken all her makeup things with her.

For the next few days, he lived in a dazed state. He did not leave the house and said nothing to the servants. He did not even share his bewilderment with his friends and relatives. Weeks passed and he no longer felt afraid of a scandal as he had been at first, neither was he hopeful of her return.Reflecting calmly on what had happened, he thought of the love he had given her, the care he had taken of her, the readiness with which he had done whatever she desired and he began to wonder what had gone wrong. She had left without saying why, without even leaving a note. He tried to think of the years of loneliness that lay ahead and shuddered.

His parents were poor and he'd had a lonely childhood His education had been modest and he had lost his father and mother in infancy. It was only natural that he had tended to become a loner In any case, given his straitened circumstances it was not even possible to go out and meet people. His early youth was spent looking for economic security and with hard work and luck, he had succeeded in achieving that, but he still avoided company and was happier by himself. However, since the change in his fortunes, a number of relatives had cropped up from nowhere. They had imposed themselves on him and were always going on about his being single. ``Are you going to remain without a wife all your life? Come on, we are going to find you a lovely girl who will make a home for you."

One older gentleman who was some kind of a distant uncle once said to him, ``Why go far? In our own family, we have such beautiful and accomplished girls. Surely....."

With time, he began to weaken, and finally allowed himself to be prevailed upon to marry one of the girls from the distant family She was nice looking and she had an education. As a student he had always opted out of the excursions his classmates would make to neighbouring villages looking for fun, so he really had no experience of women at all. Now that he was married he realised what an absurd life he had spent and what he had been missing. He proved to be a perfectly devoted husband. He would spend all his time at home and even avoid office parties and get togethers. He met very few people and could not bear to be away from his wife for very long, and even at work he would keep glancing at his watch.

If he ran into a friend on his way home who wanted to take him out for a bit of fun and action, he would tell him coldly, ``You will have to excuse me. My evenings belong to my wife who waits at home for me all day, all alone." Or, ``I never go anywhere without my wife."

What a fool he had been! All that for a faithless whose love was a pretense! He suddenly felt very angry. He began to breathe hard and across his mind flashed an image of himself strangling his wife. Her terrorised eyes begged for mercy, but he felt none. He was strangulating her, slowly derterminedly. He saw her pink face become black and lifeless and blood flowed out of her eyes. He picked up her lifeless body and threw it on the floor.

However, after sometime his intense, almost insane feelings of revenge began to fade. Instead, when he thought of his marriage, he found his love and devotion and even the faithlessness of his wife laughable. One day he said to himself, ``What a

Extracted from
Hotel Moenjodaro and Other Stories
by Ghulam Abbas
Published by Penguin Books India
Price Rs 150

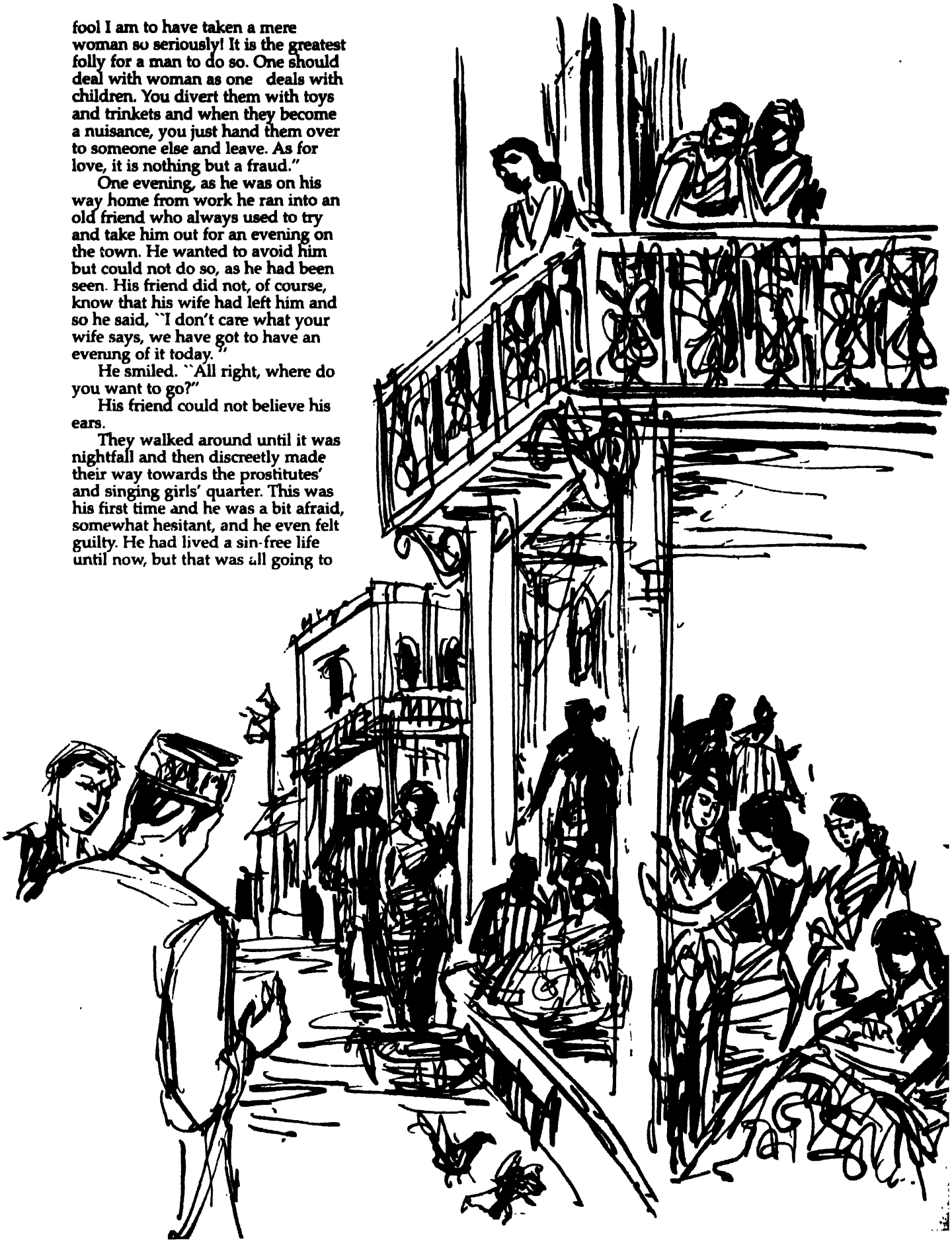
fool I am to have taken a mere woman so seriously! It is the greatest folly for a man to do so. One should deal with woman as one deals with children. You divert them with toys and trinkets and when they become a nuisance, you just hand them over to someone else and leave. As for love, it is nothing but a fraud."

One evening, as he was on his way home from work he ran into an old friend who always used to try and take him out for an evening on the town. He wanted to avoid him but could not do so, as he had been seen. His friend did not, of course, know that his wife had left him and so he said, "I don't care what your wife says, we have got to have an evening of it today."

He smiled. "All right, where do you want to go?"

His friend could not believe his ears.

They walked around until it was nightfall and then discreetly made their way towards the prostitutes' and singing girls' quarter. This was his first time and he was a bit afraid, somewhat hesitant, and he even felt guilty. He had lived a sin-free life until now, but that was all going to



change and all because of that faithless woman. However, a few quick drinks soon quelled his misgivings. He felt perfectly at home and found himself enjoying every minute of it and even making risque suggestions to the performing courtesan like a seasoned habitue of these places.

That was the beginning of a new chapter in his life. For the first few days he had needed the guidance of his friends but now he was so much at home in these streets that he did not require any companions. His routine was always the same. He would walk up and down the quarter like a trader evaluating goods and then pick up the woman who attracted him, for the price asked. This was the good life. He would often come to the women 's quarter straight from work and every day he would sample a new woman, listening to her false assurances of love and extending even more false assurances to her in turn. The next day both the woman and what had been said the night before were forgotten. He liked this kind of relationship because it was simple and uncomplicated, being based on money.

He earned enough to live in comfort and raise a family, but it wasn't so much as to admit a fund restricted spending, day after day. Before his marriage, he had little or no expense of his own which was how he had managed to build up his savings. Even the many expensive presents he had bought his wife had not made much of a dent in the figure but he now realised that he had begun to spend so much money, that before long, he would have nothing left except his salary. Afraid of losing his financial nest egg and worried over his indifferent health because of the irregular life he was leading, he gradually reduced the number of his visits to the quarter. Sometimes he would stay away for days on end.

One morning when he was ready to go for work, there was a gentle knock at the door.

"Who is it?"

There was no answer.. He opened the door and almost fell backwards. It was his wife. She looked terrible. Her eyes were lowered and she was wearing unwashed clothes. She hadn't done her hair for weeks and he noticed her face was pale and there were circles under her eyes. she reminded him of a dog which had just been wallowing in mud.

She did not speak but fell at his feet, her arms around his legs, weeping bitterly.

He tried to wrest his legs free but she wouldn't let go. "Forgive me, forgive me," she managed to say between sobs. "I know you hate me and do not even want to look at my face, but I do not ask that you love me. That is something I have no right to expect. I do not deserve it but you must take pity on me and let me stay in this house. More than that I do not wish. I was blind. Please forgive me, I was betrayed."

His anger against her was mostly gone and what was left of it disappeared, seeing her as she was. He did not feel pity, however, only disgust. Since she had left, he had often wondered about the man she left him for. Was it someone he knew or a total stranger? But right now he felt no curiosity; he just wanted to be rid of her.

She was saying, "I know you are a good and kind man who will not push me out. I have nowhere to go.

Oh, the trouble I have seen! Treat me as a servant, because that is what I deserve."

"Keep your voice down. The servants might hear you."

He was getting late and he managed to free himself, but not roughly. Then picking up his cap, he walked out of the door.

All day long her face danced in front of his eyes. Was this the same young and innocent girl he was so madly in love with only six months ago? Was this the same woman who loved perfume and who could not stand even a speck of dust on her body? Was this the person he was so proud of walking next to, on the street?

He debated with himself. "If all she wants is to be allowed to stay in the house, I am not so mean as to deny her that. One thing, however, is certain: I will have nothing to do with her. Perhaps, one day, when she has had enough of my indifference to her, she will leave of her own accord."

It was two weeks since she had returned but he had not so much as cast a glance at her, nor had they spoken. It was as if she did not live in the house. She, too, had tried to stay out of his way while reminding him of her presence in different ways. When he woke up in the morning, there would be fresh flowers by his bedside. He was fond of reading the morning paper in bed, which was where he was now being served breakfast. The houseboy would bring him steaming hot, aromatic tea and crisp brown toast the way he liked it. That was how it had been in the first days of their marriage. When he would step out of his shower, an immaculately pressed suit would be ready for him. The shirt would be spotlessly laundered and a matching necktie and breast handkerchief laid out. The links would already be in the French cuffs and his shoes would be polished. He would send for food from home at lunchtime and it would invariably be delicious and only dishes he specially liked.

A bitter smile would appear on his lips and he would say to himself, "I know these are all tricks to lure me back, but I am not going to be fooled again."

He would come home, then leave and not return until late in the night. Sometimes he would stay the night out. However, there was no change in the arrangements. He was still being shown the same loving care.

Three months passed. The monsoon had broken. It rained often and steel blue clouds danced around in the sky most of the day. He had not gone out for a week and felt like making up for it that evening. He wrote out a cheque and sent the officeboy to the bank next door, but when he returned, he had no money because there just wasn't enough in his account. Although he had apprehended the approach of this day, when it did arrive, he felt surprised. He had never thought that he was so close to the end of his resources. He phoned a couple of friends but it was close to the end of the month and they did not have any money to spare. He suddenly remembered that a precious ring his wife had once given him, lay in a small jewellery box at home. It had no sentimental value in his eyes any longer and he could easily sell it for good money.

He went home, found the ring and was passing through the courtyard on his way out when a

woman delicately perfumed and wearing a lovely silk sari appeared from the other side of the house and went past him. She did not look at him but he had caught a glimpse of her face, which though brief, was enough to captivate him. It was none other than his wife who only three months ago had looked like a zombie freshly out of its grave. Living at home in comfort, eating good food and taking care of her skin with lotions and creams had worked wonders and brought back her looks. Her cheeks were full and her eyes sparkled. She looked as she had looked on their wedding night. Her expression which was then innocent was now maturer and her self-consciousness had given her added attraction.

However, he did not stop, and walked out of the house. Soon he was in a jewellery market where business seemed brisk, with customers crowding most shops. He had never tried to sell anything before and felt a bit hesitant about offering to sell a ring with so many people watching. What would they think of him? For an hour he roamed through the area but somehow wherever he looked, he found customers leaning over counters. When a group would leave another two or three would take their place. At last he noticed a shop which was relatively less busy and mustering his courage he walked in.

"What can I do for you?" the jeweller asked.

"I am looking for a pair of earrings, " he replied, wiping his brow

The shopkeeper placed several infront of him. He picked up a pair. "How much for this?"

"Sixty-five rupees."

"Oh, I am sorry, I forgot my money at home, but please keep them aside, I will come for them tomorrow."

"That is all right," the shopkeeper said somewhat coldly, while returning the ornaments to their appointed place.

He felt a sense of relief as he walked out of the jeweller's.

It was rather late now and the best thing to do was to go home now and send a servant out tomorrow, to sell the ring. It was also possible that he may not have to do that at all and money may come through some other source. He was tired but he did not feel depressed. In fact, he was in a pleasant mood, which was what induced him to walk back home by a diversion through the courtesans' quarters, just for a look-see

The bazaar was full of life, it being that time of the evening. The women, bejewelled and heavily made up, hung out of their balconies or could be seen through the windows, pacing up and down in their rooms, where song and dance performances for the customers took place behind closed doors. It was quite a scene, with men promenading past the houses, ogling the inmates. Amid the noise and laughter, you could hear stringed instruments being tuned.

He walked past one house after another, quite a few of which he had frequented, but he did not stop. In fact, without realising it, he quickened his steps. When he was at the end of the street, he suddenly thought of his wife and he saw her as he had seen her that morning in her splendid silk sari. He could not help comparing her with the women of the quarter. Most of them were really nothing more than theatrical heroines who looked quite lovely if you were at some distance from them, but ugly when you saw them from up close. His wife, on the other hand, was beautiful at any distance. These women did not have her breeding and manners which only a good upbringing and education could give. Most of them painted their faces and did their hair crudely. While some of them were undoubtedly pretty, by and large their taste in clothes was cheap and loud, bordering on vulgarity. They preferred screaming colours as rustic women do. They tended to load themselves with ornaments but they lacked the beauty which only good taste and simplicity can give a woman.

As he walked, he could not stop thinking of his wife and the early days of their marriage. For the first time in his life, he had discovered the joys of physical intimacy. He trembled slightly as he relived those nights when the farthest things from his mind had been sleep. He felt overwhelmed when he thought of the enjoyment he had once experienced. It also occurred to him that all those good times were free of cost. He had not had to pay for them, as here on the street.

He was practically running as he approached the house. Yes, it was true that his wife had not been faithful to him, but what about the women whom he had been visiting all these months? They could be had by anyone who paid their price.

She was all alone, stretched out on the bed, cool and fragrant, half awake, half asleep, and looking very beautiful. She heard footsteps and she knew that someone was walking up the stairs to come to her. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, romance and finance will now go hand in hand Children and grandchildren give ample joy. This is a good time to improve your mind, widen your horizons, travel, take prayers and meditation very seriously July 25-27 is for socialising

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

The spotlight will be on home developments, be they a mere shifting of the furniture, or renovating the entire place, or buying, selling of office or shop or godown or warehouse or just the land You could pick up a bargain now. The hosting or attending of parties foretold

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

You will have a chance to get on top of your rivals in a test or a competition Trips and ties are destined and these will boost your ego Those in research, ads, publicity, governmental work, politics, communication and trade do well July 25 26 are for finance and romance.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

You will hum, strum, say hello feel deeply, react instantly and have your spills and thrills. It would be advisable to be adventurous, take courage in both your hands Thursday and Friday are ideal for it. Many Cancerians will be partying and going full steam ahead in their ventures.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

A very favourable sun placing helps you to steal a march over your rivals You will succeed in making your presence felt and that to you is important At meets and interviews, you will show your true worth. For corporate executives and writers, time to push ahead

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Follow your hunch and heart and delve deeply within for treasures and answers Very possibly, it will be journey time, so get your travel kit ready Many Virgoans will be in touch with foreigners and people from distant places Those in travel, trade and accounts get kudos

Libra
September 23 — October 22

You will start anew and succeed Your love life is bound to improve and so will your bank balance Those in public relations shine and even scintillate because they win awards and rewards for work well done. A family get together is definitely on the cards, says Ganesha

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Your style and class will begin to tell Your work will take top priority. It is certain that you will push ahead with vigour and confidence, thus making excellent headway Learn to keep your plans completely flexible for last minute changes Participate in meets and gatherings.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

People will flash smiles and compliments at you because of your looks and apparel. Accept it gracefully. There will be a certain air of restlessness about you because it is time to move. This could be mental, physical, spiritual, emotional or possibly all of it.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The salient features are joint finances, taxes, investments, buying, selling, shopping, leasing and capital formation, and these should continue for the next 36 days at least Capricornians see better days. A house or office move is probable for Capricornians.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Information dissemination will be accompanied by partnerships and alliances for Aquarians. You will have an emotional response, a warm one, to most situations and persons, and that is slightly unusual for you. An official engagement or change of job foretold.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

While the focus is clearly on job, work and promotion, your personal relationship also comes under a lot of attention. Your imagination and style will help you to sell an idea or product to maximum advantage July 23-27 is the time to push a project through

BIRTHDAYS

July 21: Moon sun sextile indicates your objectives will be achieved. Promotions, partnerships and promises give you happiness.

July 22: Moon trine Venus promises riches, luxuries and some fun good for romance. Those with any creative leanings get ready to shine.

July 23: Lucky cause it will big because the sun, power and [illegible] Pluto, energy and enterprise. You will score in [illegible] because of it.

July 24: Moon square sextile making use of excellent [illegible] to make money and win plaudits. A job hop or a promotion is likely. Loans and funds can be [illegible] away from home is predicted.

July 25: Moon sextile Neptune is excellent for [illegible] bankers, managers, chartered accountants [illegible] competitions you will make it.

July 26: Moon trine sun Saturn sextile there is [illegible] nothing you cannot achieve. It is expansion time [illegible] time, too.

July 27: Mercury sextile Venus signifies you will [illegible] money, please the world and get what you want. [illegible] sales, teaching and publicity are lucrative.

IME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 741	[illegible]	[illegible]
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 143, [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	PF 301	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PF 302	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 722	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D2 131	1600	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	1140	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 14	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1700	[illegible]
DELHI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 622	0925	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 609	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1135	daily
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
			[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DIBRUGARH					
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOA					
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9-416, [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
GUWAHATI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 704	[illegible]	[illegible]
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 612	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 511	1035	[illegible]
M9 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1635	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 704	1805	[illegible]
			D5 [illegible]	2015	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	1700	1
IC 777	1615	3 5 7	IC 778	2115	3 5 7
IC 749	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2120	2 4 6
9F 104	1740	1	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC-213	1140	[illegible]	IC 213	1540	2, 6
JORHAT					
IC 257	1145	1 7	IC 257	1550	1 7
LILABARI					
PF 301, 302	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
MADURAI					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC 543	1625	3 7
IC 544	1115	3 7	D2 171	1155	daily
D2 172	1640	1 2 5	D5 401	1230	[illegible]
[illegible] 174	1700	2 4 6 7	IC 766	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	1730	daily			
MUMBAI					
M9 307	0640	1 2 3 4 5 6	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W 210	0715	daily	D2 101	0950	daily
IC 576	0730	daily	9W 251	[illegible]	daily
D2 102	0920	daily	M9 308	[illegible]	1 2 3 4 [illegible]
M9 307	1200	daily	AI 306	[illegible]	[illegible]
AI 309	1930	5	IC-574	1840	daily
9W 212	2000	daily	9W 211	1925	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	D2 103	1935	daily
D2 104	2005	daily	M9 308	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	2150	2 4 6
PATNA					
D2 406	1330	3, 5	IC 249	1830	2 6
[illegible] 241	1445	2 6	D5 406	1830	[illegible]
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0640	1 3, 5	IC 286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC-249	1445	2 6	IC 249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0700	2 4 6	IC 254	0940	2 4 6
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
M9 323	1220	2 6	M9-323	1555	2, 6
M9 325	1220	1 4	M9 325	1610	1, 4
TEZPUR					
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC-213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
M9 304/111	0850	daily	D5-406	1835	3, 5
D5 406	1330	3 5	M9 112/301	1935	daily
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC-541	1030	1, 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	D5-401	1230	3, 5

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 184	0710	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0520	7	KL 875	0130	
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0820	6	KB 106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	TG 313	1240	1 5 6
			IC 732	1505	2 5
IC-855	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI 306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
[illegible]					
RO 076	2120	5 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7
[illegible]					
IC 225	0700	1	IC-226	0920	1

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG 092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3 6 7
IC 723	1300	1, 3 5, 6	IC-724	1520	1, 3 5 6
BG-094	1905	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	1 2 3, 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7 061	1000	3	Q7-060	1230	2
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	1	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC-747	1035	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1330	1 2 4 6
RA-214	1525	2 6	RA 213	1425	2 6
[illegible]					
BA-142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU 538	2100	1	[illegible]	0730	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1105	3	KB 105	0810	2 6
KB 106	1325	5			
[illegible]					
BI-108	0830	7	BI-107	2000	6
SQ 415	2445	2 5	SQ 416	2240	2 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	1	LZ-503	1950	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1820	7
YANGON					
IC 227	1530	4 7	IC 228	1455	1 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **S2** Sahara India Airlines • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **4S** East West Airlines • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways • **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	19 30	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
3003	20 00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	14-00	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya-Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16-15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16-15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tue Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	13 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12-50	2306
2307	23-30	**Jodhpur Express**	4-40	2308
2019	6 20	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
3073	23-00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11-35	3074
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr Friday	12-25	3046
5049	23-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11-35	5050
5047	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4-30	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9-30	**Udyan Abha Tootan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3032
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun, Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 30	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7-55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchenjunga** (Dumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kaliher Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11 20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5185	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues. Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20-30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	13 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	12 30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	17 25	2859
2021	6 50	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 15	8033
8020	11 20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	10 20	8029
2841	14 05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	17 05	2842
7003	5 10	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun, Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	17 40	7004
6311	22 35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6312
8013	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8111	6 50	**Japat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 25	8112
8005	20 55	**Titagarh Express**	5-50	8006
8015	21-40	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 10	8016
8007	22 15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	8008
8409	19 50	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	[illegible]	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	10 25	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 10	8046
8017	16-45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11 35	8018
1030	15 50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	16-10	
	11-05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Saturday only	10 45	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	[illegible]	
-	14 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Saturday only	[illegible]	6321
	14-05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	[illegible]	6315
6314	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
6520	22-35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	[illegible]	
-	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

BEAUTY IS SKIN-DEEP

Some tips on how to take care of your skin this summer from ***Manisha Gulati***

Everybody is equal, but some parts of every body are more equal than others when it comes to skin stress and the effect of the elements On these you need to lavish more tender loving care than on the others.

These are parts of the body that we never think about — the crook of the arm, the ear, behind the knees — as anything other than parts of the whole. At most these areas are lucky to get a pat of body lotion after a bath. We tend to be obsessive about the skin on our faces and uncaring about the other 90 per cent of the body's surface — polishing our cheeks twice a day, but gazing with relative indifference on the unmoisturised, delictae skin of our shoulders, neck and decollete.

Yet it is precisely these sensitive, and often rather secret places that need extra care Tender places like the nape of the neck are often sensual zones too, and don't deserve to be neglected.

Summer is the time that most people become aware that some body areas are more tender than others. Few people tan evenly, (and who wants that either). Instead, there are danger zones that become more tender, tanned and oily after a day's battering from the ultra-violet rays. The t-zone (forehead, nose and the sides running onto the cheek) is an exquisite area of torture The top of the nose and the shoulders are areas we expect to be burn-prone These are the two parts of the body most exposed to merciless sunlight from above when we are standing upright

Lips, too, are accepted as delicate and entitled to total block and the regular dab of vaseline. And the eyes, the first area to wrinkle, are an obvious zone for tender loving care

Other summer danger zones are the collarbone — it can easily become a brown or red weal across an otherwise fairer or lighter coloured chest. Another forgotten body zone is the scalp. Though somewhat protected by the

hair, it can burn right down the parting, peeling into little sheets All this gives rise to dandruff. Regular oiling and frequent washing with a mild shampoo helps.

Most often it's the folds of the body that are treated most cruelly by the sun. But why should these places be any worse than the rest?

"Areas which burn fastest, apart from those that are exposed at right angles to the sun, are those that have not seen a lot of the sun, day by day, during the year," says Finesse Salon owner, Kavita Khullar. Covered up in winter, they are not protected by the normal thickening of the skin in response to ultraviolet light.

But why is burning more dangerous than gradual tanning? Kavita says, "The more you damage your skin by repeated burning, the harder it is for the skin to repair itself."

A great deal of the pain can be taken out of tanning, burning, and the resultant greasy skin by giving a few extra seconds to tender places. It needn't be a complicated matter because differ-

ent products are available for every separate niche. All you need is a sunblock stick or at least a tube of sun protection cream When it comes to year-round care some beauty companies are learning to focus on the needs of specific parts of the body. There are products for hips and thighs, for hands and for the throat.

But you don't have to invest in a cream for every nook and cranny Take hand lotion — usually richer than body lotion — right up to the elbows and foot lotion up to the knees. And maybe one day someone will invent a little pot of cream for earlobes, or the bits between the toes. Until such delicacies abound, a little tender loving care will abound

Here's a little how-to for your particular type of skin:

Dry Skin: Whatever type of skin you have, there's a natural way to care for it, and to pamper yourself at the same time A dry and sensitive complexion is caused by too much water evaporating form the cells in the skin. The result is a delicate flaky complexion that needs a careful regimen to prevent it form dehydrating further

Dry-skinned people often lack vitamin A and vitamin B Camomile is soothing to dry skin. It works to maintain the oil \ moisture levels, protecting the skin against the harsh effects of cold or dry environments. A relaxing treatment containing sweet almond oil helps reduce red veins and encourages elasticity — vital in the battle against lines and wrinkles.

Oily Skin: Though prone to spots and blackheads, oily skin has great resilience against UV rays and cold weather. Nevertheless certain plant extracts help stop it from clogging with dirt and looking lifeless. The secret is to promote cell renewal for a healthy, glowing skin. Cucumber's refreshing properties have long been employed in beauty treatments because the acid \ alkaline balance so closely resembles that of skin, without oil production.

Fragrant and slightly astringent, lemon balm calms and minimises the pores of oily skin. Finally, Rosemary contains camphor which stimulates cell generation while their gentle antiseptic qualities help to heal and soften.

Normal skin: Normal and combination skins balance qualities of the two extremes of skin type. With the help of the right plant extracts, even the oil prone t-zone should remain clear. Lime blossom is a mild anti-inflammatory which invigorates the skin, beautifully scented orange blossom makes a penetrating moisturiser and in fact enhances the skin's own moisture-retaining capacity.

And to stimulate cell renewal carrots rich in minerals and vitamins A and B can help keep that peaches and cream complexion. The oil in the peach kernel offers a hydrating treatment for body and hands, protecting the skin and maximising it's moisture levels.

So, this summer, at least make sure that those awkward bits of your body look better than they ever did. Once winter comes around, you can always hide behind all those bulky sweaters and shawls, can't you? ■

SKETCHES

POTTED HISTORY

This Week: Private airlines

How it all started: Long before there was an Indian Airlines, there were lots of private airlines who flew Dakotas between Bombay and Delhi. The government, in its wisdom, decided that bigger was better, nationalised all the airlines, merged them and lo and behold! Indian Airlines was born.

Till the 1990s, various abortive stabs were made at starting private airlines. There was Jam Air; there was Continental, and there were lots of airlines that nobody remembers.

Then, in 1991, the government introduced an open-skies policy, encouraged people to import aircraft and allowed them to compete with Indian Airlines.

And did lots of people start airlines?: You bet. Everybody and his dog wanted to start an airline. If you were a big businessman, you always said that you were on the verge of starting your own airline. Two big businessmen did actually start airlines. Vijay Mallya started UB Air which flew the skies till he got bored and wanted to do something else. And S.K. Modi started Modiluft with technical cooperation from Lufthansa.

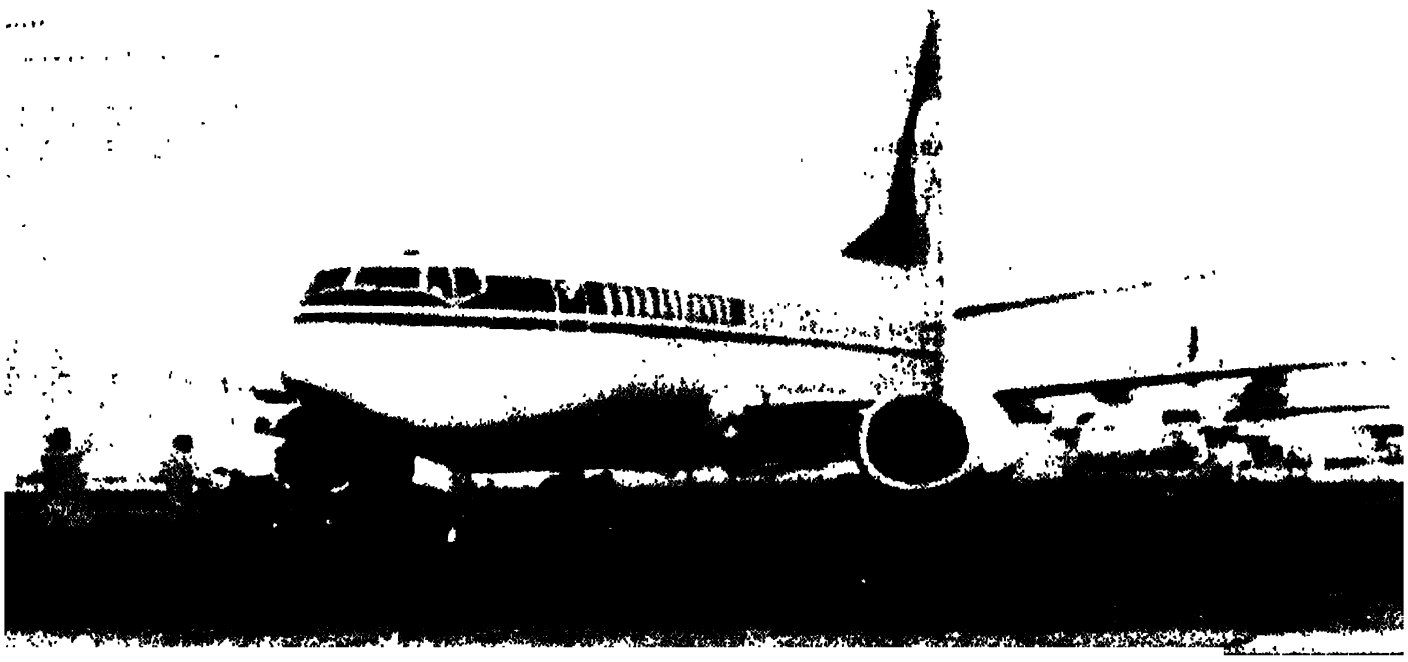
Weren't there any serious players?. Not too many, alas. The logical route for entry into the business was the travel trade. East West, one of India's largest travel agencies, started an airline only to be haunted by allegations that Dawood Ibrahim was the *benami* owner. The directors had just finished denying that they had anything to do with the underworld, when the managing director was shot dead in a gangland hit.

Then, there was Subrata Rai, whose Sahara empire takes in everything from magazines to finance to TV studios to Raj Babbar. His airline crashed, quite literally, at Palam airport, but made a worthy comeback on the basis of advanced 737-400 aircraft and excellent cabin crew who, contrary to rumour, did not greet you by saying, "Good Sahara".

But Rai knew his finance. Unlike poor Parvez Damania, a chicken farmer, who was hopelessly out of his depth and who soon realised that fashion shows, models, and actresses were not enough to keep an airline flying.

But was there a biggie? Only one Naresh Goyal, widely regarded as the shrewdest man in the travel business who is the general sales agent for over 20 foreign airlines. Goyal got equity participation from foreign

Jet Airways: The most successful carrier in the private sector



airlines, hired an expatriate CEO, chose the fuel-efficient 737-400, and built up the largest fleet. As a consequence, his Jet Airways is the most successful of the private airlines.

What about the Khemkas?: Well, they certainly entered the business with a bang. They had a local south Indian operation called NEPC Airlines, but when they put poor Parvez Damania out of his misery by buying his Damania Airlines (now called Skyline NEPC), they hit the big time. They followed this up by launching a hostile takeover of Modiluft despite S K Modi's claims that he owned a majority of the equity.

After that, things have gone downhill The Modiluft takeover hasn't gone through, Skyline NEPC is in a bad way, and there are constant rumours of liquidity problems

Will they all survive?. Oh no, they won't. East West is already in trouble. It owes crores in landing fees to the Airports Authority which grounded it for a few days till it promised to pay up Lufthansa has pulled out of Modiluft, but S K. Modi insists that he is better off without the Germans. Skyline NEPC has its own problems (see above) and Sahara has yet to make its mark. A smaller airline, Archana Airways, suffered when a plane crashed in Kulu recently

Do people prefer them?: Well, they used to. But now, there is a large-scale exodus back to Indian Airlines According to Indian Airlines this is because the national carrier has turned itself around. According to the private airlines, this is because Ghulam Nabi Azad has stopped them from serving alcohol.

Why did Ghulam Nabi do that?: Mainly because of Damania, which kept the whiskey flowing on such medium-haul flights as Bombay-Calcutta, ensuring that passengers learnt that a Boeing wasn't the only way to get high.

Will there be new entrants?: There is a new entrant waiting in the wings. Two years ago, Singapore Airlines tied up with the Tatas to launch what would have been India's biggest private airline. The aircraft would have come from Singapore Airlines and in-flight service and on-time performance would have been on par with south-east Asia's finest airline. When everything was set, Ghulam Nabi Azad announced that Indian airports were very crowded, so there was no room for the Tata Singapore airline. The travel trade saw the hand of Jet Airways' Naresh Goyal in the decision; a charge he strenuously denies But even Ghulam Nabi could not explain why, if airports were so crowded, Naresh Goyal and others were being allowed to expand.

All hopes of a change in this policy were dashed when the new civil aviation minister C.M. Ibrahim, announced that he would not allow private airlines which had a foreign shareholding Obviously, nobody had told him that Jet Airways was owned 40 per cent by two foreign airlines.

And the future?: Bleak. Prepare to travel by Indian Airlines, Alliance Air (an Indian Airlines subsidiary) and Jet Airways. Those will be the biggies in the years ahead. ■

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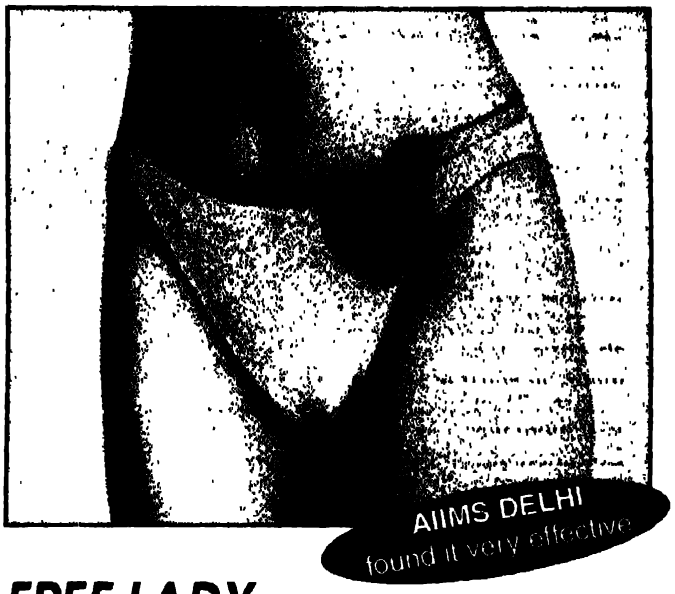

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COMICS

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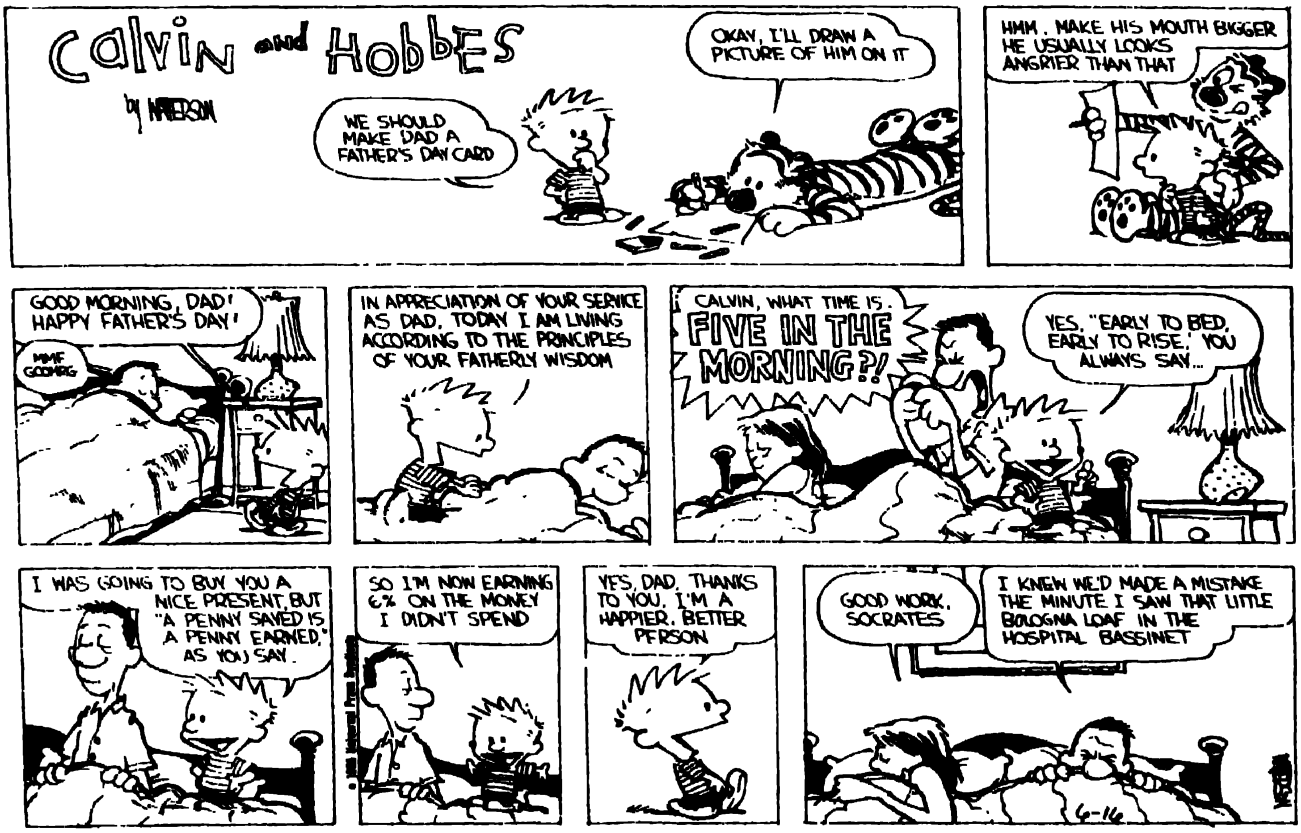
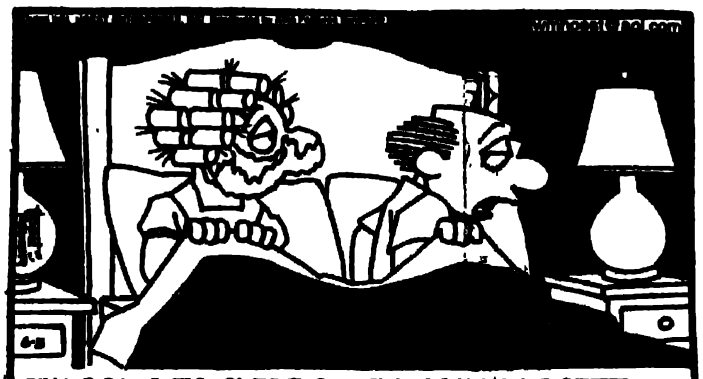
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

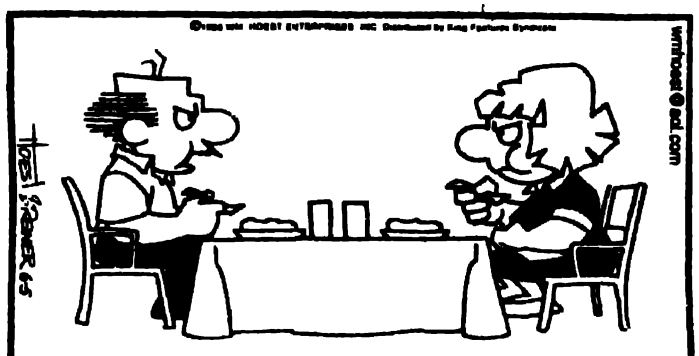


THE LOCKHORNS



"I'M GOING TO SLEEP ON THE COUCH, LORETTA... IN CASE THERE'S A MUDSLIDE."

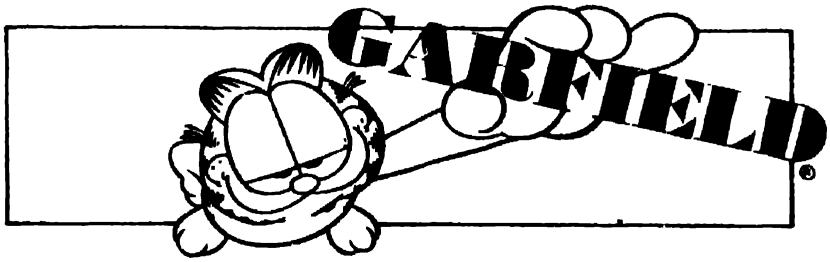
"I TOLD YOU MY FAVORITE UNCLE WOULD LEAVE ME SOMETHING!"

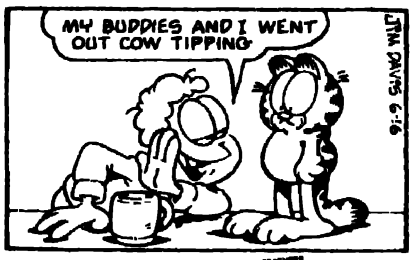


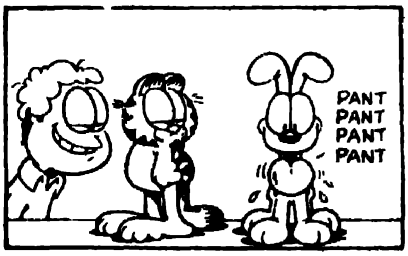
"YOU KNOW, SOMEWHERE IN THE COURSE OF THIS MARRIAGE I THINK YOU GOT FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER MIXED UP."

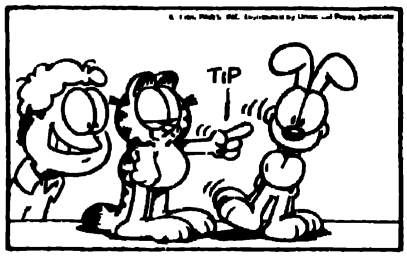
"WHY DON'T I LOOK LIKE HER? BECAUSE YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE HIM."

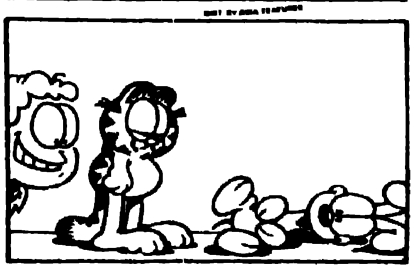
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



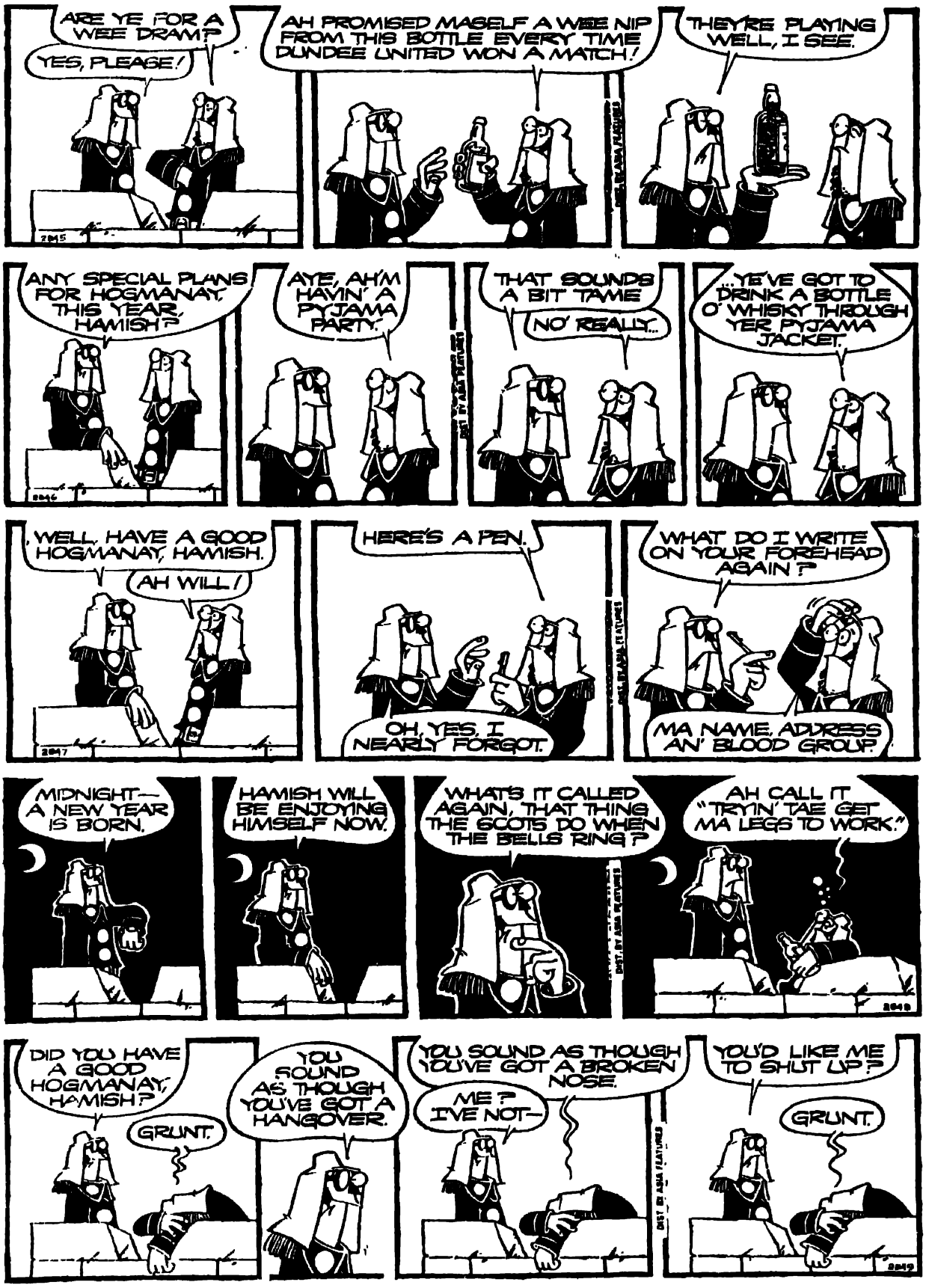


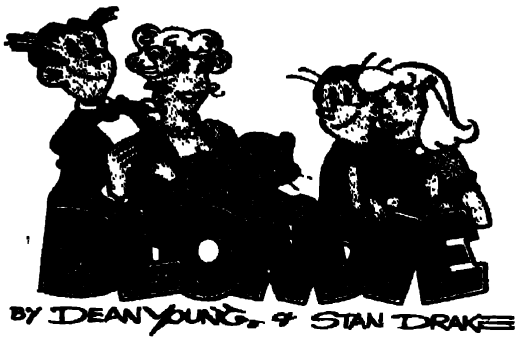


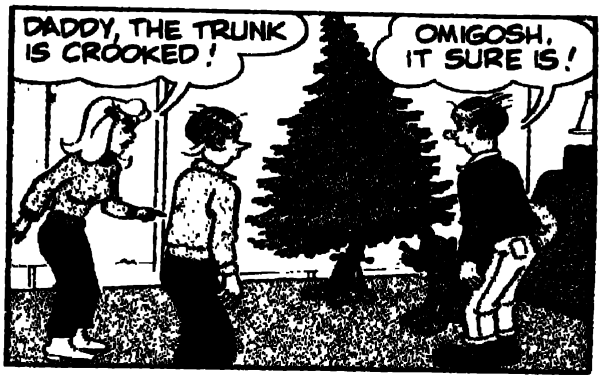


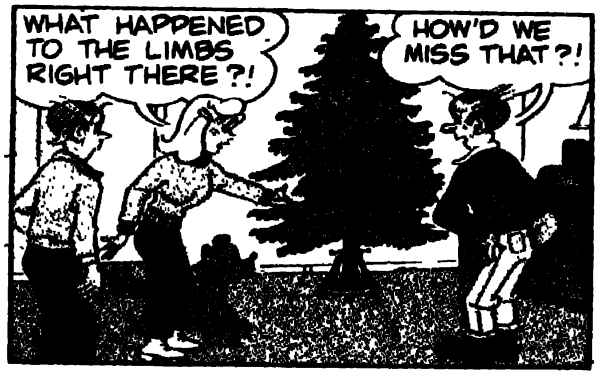


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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FASHION

LABELS FOR MORE

Status symbols abound with international brand names taking over the market, says ***Samita Bhatia***

Whether it's hand made suits from Milan, or feathers and body paint in the Amazon basin, every society clothed or naked has its symbols to define status, dominance and style. Symbols that can be owned at a cost--sometimes even a small fortune.

And today, symbols such as these have infiltrated the Indian markets with a bottomline which is kind of obvious: those with meagre bank balances need not even take a look-see. Obviously top-of-the-line international labels in India have targeted the upper, upper crust of buyer.

So, you no longer find yourself deciding on which music system to buy, but instead face a dilemma as to which model of cellular phone suits you best. What will it be? Nokia, Ericsson, Motorola, Siemens or Sony?

Your search for a television set will take you through a range of Panasonic Top Domes to 44 inches, and Akai and Samsung sets that are legally available, above board, with prices that are comparable with other Indian televisions. Home theatre systems too are becoming something of a craze in the entertainment market.

Today you can zip around in a Rs 20 lakh plus luxury Mercedes Benz. And the multiplicity of options for the wheels you can drive is sure to delight those who love to change their cars like they do their shirts. The Opel Astra (Rs 6.3 lakh), Rover Montego (Rs 10 lakh), and the Honda (Rs 6.5 lakh) are soon to take to the roads--just take your pick--even as marketing strategies project the cars as the ultimate status symbols.

Designer labels in the clothes department for both men and women are already making their presence felt, and other goodies that may have sneaked into the smuggled goods bazaars are freely available.

Starting from leading international signatures tagged onto contemporary, ready-to-wear suits created in the design temples of Italy or France and going on to exotic perfumes with equally evocative names--Joop, Covet Lancome, YSL's Opium, Chanel No 5, Mitsouko Guerlain --are all available off-the-rack. Floor price: around Rs 3,500.

Van Heusen, Arrow and Louis Philippe are here too and so are the footwear giants. On the footwear front if the all-Indian shoe doesn't appeal pick up a Hush Puppy, Reebok or a Nike for a price that some are wont to think is criminal for a shoe. Expect to pay in the region of Rs 2,500-3,000.

Ready-made designerwear has not bypassed the Indian woman. Artfully detailed *couture* --slim jackets, dresses, bright scarves--

Mexx men's leisurewear

The Louis Feraud showroom, New Delhi: No

Mangal Kumar

and vibrant ensembles from Louis Feraud have found ample buyers. This despite the fact that prices vary from Rs 8,000 for jackets and escalate to Rs 40,000 for evening wear.

The Revlon (another cosmetic brand finding its feet here) lady, Mehar Bhasin simply loves to shop here. "I've modelled the Louis Feraud Western collection and that's how I discovered it," she says. "Most people are today aware of what world-class labels are all about. A branded perfume in any market of the world costs a lot of money. Brand-conscious people are very aware of what they pick up and to them price is immaterial." In this receptive scenario, enter the Italian Marzotto Group and America's Target. Marzotto entered the market with a flourish tying-up with KB+T for technical and design know-how for the manufacture of classic Italian men's suits, jackets and trousers in India.

Up front in the textile and apparel sector in the American, European, South American, Australian and South African markets, KB+T was launched in the country after it

KB+T: The label that counts

reportedly conducted surveys that spoke to over 10,000 men in 12 cities across the country to arrive at the right styles best suited to the Indian physique. From wood hues to pale shades in gray, from beige to golden hues, from blue to navy, KB+T rules all the way. And these can be picked up from an affordable Rs 6,000 to as high as Rs 20,000.

Despite the hype, however, some customers have returned from the

dearth of buyers though high on price

KB+T store quite disappointed. Like Raj Naresh Singh who drove all the way from Patiala, Punjab, to pick up his size of suit.

Singh is 6 ft 2 inches plus and wears a size 46. "Friends had been recommending the label for the variety of its sizes, however, I couldn't find one for myself. Why shouldn't I opt for a custom-made suit from Raymonds or Study by Janak then?" he asks.

Another international designer label to hit the market soon is Target that comes to the Indian market with a promise of giving the customer a choice of 13 sizes. Target is poised to bring its premium collection to India, though not its other popular brands (Target has different brand names for different markets) like Stanley Blacker, John Whites or Arnold Palmer which are retailed in the stores of New York, London and Paris

According to Ajit Arora, chairman and CEO, Golden Gate Company, which has tied up with Target, "Though our clothes have been priced looking at the upper end of the market at Rs 9,500-15,000, I feel that the Indian male is ready to pay a premium for quality fabric and the latest international fashion tailored according to his physique."

Says Murli Menon, publishing director with a leading publishing house, "The range of clothes the companies promise will be crafted in wools from Beilla, Italy, while collections from the design centres of Paris, London and Milan will also be available here. If the companies live upto their promise there's no reason for men not to buy ready-to-wear designer suits. The price is steep but then reputed Indian designers like Rohit Bal, Ravi Bajaj or J.J. Valaya also charge more than Rs 8,000 upwards for jackets alone."

And there is more available as far as embellishments for the Indian male go. If it's up-market you are looking for, it's up-market that you are going to get. You can step into the Ravissant showroom in Delhi and pick and choose from a range of Cartier products that have been elegantly displayed.

Cartier's masculine range of watches is easy enough to recognise: in steel, all gold or a blend of steel and gold, the Chronograph range looks —and is —awfully complex as well.

The watches have names to go

KID'S STUFF

Labels are big business even in the children's wear segment of the market

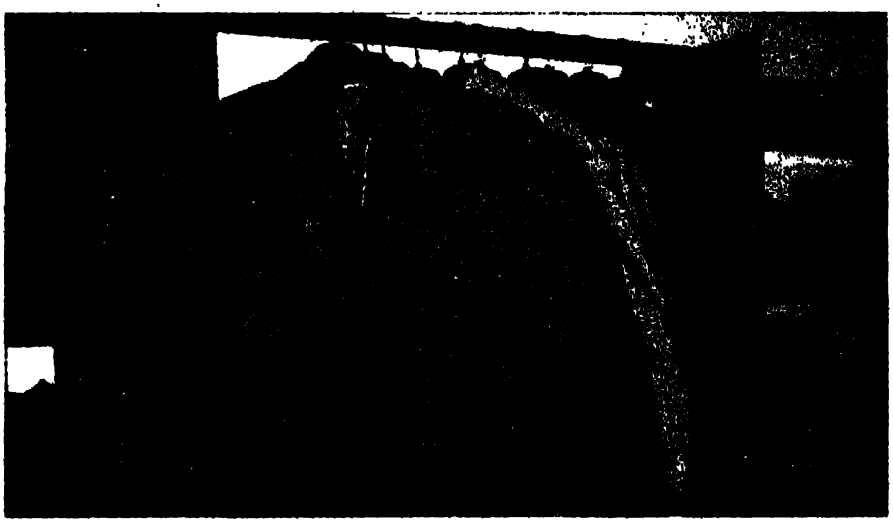
If Benetton's 0-12 range has made a considerable dent in the kidswear market, can other international labels, catering primarily to the young ones, be long in making their debut here?

The latest entrant in the children's wear segment is an old American favourite that brings pure Americana to India. A tongue twister but hip nevertheless—OshKosh B'Gosh—is known to be the largest, oldest and most famous children's clothing company in the world.

Now the stores are on-line in Delhi's alive —but perhaps not very upmarket —bazaars, Lajpat Nagar and Karol Bagh. But come 1998 you may just find a hundred exclusive retail outlets all over the country.

The store offers a different kind of clothes range for children of varying age groups. At OshKosh the emphasis is more on denims and the styles are quite different

Benetton: Making a considerable dent



Panthere bracelets and broach from Cartier

Osh Kosh B'Gosh: Old favourite

from those in other stores. The prices are somewhat steep but other stores too are no less expensive. So, for your four-year-old get prepared to shell out Rs 1,000 for a pair of overalls and Rs 250 for a pair of socks as the company targets retail sales of Rs 14 crore for 1996.

The stores—just like the clothing they display—come in different sizes. Depending on the covered floor area they are dubbed as 'mega,' 'mighty' and 'mini.' Tailored after the American barn-like designs, the garments are trendy with a complete emphasis, says Michael Lewis, MD for the Asia-Pacific, on "quality, quality and quality in that order of priority."

with their male appearance. 'Pasha' at Rs 1.10 lakh, 'Panthere', a range where no two watches are identical, thus justifying the Rs 6 lakh price tag, 'Cougar' and the 'Louis Cartier Tanks' prices for which vary between Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 6.80 lakh.

This is also the place where some—Sonia Gandhi, for instance, who is known for her love for silverware from Ravissant—might order their crockery. That will be Rs 65,000 for the tea set, please.

Says the lady behind a counter at the Ravissant showroom, which also houses the Cartier counter, "Industrialists and businessmen who are our clients (she refuses to divulge any names) don't consider prices but look for the quality of the product they buy. And ever since we advertised for the Cartier range the inquiries have been pouring in."

This regardless for the fact that Cartier scarves will be available for Rs 8,300 and Rs 8,800, Trinity rings

Mangal Kumar

Casual wear for men at Contempo

for Rs 23,000 to 36,000. And it doesn't end there: lighters are tagged at Rs 13,000-20,000 and clocks for Rs 23,000, Rs 35,000, Rs 65,000—and if that wasn't enough—or even as much as Rs 1,23,000.

Pushing hard at the affordability factor, the lady says helpfully. "We have a range of affordable watches as well. The Must 21s are not only swanky but also reasonably priced. Rs 38,000 40,000 and Rs 60,000."

Price needs must be a secondary factor when Cartier's jewellery watch can be ordered by paying a small fortune —Rs 25,43,000. A range of jewellery pens comes with a Rs 8 lakh tag. If it's any consolation the nibs are gold and platinum alloys.

Besides the history that the company claims which comes with each Cartier product, they also carry a two-year guarantee

During this period any defect in the product will mean that it will be exchanged for free —no questions asked

Upmarket international designer labels are here . and to stay And from the looks of it the promise of international standards in quality are winning customers over But the swanky labels better watch out for as the Indian customer becomes increasingly discerning, a slip in standards in quality could mean a swift fall from grace ■

SHANKO CHAUDHARY, *the octogenarian sculptor, has created masterpieces in bronze and marble that adorn many world capitals from Rio De Janerio to Copenhagen to Delhi. Today, in the twilight of his career, he is all set to start afresh with a new medium—stainless steel!*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be engrossed in work, preferably in something worthwhile, not necessarily sculpture.
What is your greatest fear?
To be a cripple.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
In sculpture my teacher Ramkinkar. In life, my mother and my another teacher, Krishna Kriplani.
What do you dislike most in others?
Jealousy and cruelty.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My inability to say no when I should.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a naughty boy

What is your most precious possession?
My ethnological connections, friends and family.
What objects do you always carry?
Nothing in particular.
What makes you most depressed?
Being accused of meanness!
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Slovenliness.
What is your favourite word?
Chor (Thief).
What is your favourite journey?
To the tribal world at home and abroad.
What is your favourite dream?
Childhood days in the tribal areas.
What is your nightmare?
Diving deep into the water and unable to surface.
Who or what is the greatest love of your life?
Probably music.
What is your source of sustenance?
Faith in near ones.
On what occasions do you lie?
If I feel truth would be hard on others, specially those dear to me.
What is your greatest regret?
I could not learn music.
What has been your happiest moment?
When my achievements made my mother and wife happy.

What is your nightmare?

Diving deep into the water and unable to surface

What brings tears to your eyes?
When I see a real act of charity or compassion.
How do you relax?
By listening to music and taking a trip to tribal areas.
What do you envy most in others?
Who have the means and can travel as they like.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a naughty boy.
How would you like to die?
A sudden death- preferably in an accident.

THERE'S NOTHING ARTIFICIAL ABOUT THIS SMILE: IT'S MADE OF 20 NATURAL HERBS

Ayurveda the science of life, has stood the test of time for well over 2,000 years. Ayurveda is a legacy from India's glorious past when the Rishis had mastered the secrets of nature for the benefit of mankind. Vicco Vajradanti Paste is the original Ayurvedic paste. Vicco cares for your mouth — effective, active, totally natural Vicco is for healthy gums & firm teeth. Every tube of Vicco contains 20 pure herbal extracts long established by Ayurvedic herbal traditions to be good for teeth, mouth & gums Ayurvedic practice, centuries old, actively involves, those elements in nature most beneficial to the individuals. Vicco Paste is made from herbs, barks, roots & flowers. . no artificial ingredients, no harsh abrasives or fluorides. Just the best ingredients for disorders of gums & teeth Vicco's concentrated formula lasts longer and tastes great. Vicco is worldwide favourite for decades. Vicco is vegan No Animal ingredients.

Vicco Products: Natural-Naturally better.

VICCO
LABORATORIES

Dadar, Bombay-400 014, India.

ecially your favourite Duke
hirt. So comforting, that it's
rd to give up, even while
ditating. The exquisite fabric
nds with international styling
duke
INDIA'S FAVOURITE T-SHIRT
make it quite irresistable, even to
the most ascetic. Now choose from
a colourful range of plains, stripes,
prints and jacquards. And be on
your way to Nirvana.

The Telegraph magazine
28 JULY 1996

POST MORTEM

Carry On Karan

■ The Magazine has become more readable with your new set of cover stories focussing on personalities from diverse fields of excellence and 'The Greying of Karan Thapar' (June 16) was one such enjoyable story.

Indian television has really come of age: technically and content wise it can match up to the standards of any foreign television coverage. The new television culture has spawned a breed of super journalists of the likes of Nalini Singh, Vinod Dua and Karan Thapar.

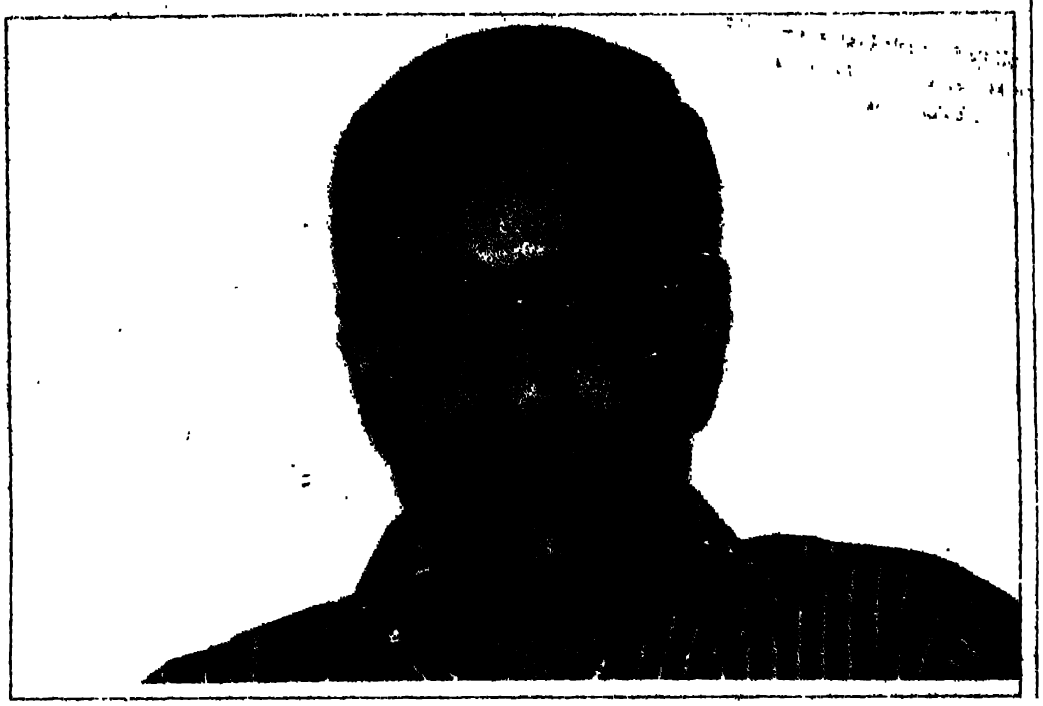
They have established such credibility among viewers that their programmes are lapped up by the very mention of their names.

Thapar, in particular, is the no-nonsense journalist who keeps probing till he gets his answer and he can be quite a terror on screen. No wonder George Fernandes called him 'juvenile delinquent'.
Asit Roy,
Calcutta

■ Karan Thapar undoubtedly brought about a spectacular change in the concept of television journalism with his rapidfire questions and stern approach; often embarrassing ministers and making them sweat.

I remember, Thapar was once interviewing Kiran Bedi after she made available certain extra facilities to Tihar Jail inmates. Bedi tried to defend her actions but Thapar was unrelenting.

The supercop really cut a sorry figure in front of Thapar.
Sunil Banerjee,
Calcutta



Karan Thapar: The stern, aggressive interviewer on television

■ Karan Thapar is the finest thing that could have happened to Indian television. He was the only television journalist who could ruffle even the most sedate guest and make him speak.
Debabrata Mohanty,
Balasore (Orissa)

■ You seem to have overglorified Thapar. In your honest attempt to assess this colourful personality, you have overlooked one very important quality of an interviewer and that is not to interrupt the guest speaker too often.

Viewers are interested in hearing what the celebrities invited on the chat shows have to say but this often becomes impossible as the host himself does all the talking.
Subrata Chakravarty,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Nitin Rai

Raghu Rai

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RAGHU RAI, India's ace photographer, talks about his art and photo-journalism in an interview to the Magazine.

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GOUTAM GHOSE traces the Silk Route in his forthcoming film, *Beyond the Himalaya*.

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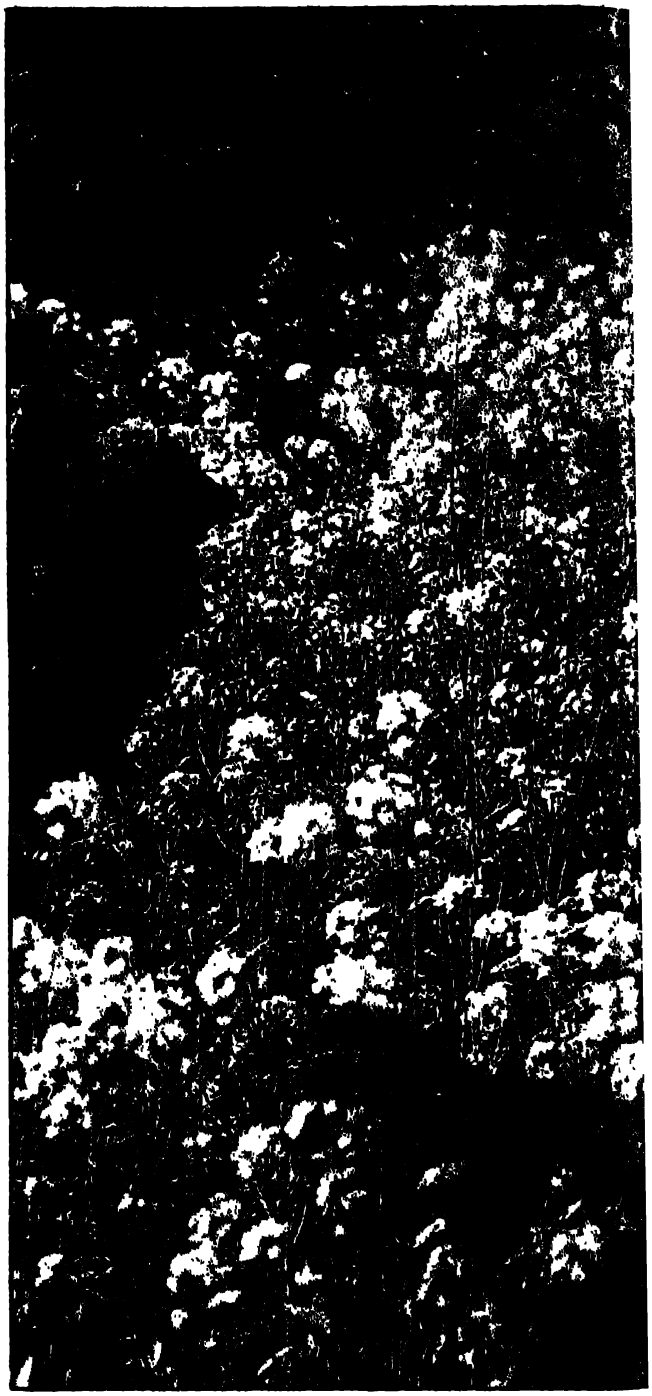
Cover Nitin Rai

COVER STORY

IN FOCUS

Raghu Rai is India's best-known photographer. ***Samita Bhatia*** *profiles the man behind the lens*



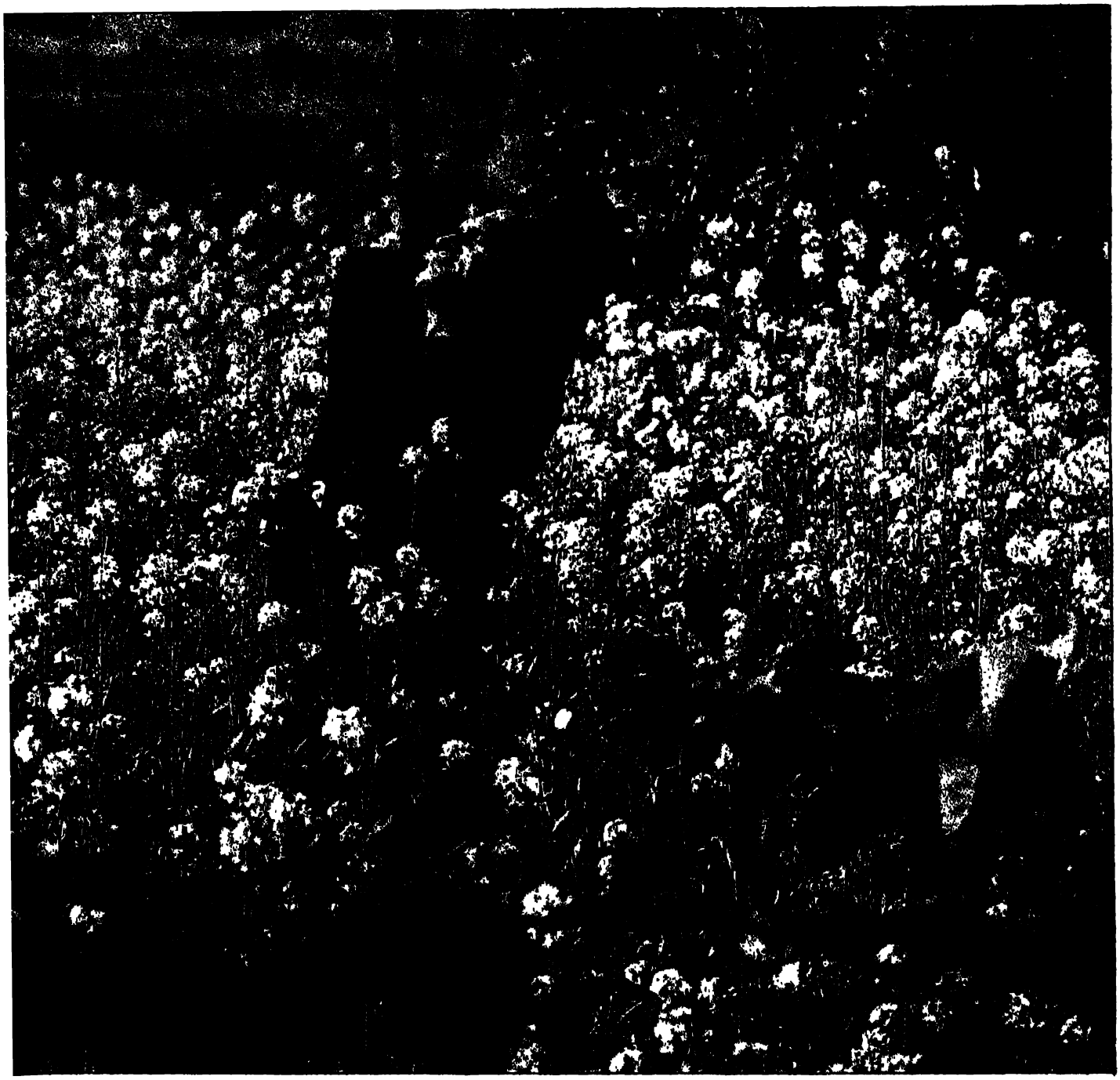
Raghu Rai's house is an extension of his art. Set cheek-by-jowl with a bustling Delhi market, it still manages to a maintain a peaceful silence. It's green, and how! Even the address is not visible, lost somewhere in the foliage. The languid garden appears to be overgrown at first glance — till you discover the method in it s madness. Manicured it is not, untamed, maybe, but with an obvious attempt at a cultivated wildness. Past the bamboo-shaded gate, meandering through some leafy palms, some terracotta figurines and a wooden pillar, you find the bell.

India's most distinguished photographer obviously loves his spaces. While you'll find a fine collection of antique furniture at the entrance and in the living room, there's nothing cluttered or heavy about the setting. It's just, well, distinctive. You simply can't quell the urge to ask where he picked up the stuff from and he answers, "From all over — Calcutta, Gujarat and Rajasthan. I wouldn't recommend Delhi. It's far too expensive."

Surprising though it may seem, what you wouldn't find embellishing the stark white walls in the Rai home is a single photograph taken by the ace photographer. And if you find on your next visit that the setting has changed completely, don't be too taken aback. "When I get bored with the world and myself I change everything around me," says Rai matter of factly.

A man with simple tastes by his own admission, antique furniture notwithstanding, Rai confesses that "even my camera and lenses are never really sparkling clean; they are like me, rough and tough". So, it's not surprising then that Rai spends the better part of his time landscaping his farmhouse on the outskirts of Delhi all by himself — bulldozers and all — creating levels and structures quite in the ilk of an artist.

But there's another artist concealed somewhere in the privacy of Rai's home. The marble-top table has the tell-tale — and indelible — scribbles of a one-and-a-half-year old. "That's my youngest daughter trying out my waterproof pens," he



explains indulgently.

As you look surprised, he shrugs. "Conventionally to be father of a toddler, while your older children are married and have children of their own, can make some people uneasy," he says. "But it doesn't matter to me, as every child is a new experience and every human being is born with something unique to discover and understand. When my older children were born I was very young and didn't really understand fatherhood, but my little girls (aged one-and-a-half, and four years) are a new experience for me and I find myself growing with them all over again."

Raghu Rai, the celebrity photographer, goes through life with not one chip on his shoulder. "Sometimes people make you conscious of your so-called fame but I still love to sit on a footpath and eat some *papri chaat*, live my life the way I want to. I am a surgeon who cuts Raghu Rai to pieces with ruthlessness and never gives him any concessions," he says.

While he can be blase about his celebrity status today, life wasn't always as easy when Rai positioned himself behind the camera lens in the 60s. His gurus, Kishore Parekh, then with *The Hindustan Times* and older brother S. Paul who was photographer with *The Indian Express*—both 10 years his senior—were struggling to do something 'different'. But as they taught Rai the ropes, little did they realise that their understudy

would be offering them stiff competition within a couple of years.

"When I joined *The Statesman* as the chief photographer," says Rai, "I had just one thought each passing day — my work had to be different and new When you are young and raring to go, you understand little but have a zest that motivates you to implement your grand plans."

Those were the days when eight-column human interest pictures were splashed on the front pages when the political scene got dull. Full page and half page pictures were not a surprising occurrence either.

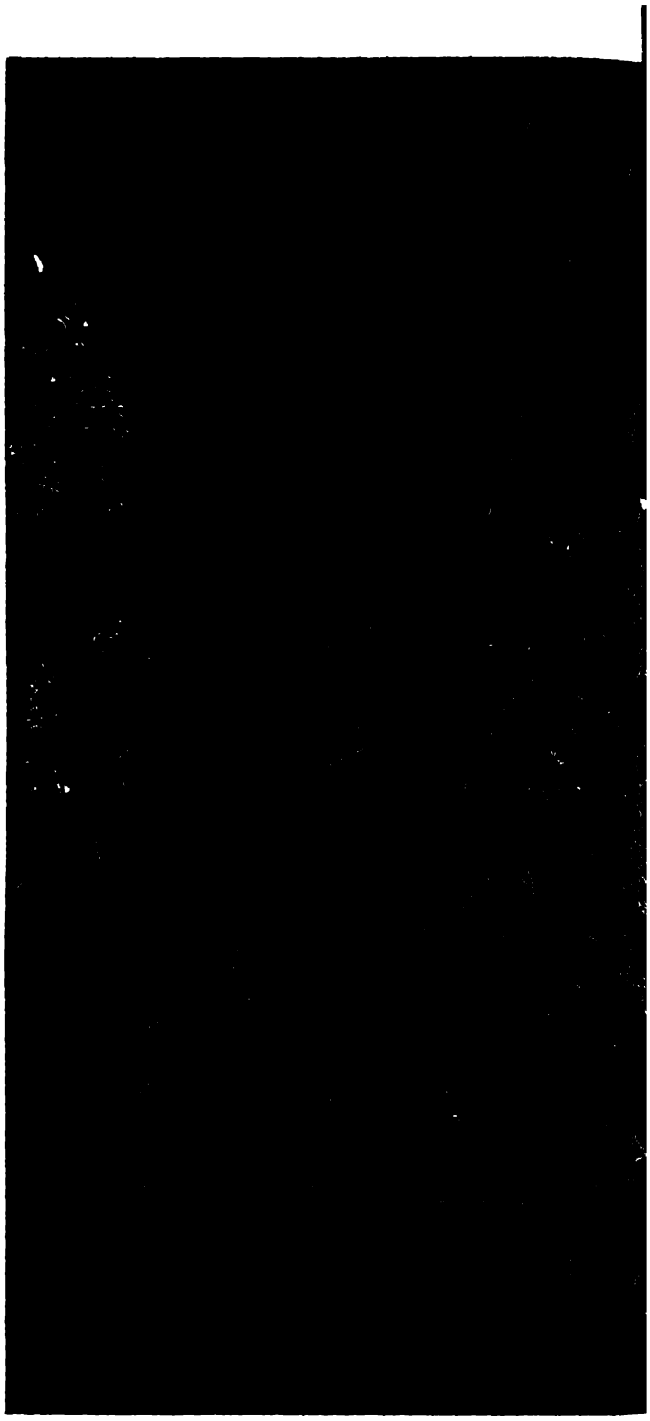
Rai's images — those dating back to the 60s and the more recent ones — have a haunting quality about them that keep them alive even when their memory would have faded. So does he think he has made any difference to the world as it is seen through the eye of a camera lens? He says ambiguously, "I am making a difference to my own life," and adds, "to make the difference you have to use an energy and vitality which will override the drudgery that the medium has fallen into. As a photographer you have to develop a vision which will capture the essence of what you are shooting."

This penetration, he feels, comes with years of experience which lifts the photographs from the realm of a quick picture to something that conveys a thousand words. "Daily news pictures die a daily death, but if you have the ability to go beyond the daily needs by penetrating deeper — that's what makes all the difference," says Rai.

A landscape by Raghu Rai

Maturity and vision may come with age, but according to Rai there are some young photographers who are doing "smart" work. Praveen Jain, Manesh Swaroop and some of the work of his own son, Nitin Rai — who has photographed Raghu for this article — have been "eye-catching". But the final test is for the photographs to live on.

Rai's formula for aspiring photographers is indeed a tall order. He feels that while the subject must be captured with honesty, great precision, sensitivity and discipline, the mind should be



clean and reflective. Creativity which is an instinctive urge, he says, must be kept alive no matter how difficult it may seem, while the distance between the photographer and his subject treated as a tightrope walk. He elaborates, "One step extra or a step too far can shatter the magic of the moment."

A good photographer, in his opinion, is one who has an experience to share with a fresh approach, no matter what his subject. Rai doesn't have favourites; even his son is not spared criticism. "But Nitin's work is bold, direct and strong," he adds, proudly. "I have often been annoyed by stray remarks like 'Take him under your wings'. For had I done so, when would he have had the chance to discover his own wings? I have been very tough and ruthless on him because I know that while we can share and discuss matters, he cannot 'inherit' an art."

Thus, Rai's advice to aspiring photojournalists: your 'guru' dwells inside each person and they had better listen to his dictates.

Rai rues the fact that young photographers in the field today lack dedication and seriousness, "Even though environments and attitudes are changing they are not making a concerted effort to alter their responses, styles of photography, or subject matters," he says. "The repetitive junk that is being produced is fast becoming very boring."

Rai feels that a photographer's job is far more difficult than that of an artist's, musician's or a

One of Raghu Rai's photographs

person associated with any other creative field. A photographer must be alert, sensitive, reflective and responsible at all times without getting distracted or influenced by other people. "Painters or musicians on the other hand have the luxury of meditating and doing *riyaz* for hours together," he smiles.

He elaborates that a painter can choose his colours and compositions but a photographer cannot. "Life has its own spontaneity and that flow must be captured just that way for itself in its most natural way without looking for compositions. That is what makes us different from painters — for we can't affect colours or structure situations."

While Rai obviously had an intense experience with all the newspapers and magazines he worked with, eventually he relinquished himself of the constraints that came with the designation of chief photographer or photo-editior. "With a newspaper or magazine one gets bogged down with a hundred little things that have to be done for the journals," he clarifies. "Your instincts, sensitivities and urges have to be suppressed to meet the demands of the job at hand. To grow, a creative individual has to be free of such restrictions." Besides, the demands of the print media have changed so much today that Rai finds himself inadequately equipped to give them what they are looking for.

Rai is convinced that most editors — despite their claims — are visually illite-

rate and don't have a sensitivity to 'read' pictures. "The other day a Japanese artist came to me and requested to see some of my work," he says. "Though he didn't say a word, just the way he studied the pictures was the appreciation that any photographer could hope for."

And therein lies the difference. Even today, while on the one hand he finds many publishers and editors extravagant in their praise of his work, they are hesitant to be liberal with the space they can give those photographs. He explains, "Nobody will give you the freedom to do as you want on a platter, nobody will give you the space, even if you deserve it. Every moment you have to fight for that space, which is related to the 'space' you have experienced while you were photographing."

The factor that was primarily responsible for Rai pulling out of newspaper and magazine journalism, was the fact that beyond a point his vision and energy were not understood by many people. "It can be a very painful experience if an intense moment captured on film needs to be explained to people," says Raghu. "If a moment captured by you doesn't make the reader drop a heart-beat, your effort can be a complete waste. Sharing such moments in newspapers and magazines are impossible."

He feels that giving the art a new direction is not possible while working for the print media, unless you are a born fighter and can battle for your space. Photography must capture the change, not the predictable and approachable. "Newspaper and magazine photographers are happy with the work they are doing for that gets published everyday Obviously it's mediocrity that sells. The level of expectation in India is very low," says Rai.

Despite years put into the profession, there is not one photograph that Rai would like to single out as his favourite "There is no point in glorifying something," he says. "The last few years I have been choosing my own assignments -- where the human interaction is powerful, intense and fulfilling." A man who prefers not to rest on his laurels, or the brilliance of past assignments, Rai is not one to harbour a nostalgic madness about his work. "I live it, I enjoy it and then it's over. As a matter of fact, if you were to throw away all this (a sweeping gesture encompassing one of his books lying casually on an antique settee) in the dustbin it really wouldn't bother me beyond a point."

Success, according to Rai is essential, the applause is required but an overdose can be dangerous: "If success goes to your head, you run the danger of becoming a performer. Having identified what the people have liked, you tend to fall into a pattern to keep the recognition intact." Which is why today, he muses, we don't have actors and actresses -- we have stars, performers and entertainers. "You have to step back from the dizzying effects of success and delink yourself from it."

Fame to him is important, but having touched exalted levels of sensitivity and understanding, he feels that the person has to stand alone. "I haven't fallen in that 'frame' in which photographers deal with everyday. Mind-blowing appreciation can sometimes make you a prisoner of that frame. Each time you experience exhilaration at the discovery of a new concept, composition or space which is very rare and difficult to capture, you have to make a deliberate effort to break that very frame and liberate yourself from its bondage," he says

A dramatic situation that could shake you in that one moment — a mutilation, a dismembered head that makes it to the front pages. Or calls for a photo feature in a colour weekly — often becomes the subject of a heated debate on the ethics of photography. So, do photographers have the right to cover such events as the brutal assassina-

tion of Rajiv Gandhi, the gory scenes of riots, accidents or murders in as graphic a manner as possible? "Sensitivity lies in photographing that situation in a manner which symbolically, in a sensitive way, tells you everything," says Rai "But in photo-journalsim today an action picture is a really great picture, no matter how gruesome."

Rai questions the very ethics of printing pictures every day of the year. "Publishing the pictures of politicians day after day is gruesome, tiresome and painful for me. Why should the picture of the Prime Minister be published everyday, why not of the millions of people who are the essence of this country?" he asks

Rai was known to often tell his editors that they must actually go out with the reporters and photographers for major events and 'feel' the situations for themselves, rather than just imagine them and thus decide on what must be carried. He feels that we have a set pattern of tackling news reporting, major events and political situations which is neither sensitive, original nor refreshing.

"We are here in big cities, publishing newspapers and magazines that basically serve the big guys. Imagine if we were doing stories from the remote corners and villages of the country you

Raghu Ra

Raghu Rai

would discover that all the politicians would come to these villages to meet you and maybe even be compelled to work with the people there," he says.

Rai's first major book was on India's USP, the Taj Mahal, which has sold tremendously well here and internationally. The Taj Mahal is a constant, but each time he went to photograph it with a particular perception in his mind it had something totally different to offer.

"You must respond swiftly to whatever nature has in store for you," says Raghu. "If you make yourself available to a theme with sensitivity and responsibility then the theme, story or situation whispers to you. And these whispers are eternal and they lead you to the truth For that is what nature had wanted you to do and if you've delivered that."

After the Taj Mahal, many others followed — *India, The Sikhs, Indira Gandhi* (after her assassination), *Tibetan Exile, Khajuraho, Delhi* and *Calcutta* in black and white. Raghu Rai's *Mother Teresa* is on the anvil that is due to be published by Element Books in England and America while another on musicians is coming up

One regret that Rai has is not being able to share his work with the people in his own country — primarily due to the fact that his books cost a small fortune and second because a lot of his work is published in foreign journals. He explains, "It can't be a one-way traffic, that on the one hand you are so intense — you love situations, you love people — and then not being able to share these moments with your own people is a terrible dilemma." On the other hand books that are to make a visual statement have to be well produced which tends to make them very expensive and out of the reach of many, he says.

"If you've written an A-class book and have that printed on ordinary paper, people can still read it, you could sell it for even Rs 30, but not so with a visual book. It might sound arrogant but creativity beyond a point can't always be shared with everybody," says Rai. "Even those who can afford the book may buy it only because it is a very popular book that could grace their centre tables, without being read. So ultimately you actually share your work with a very slim percentage of people."

However his fans can look forward to his next projects which will be in a smaller size — and thus easier on the pocket. Others can expect to see some of his best works at an exhibition that is coming up in November

Not a man given to urges of exhibiting his work, he says he can count the number of his own photo-exhibitions on his fingertips The first and only real exhibition that he admits putting together was way back in 1970. Then in 1982 when Ebrahim Alkazi egged him on with "nobody can afford to buy your books, and you won't share your work with us!" This was followed with a quick show based on 'Delhi'. Come November '96 and the much awaited Raghu Rai Retrospective will open at the National Gallery of Modern Art, as what he describes as "my second 'real' show".

And if, as they say, one picture is equal to a thousand words, then this will be the stuff that epics are made of.

Photographs of Raghu Rai by Nitin Rai

EXTRACT

Behind the FACADE

Extracts from ***Rama Mehta's*** *account of an independent woman's struggle in a traditional world*

Geeta tossed and turned in her bed. A cold sweat erupted all over her body as she thought of the day ahead of her. The noise from the kitchen below her room woke Geeta up well before dawn. It was 21 days after Vijay had been born. Even after two years in the *haveli* she felt nervous when relatives gathered, she was still not comfortable moving around with her face covered.

The women of the *haveli*, rich and poor, young and old, knew exactly what to do, they were never awkward. No matter what they were doing they carried themselves with effortless grace. Geeta got no confidence from her college education. Nor did the admiration and constant reassurance from her husband make her feel more at ease. The remarks the women had made on her first day in the *haveli* came back. "She will never adjust. She is not one of us."

As the clamour of voices and the clanging of utensils grew louder, Geeta decided it was time to get out of bed. Any minute the maids would be there to prepare her for the festivities. She went into the adjoining bathroom to bathe and [illegible] o put on her sari when her mother-in-law came almost noiselessly into the room.

"Binni*ji*, Dhapu will bring your clothes. I have brought the jewellery. See if you like the pearl set, if not, I will take out the enamel one," said the mistress of the *haveli*, sitting down on the floor. She seemed preoccupied as she carefully separated the bangles from the bracelets, the anklets from the armlets, the necklaces and the earrings.

Bhagwat Singh*ji*'s wife was called Kanwarani Sa by the servants. She was a tiny person with small bones delicately fitted which made her look frail and fragile. Her complexion was smooth though sallow from lack of exposure to the sun. Her movements were birdlike but she held herself erect. Her mouth was firm, there was rigidity in her thin lips when pursed together. She walked with indescribable self confidence and exuded strength and dignity as if she were naturally born to command.

"Binni*ji*, she said gently but firmly, "keep your face covered, by now you should be able to move around without uncovering your face." Then, after a brief pause, as if to give emphasis to her words, she said, "Do not talk too much to your young cousins-in-law, it's not becoming. You know, the women are critical because you are still clumsy. I want to show them that even an educated girl can be moulded. That I was not wrong in selecting you as the wife of my only son. Besides, I am getting old now and soon you will have to take over," she said, and carefully fastened the bracelet on Geeta's wrist.

Then as an afterthought she added, "Give Pari*ji* all the money you receive for Vijay; the accountant will note it down so we know what to give on a similar occasion in another *haveli*."

"Yes, Hukkum," said Geeta, using the politest form of address to cover her humiliation. She knew all her fears were justified. No one thought her worthy of the family. Everyone was afraid she would embarrass them by an indiscreet word or a faulty move.

"Binni*ji*," said Bhagwat Singh*ji*'s wife, getting up, "I know you don't eat properly when there is confusion around you. As soon as the women sit down to eat, you come upstairs. I will have your *thali* sent up. Wait till Dhapu comes to put on the rest of

Extracted from *Inside the Haveli* ***by Rama Mehta Published by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd. Price Rs 150***

the jewellery," she said, lightly shutting the door behind her

This was the kind of concern and affection that made Bhagwat Singhji's wife so difficult to fathom Though she was strict she was not uncompromising In many small ways she showed an understanding of Geeta's nature and tried to adjust to her needs But on essentials she did not compromise

From the day Geeta came into her family she had to abide by the form and the etiquette of the *haveli* Her mother-in-law's personality was such that it was difficult to contradict her or even express a different point of view She had her own way of prevailing over others, a blend of craft and tenacity She never lost her temper, she was always seemingly considerate and gentle. She never raised her voice; she was patient and prepared to listen It was due to her tact and her gentle persuasion that Geeta had been gradually drawn into the life of the *haveli* without even wanting to resist it There was something in this way of life that frightened and fascinated her at the same time

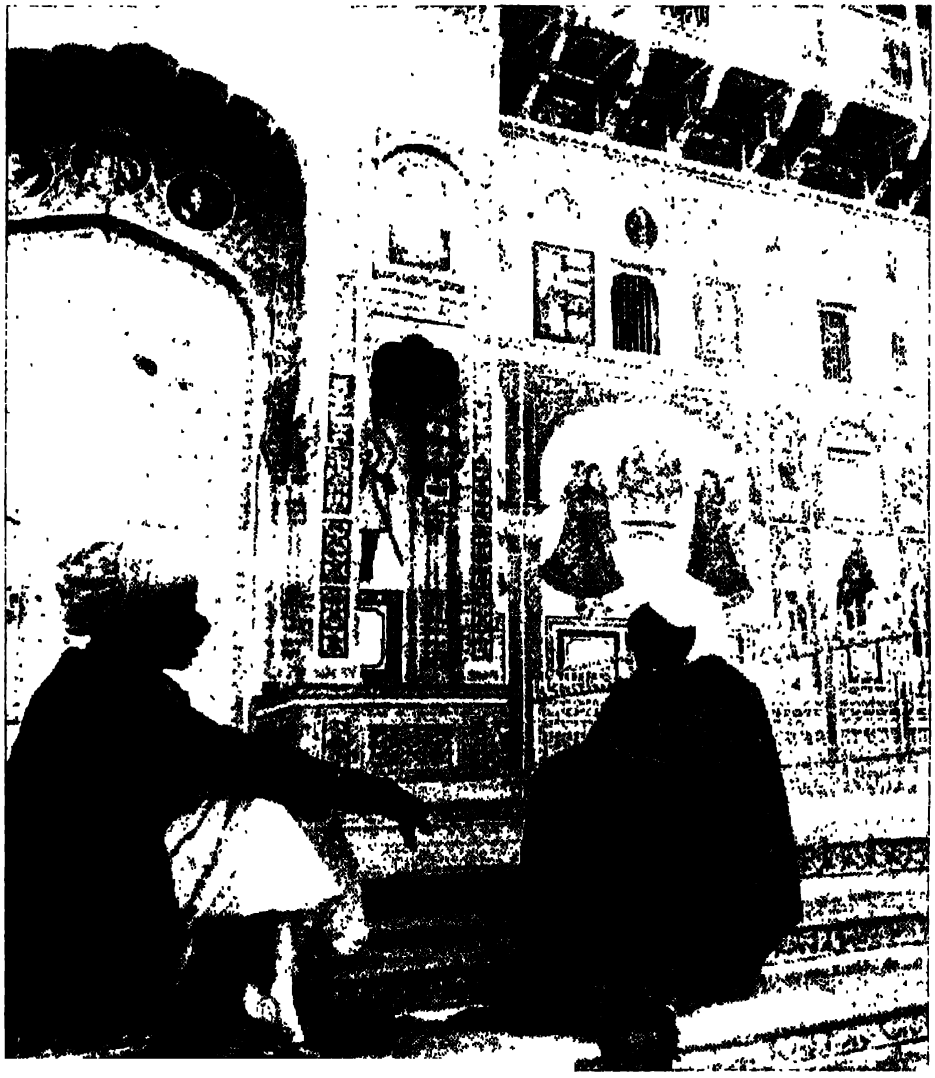
Dhapu came into the room smiling with the bundle of clothes balanced on her head Since Geeta was pensive she said, "Binniji, has something upset you that you sit staring at the floor?" as she put the bundle of clothes down. "Today I have no time to hear your complaints about the *haveli*. I have a thousand things still to do " Dhapu started to unfold the red brocade sari with quick strokes of the hand "Oh, I nearly forgot, Kanwarani Sa told me to warn you not to lift the baby or show any concern for her in front of others, not the way you lifted Vijay Bai Sa and kissed her the other day in the presence of your aunt-in-law"

"Stop lecturing me, I am fed up with all the pretence that goes on here," said Geeta in a high-pitched voice, at last releasing the irritation she felt "I hate all this meaningless fuss! Don't tell me what I should do with my own child!"

Dhapu cringed a little, she wasn't prepared for this outburst "Binniji, don't be angry with me Today is a very special day for us servants. We have waited for it for 27 long years," she said in a voice full of emotion, and silently continued to drape the sari round Geeta's slim waist, then with deft fingers closed the clasps of the bracelets and anklets. It was when Dhapu pulled the sari over her face that Geeta knew she was ready.

As she came out of her room, her head was bent more than usual, as much by the heavy jewellery she wore as with anxiety at the relatives gathered in the courtyard.

When at 19 Geeta had come as a bride to Jeewan Niwas, she was lively and spontaneous She had not been taught to stint in giving affection, nor was she taught to keep her feelings concealed Her parents had encouraged her to speak her mind There was a child-like enthusiasm in everything she did or said She knew marriage meant going into unfamiliar surroundings, but she was not afraid. In her youthful confidence she believed that with love she could win over anyone, anywhere But after two years she was not so sure of herself. In the *haveli* no one really expressed their feelings. They covered their emotions in an elaborate exchange of formal gestures and words. Even her husband talked to his parents as if they were dignitaries with whom he could take no liberties. The form and courtesy which the young maintained before the old lacked spontaneity. In the two years Geeta



had never heard any really unpleasant exchange of words between different members of the family. She was aware that certain relatives were not liked and others were definitely disliked, but each time they came to the *haveli*, her mother-in-law met them as if she was overjoyed to see them. Everyone moved cautiously, every word was weighed before it was spoken. Even with the servants no one lost their tempers; they were reprimanded with polite but cutting words which was almost worse than if they had been openly abused.

In the two years, Geeta had lost much of her exuberance but still she was unable fully to control either her words or her feelings. She was still capable of talking frankly with her younger in-laws. Because of this, her mother-in-law kept reminding her of the importance of reticence.

The courtyard was already full of chattering women in bright red, green and orange saris and a host of unruly children in their tinsel embroidered frocks.

The widows, some of them young girls, were in black, the contrast of their saris with those of the married women like a blot in a spectrum of bright colours. Everyone was talking as if they hadn't seen each other for years. As more guests arrived they joined in, there was no need for introductions: everyone knew each other. The children played hide-and-seek behind their mothers' skirts, shrieking with delight, but nothing disturbed the women; they kept on talking.

Pari steered Geeta through the crowd to her grandmother-in-law Bhabha Sa sat on her bed in the covered verandah of the courtyard. Vijay lay next to her. Her maids, Bhatiani*ji* and Gopi Bai, fanned the flies off the baby's face.

Geeta bent down and touched her grandmother-in-law's feet. "May you have many, many sons, my child, and may you always wear red," said Sangram Singh*ji*'s wife, fondly stroking Geeta's covered head.

In the centre of the courtyard the priests sat under the canopy, chanting prayers. Then, at the exact time set by astrologers, Bhagwat Singh*ji* and his son entered the courtyard. There was an immediate lowering of voices. They walked slowly with great dignity to the canopy as if what they were about to do was of great significance. As the priests lit the pile of sandalwood fire, Pari escorted Geeta to the specially erected platform and seated her next to her husband on one side of the fire. Bhagwat Singh*ji* and his wife sat on the opposite side. The chants grew louder as the priests poured melted butter on the fire, and instructed Bhagwat Singh*ji* and his son to follow suit. The incantations of the Vedas were drowned in the screams of the children who continued to run around the courtyard. But as if noise were a natural accompaniment to prayers, the priests went on undisturbed.

The worship over, Bhagwat Singh*ji* and his son quietly went out of the courtyard. As soon as the men left, the women relaxed; their voices rose again, they started where they had left off. Pari helped Geeta off the stool, adjusted her sari and then pushed her way to the senior-most relative for the ritual of touching the feet. Geeta could hardly see through the gold embroidered sari; the tinsel tickled her nose and she wanted to sneeze. She had never felt so nervous before. She walked cautiously lest she trip over someone's feet in the congested courtyard. As she bent down to touch the feet she vaguely heard, "May you have eight sons; may the gods bless you. May this *haveli* flourish forever." The words barely registered in her mind; all she was aware of was the next pair of feet she must touch without losing her balance. The heavy sari, the full pleated skirt, the gold, all combined to make her feel as if she was a heavy log of wood that had no mobility. When Pari held her back to sit down next to Bhabha's bed again, Geeta could hardly believe that the ordeal was over.

The noise and confusion were getting worse; the air was stifling around Bhabha's bed, as one woman after another came to her offering their congratulations and placing money in the tiny clenched fists of Vijay. The amount they gave was according to the status of each *haveli* and its relation to Sangram Singh*ji*. The family accountant with his steel rimmed glasses sat with his head bent, noting down the name of the *haveli* and the amount, as it was

called out by Pari

It was nearly twelve o'clock by the time the last woman had greeted Bhabha Sa and blessed her little great-grand-daughter The priests had left with gifts of fruits, grain and cloth. The maids had spread thick white strips of cloth along the verandah surrounding the courtyard and on the edge of the cloth they placed large green banana leaves for plates and cups made of dry leaves pinned together with thin twigs Steaming rice, dal, vegetables and different kinds of curries were in buckets, ready to be served The sweets were in large *thalis* The aroma of spices, mixed with incense, made the air heavy

Once everything was ready Bhagwat Singh*ji*'s wife, with great formality, invited the women to sit down to eat, as if they were guests who had come to the house for the first time Tantalised by the smell of food, the children were getting restless. They jostled and scrambled to get what places remained or squeezed themselves next to their mothers or grandmothers The chatter of voices was soon replaced by the smacking of lips. The close relatives served the guests As soon as the serving buckets were empty, full ones were brought

Bhagwat Singhji's wife with her elder relatives went around coaxing the guests, ``Have some more rice," `One more *puree*," At least a *ladoo*' There were protests, but finally they were persuaded to take something more. Having eaten with relish they belched with satisfaction and got up, washed their hands and crossed into the adjoining courtyard where there was room for them to stretch their legs and relax

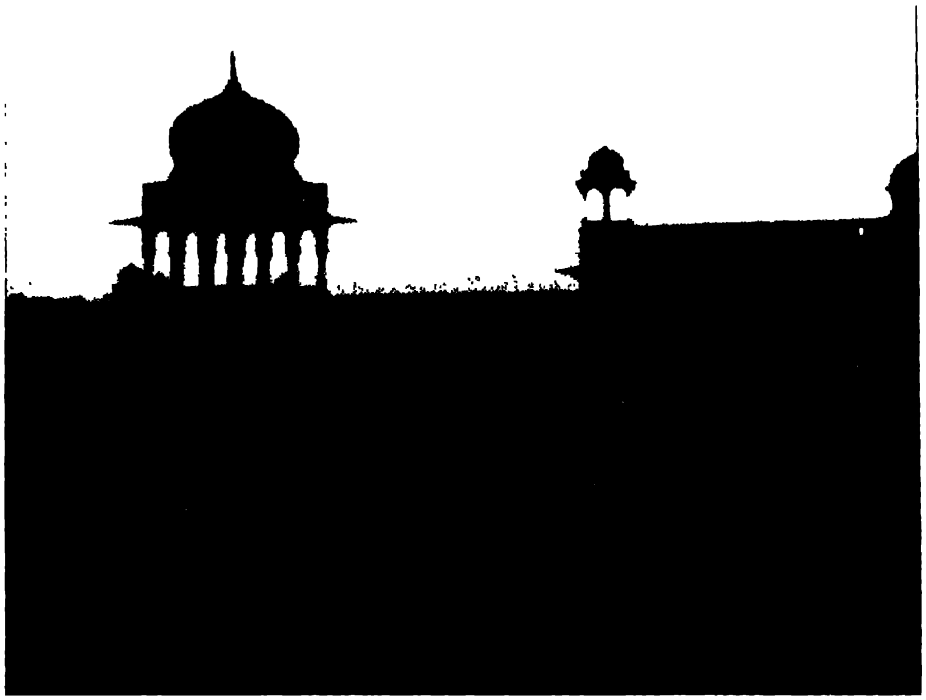
The first group of women having finished, the maids quickly picked up the leaves and cups and threw them outside the courtyard wall The stray dogs and cows were ready to lick them The maids moved rapidly; through years of experience they had become experts at feeding a large number of people without getting flustered The relay of feeding and clearing went on till all the guests had been served Bhagwat Singh*ji*'s wife was on her feet till the last row of women had been served.

In between the eating sessions Geeta was given the sign that she could go up to her room. When after two hours she came down she felt a little more composed There was less noise, the maids were busy cleaning up the puddles of dal and curry, sweeping the grains of rice and savoury crumbs of the floor The ladies were quiet, the heavy spicy food seemed to have dulled their spirits for a while Bhabha Sa seemed happy. The elder women sat around her bed talking She would doze off for a few minutes and again sit up She did not want to miss anything The younger women had formed a group of their own at the other end of the verandah so that they could talk freely. But still their saris fell over their faces lest some elder relative see them Geeta came quietly and sat down among them.

Late in the afternoon the household seemed to be astir again. The professional singing group had arrived and started to serenade the ancient house of Sangram Singh*ji*. The families of these women had served the *haveli* for several generations, singing and dancing on festive occasions As the singing gathered momentum, an elderly lady got up and came to where the young married girls sat huddled together and said, shaking one of them by the shoulders ``You have had enough time to digest your food Get up and dance This is an auspicious day, you have also talked enough "

The girls coyly demurred and dipped their hands deeper into their laps. ``Come on! Don't act as if you have fresh *henna* on your feet , as if you are a bride," said Kanta, the widowed niece of Bhagwat Singh*ji*. ``In my days, I didn't wait to be persuaded; in fact I had to be forcibly taken off the floor. Ask Pari*ji* if you do not believe me."

One of the girls reluctantly got up, pulled her sari well over her face and shyly went to the centre of the courtyard. At first she made graceful gestures with her hands but her body refused to tilt or bend to the beat of the drum. She tried for a while and then fled in embarrassment The singers did not conceal their disappointment.



After nudging and nagging a tall slim girl got up and went hurriedly to the centre At first sight she too faltered and hesitated, but then her limbs became supple. Her body turned and twisted with grace, her skirt swirled and her hands were cupped in the shape of a lotus and the arms turned into floating fishes. The singers raised the pitch of their voice and the drummers quickened the beat. The courtyard echoed with rhythm and song The girl paused for a moment to pull the sari over her face and then she started again.

``She is graceful, she is talented," the women said with admiration as they came up with their rupee notes, carefully taken out from inside the blouse. Solemnly they encircled the girl's head with the money and then threw it into the lap of the singers. Thus the evil spirit was bribed from casting its envious eyes on the youthful dancer. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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AHMEDABAD					
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AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
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BANGALORE					
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BHUBANESWAR					
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DELHI					
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DIBRUGARH					
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DIMAPUR					
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GOA					
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GUWAHATI					
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HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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IMPHAL					
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JORHAT					
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LILABARI					
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LUCKNOW					
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MADRAS					
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MUMBAI					
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NAGPUR					
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PATNA					
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PORT BLAIR					
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TEZPUR					
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VARANASI					
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VISHAKHAPATNAM					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AMSTERDAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
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BUCHAREST					
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CHITTAGONG					
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Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1135	[illegible]	BG [illegible]	1655	[illegible]
DHAKA					
BG 092	0650	1 5	BG 092	0830	1 5
BG-092	1150	1 [illegible]	BG-091	1110	1 2 [illegible] 6 7
IC 723	1300	1 3 5 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5 [illegible]
BG 094	1900	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG 093	1825	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG 094	1910	1	BG-093	1850	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2010	1 5
DOHA					
Q7 061	1900	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2
DUBAI					
BI 10	1100	6	[illegible]	0720	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
IC 747	0835	1 2 3 [illegible]	IC 748	[illegible]	1 2 4 6
RA 214	1125	2 6	RA 213	14[illegible]	2 6
LONDON					
BA-147	2115	[illegible]	BA 11[illegible]	1515	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PARIS					
KP 106	1107	[illegible]	[illegible]	0810	[illegible]
KP 106	13[illegible]				
SINGAPORE					
BI 106	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1[illegible]	[illegible]
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SOFIA					
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TOKYO					
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YANGON					
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AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **S2** Sahara India Airlines • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **4S** East West Airlines • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways • **VF** VIF Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
5047	1	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr [illegible] Mon Wed & Fri	1 30	5043
3009	[illegible]	Doon Express via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express via Main Line	16 15	3008
3049	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	15 30	3050
3019	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	30[illegible]
3021	16 [illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	5 00	3022
5659	17 [illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	6 30	[illegible]
3317	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3029	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	10 [illegible]	[illegible]
3045	18 20	Asansol Express	8 15	3046
3051	21 05	Danapur Express	6 30	[illegible]
3071	22 30	Jamalpur Express	5-10	3072
3015	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	15 40	3016
1159	15 25	Chambal (Gwalior) Express Dep Mon Tue & Thur Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	[illegible]
1171	15 25	Shipra (Indore) Express Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 [illegible]	[illegible]
3327	14 30	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	4 30	[illegible]
1181	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	[illegible]

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19-15	Darjeeling Mail	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	Gour Express	[illegible]	3154
5663	20 00	Katihar Express	11 [illegible]	5664
3151	11 20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	Mughal Sarai Express via SRG Loop	1[illegible] 30	3134
3103	18-25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10 25	3104
5185	12-40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	8033
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	[illegible]	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	2842
[illegible]	[illegible]	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	8008
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[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	2827
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express Dep [illegible] Monday Arr [illegible] Monday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express Dep & Arr [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	1029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via Howrah [illegible] Monday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via Howrah [illegible] Sunday only	[illegible]	2421
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express [illegible] Monday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah Guwahati Express [illegible] Saturday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via [illegible] & Howrah [illegible] Sunday only	[illegible]	6313
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via [illegible] & Vellapuram [illegible] Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Madras [illegible] & Howrah Dep [illegible] & [illegible] Arr [illegible] & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 06	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203486 (manual enquiry).

FASHION

STANDING TALL

Even the vertically challenged woman can do that now with the help of the high heels in the market, says ***Manisha Gulati***

This summer flats have been grounded in favour of the fashionable incline. The newest highest heels are strappy sandals with 4" stilettoes and waisted 7" platforms. This rather uncomfortable footwear is an amazing exercise in self-control and one can only wonder which dare-devil designer thought of the idea first.

Designer Vivienne Westwood had come out with 9" stilts way back in 1991. Her reasoning? High shoes are like pedestals, ennobling the person who wears them, at their best when elevating already tall girls to Olympian heights and short ones to respectable ones.

Of course, these aren't things you wear for a long time. On health and safety grounds, high heels are beyond the pale. They ruin your feet, causing hammertoe, bunions, knobbly heel spurs and worse. They shorten your neck to give you Dowager's hump. They do terrible things to your back, jarring the vertebrae at every step. They make you feel tired faster.

Women who have been wearing them for some years claim, with absolute truthfulness, to find them less comfortable than flat shoes. The reason for this is that the tendons in their calf muscles, adapting to high heels over the years, have shrivelled and grown shorter.

And yet high heels are aesthetically pleasing, they make the average leg look slimmer and longer. Mala wore high heels in her early twenties mainly because she is quite short and wanted extra height. It took her two years to get adjusted to flats once she decided to come down to earth.

If you have been wearing high heels for several years and want to change down to flats, it is important to kick the habit gradually. Says Dr Rashmi Anand, "Reduce the heel height by half an inch at a time and be patient while your body adapts." She then adds, "It's all a question of what is in fashion. When people are influenced by a particular celebrity wearing flats, we get groaning women suffering from painful lower back problems, foot cramps and aching calves, all caused by exchanging their high heels for flats overnight."

Marilyn Monroe. Always on stilettoes

For anyone interested in the health of their vertebral column, the most villainous high heels are the thinnest. Spindly stiletto heels are no good as shock absorbers, they are treacherous for ankles and can easily turn the shortest of strolls into a balancing act.

Clumpy (often mistaken for dumpy) heels distribute the weight more evenly. Ask Shahnaz Husain or her daughter. They have the thickest heels, fashionably called platforms, that elevate them about 8" above sea level -- they do look like they are on a different plane.

That doesn't go down so well with the men though. Akhil, Mala's husband says, "It's not so much the height as the width of the heel that constitutes it as 'high heel' and therefore sexy to me."

How about the time-tested lace-ups with square heels almost three inches high? "They're not high heels in the way even very low stilettoes are."

So there you are platform lovers. Please the men or look after your own.

Spindly heels will limit your freedom dramatically. They stop you walking for more than 100 yards at a time. They are lethal when running (we're not presuming you're trying to catch a bus in a pair), they re agony for pregnant women, carrying babies or shopping (imagine a bag of groceries, toiletries, lamb chops, a designer salwar kameez). So where does that leave us? In 5" heels in discos, for socialite evenings, to make an impact at meetings and presentations.

Choreographer Proddy explains, "High heels are very bad for the posture. Think of the dreadful way they make the shoulders go forward. We teach the girls to walk with their pelvis forward, tucking their bottom under and the shoulders back which can't be done in high heels. We encourage them to wear flat shoes or a heel of about an inch during practice sessions and even for shows. Some even go barefoot."

Going by the current vogue for short skirts and high heels one

wouldn't think models did otherwise He disagreed, "The shorter the skirt, the higher the heel High heels and short skirts look very bad."

Fame shoe shop in Delhi's Lajpat Nagar sells an entirely different concept So many 18 to 20 year olds who come here have never worn heels before They want high 4" heels. They totter a bit at first They're sick of being tomboys These days even silver and gold strappy shoes are very popular They wear sensible walking shoes in the daytime but at night they want heels. Basically because men like women in high heels.

But there is a tendency for tall women to take to flat shoes This is obviously inspired by their wish to minimise any discrepancies in height with male companions On the other hand, a little heel often helps to avoid the little girl look (if you're not a little girl), and also a sometimes childish way of walking Says Arpan Das Gupta, "I always tell my girlfriend that with legs like hers she should only wear black tights and high black court shoes."

Shahnaz Husain: On a different plane with eight-inch platforms

Some men are primarily concerned for the sartorial elegance of their women There is a vast army that believes in the slimming virtues of the court shoe. Anil Sethi of *Times of India* has other reasons for liking high heels. He says, "I like high heels because they mean a girl can't run away from me." Good thinking Anil!

Marilyn Monroe zoomed in on this particular sort of high heel appeal, wobbling around on stilettoes like a 'plate of jello on springs' as Jack Lemmon quipped admiringly in *Some Like It Hot*. But less admiring was the revelation that she used to have a quarter of an inch sawn off one of her high heels to promote a more unsteady lurch and wobble

Germaine Greer: Urging women to walk freely

The latest defence of high heels is that they are a status symbol. Successful women wear them to teeter along the corridors of power. High heels show that you don't use public transport (only a Maruti 1000 or something)

There is a new generation though, which is having its cake and eating it too They wear low or flat shoes all the time, but change to heels in the evening for the top-spin they give to dancing, or for the novelty or fun of being a different height. However, they simply won't be uncomfortable for more than ten minutes at a time and carry a pair of flat slippers in a drawstring bag if there is any doubt at all about having to stray too far from their place of seating.

Feminist Germaine Greer in the final chapter of her book *Female Eunuch* urged women to 'be emancipated from the helplessness and need and walk freely upon the earth that is your birthright. To refuse hobbles and deformity and take possession of your body and glory in its powers, accepting its own laws of loveliness'.

Heady stuff! But are any of those gorgeous ladies listening? ■

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

This Week: Naureen Mohammad Azharuddin

His better half? Well, you could forgive her all too easily if she had turned into his bitter half, given recent events. After all, it can't be very pleasing to have your husband cheat on you as publicly as Azhar has been doing of late with the fading actress, Sangeeta Bijlani.

Especially when you gave up everything at the age of 16 to become his child bride; and presented him with two adorable sons so on after.

So, is Naureen bitter?: If she is, she is doing a darn good job of hiding it. Ensconsed in Azhar's Banjara Hills home in Hyderabad, Naureen has the support of her estranged husband's family, and that seems to have helped her cope with her desertion with a rare dignity and courage.

All reporters who try and get her to slag off the Indian Test captain and his glamorous girlfriend are fobbed off with a quiet "I am waiting for my husband to return home to me."

Any chance of that happening?: No way. Bijli seems to have dug her talons into Azhar well and good, and those who have seen the lovebirds in action in England testify that they appear to be surgically joined at the hip. Sangeeta even travels by the team coach and is a constant presence in the Indian team's dressing room even though this has led to tremendous heartburn in cricketing and media circles.

Will they live happily ever after?: It certainly looks that way. In fact, rumour has it that Azhar and Sangeeta have already had a *nikkah*, and are now man and wife. One particularly scurrilous version goes even further, according to this, Sangeeta was already three months pregnant when the marriage was solemnised, and given her condition, Azhar had little option but to make an honest woman of her.

This seems highly unlikely, given that this supposed *nikaah* was solemnised more than a couple of months ago, and Bijli's waistline is as trim as ever.

What's the truth, then?: The two are certainly planning on a future together. And Azhar is even said to have bought a flat in Bombay, into which he and Sangeeta will move once they are legally man and wife. And this will, in all probability, happen once the couple are back in India, after their vacation in England.

But what happens to Naureen?: There are conflicting reports on this issue. While Azhar insists that he has divorced his first wife, and has even agreed on a settlement (he will, apparently, give her the Banjara Hills bungalow she lives in and Rs 75 lakh), others maintain that he has done nothing of the sort.

According to them, the couple are still legally married, and that Naureen hopes that they will reconcile.

And if that doesn't work out?: Well then, Naureen will at least be well provided for. With a cash reserve of Rs 75 lakh and a bungalow, she will never ever have to work for a living. And the future of her two sons from Azhar will be assured as well, atleast monetarily, how they will fare emotionally, however, remains to be seen.

Current reports indicate that she will continue to live with Azhar's parents, though her own family is said to be very unhappy about this. Her parents, who are livid at the way their daughter has been treated, want her to move back home.

As for Azhar: With the Indian captaincy slipping away from his grasp even as his marriage collapses, all that he really has left is Sangeeta. And we can only hope that she is worth it. ■

Naureen with Azharuddin in happier times

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, hobbies and pastime, writing books, or painting a fine picture or creating music or appreciating these beautiful things will make you happy. It is also a time for bonding and caring. Healers, doctors, pshychics and entertainers will be in their element.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

There will be pulls in practically every possible direction. But as the sun, power, and Saturn consolidation, are in excellent positioning, you may expect progress and headway in your work and the endeavours you make. Parents and in laws play an important part.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Taking a chance will work out very specially if it has to do with group activity. You can discover and correct disadvantages. The right time, too, to act on lofty ideals that can change your circumstances. Communications and contacts lead to success.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Mars helps you to proceed aggressively in the direction you do desire. Do not be limited or intimidated by rules and regulations which will shortly be outdated in any case. Have courage, take the plunge, be it love, social norms or behavioural patterns.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Attention rotates around children, challenges, art, creative pursuits, love and bonding. Your mind also turns to holidays, passion, food and drinks, decoration, expressions of love and hope, trust and loyalty, as to you, that's what life is really all about.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

Once again, expenses mount. Hard work, seems destined so better grid up your loins. Financial and emotional stability will help your self esteem. What was lost may well be recovered. You will have to meet deadlines. Though you are meticulous, take care with dues.

Libra
September 23 - October 22

The week relates to standards, ideas and creative pursuits that could lead to profitable enterprise. Debtor terms, check records, and eliminate unnecessary expenses. Learn to realise what you really desire because you are likely to change your mind and then it could be too late.

Scorpio
October 23 -- November 22

Ganesha says, the home and the outside world finally come together for you. That means a round of hard, sustained work or a home away from home with unusual experiences. You will reach a large audience by playing to the gallery. Be enthusiastic. Your journey time has just begun.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

You have a truly universal perspective and viewpoint and your sympathies are as broad too. You could have a love battle on your hands as the opposite party blows hot and cold. It could be time to move or atleast travel. July 30 to August 2 is action time for you.

Capricorn
December 21 -- January 19

Read and write and do not hide your light under a bushel. A little opposition to plans should not be allowed to downcast your spirits. July 27 to July 29 show the way the tide will turn. Many Capricornians will be ready to veer off course. Health safeguards essential.

Aquarius
January 20 – February 18

Look behind the scenes. Make your intentions clear but don't push too hard. A little care of health will save you a lot of tensions and stress. Do not go by get rich schemes or ideas which have not been thought out clearly. Do check facts and figures. Be a bit cautious.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

The spotlight is clearly on job, power, authority, emotional posers and loans. Use past experiences to your advantage. Be prepared to work under pressures and learn to utilise your time to the hilt. It will literally pay to be efficient and cool under fire and duress.

BIRTHDAYS

July 28: Moon conjunction Jupiter, square Saturn: Ganesha says, despite obstacles and worries, you will march on and conquer in the sense of achieving objectives.

July 29: Moon conjunction Neptune spells fine time for writers, teachers, editors and managers. It means your past efforts will be rewarded. Plenty of movement for you.

July 30: Sun-Saturn trine and other factors being favourable in your personal horoscope, spells a great year for both achievement and joy. Love, power and pelf await you.

July 31: Moon trine Venus opposition Mercury: As long as you are in absolute control in your speech and action, all is well. Otherwise, you could land in serious trouble. Love, courtships and luxuries were meant for you.

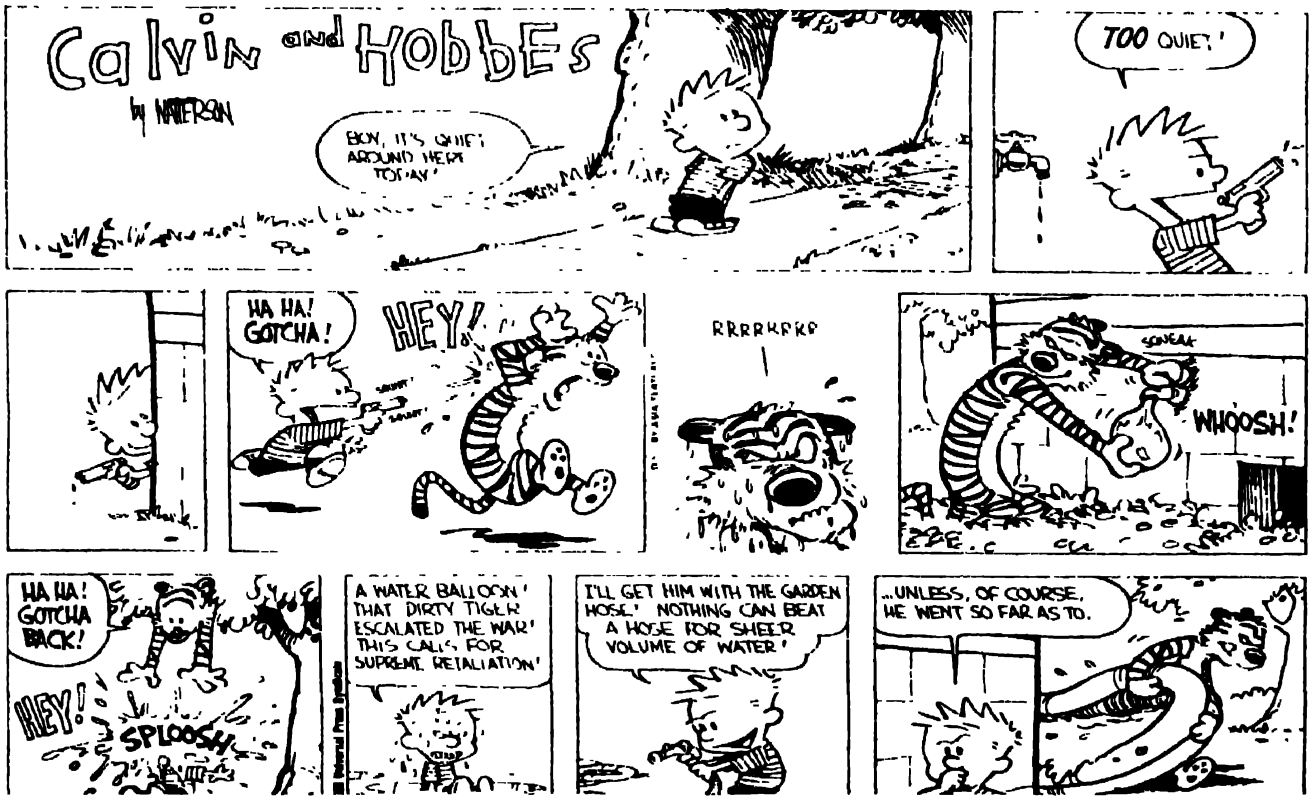
August 1: Moon trine Mars means for editors, computer programmers and those in ad and publicity, a superb placing to show their undoubted talent.

August 2: Moon sextile Neptune, square Venus warns over-indulgence will be your enemy. Yes, you will have brilliant ideas. But please take a trial before executing them.

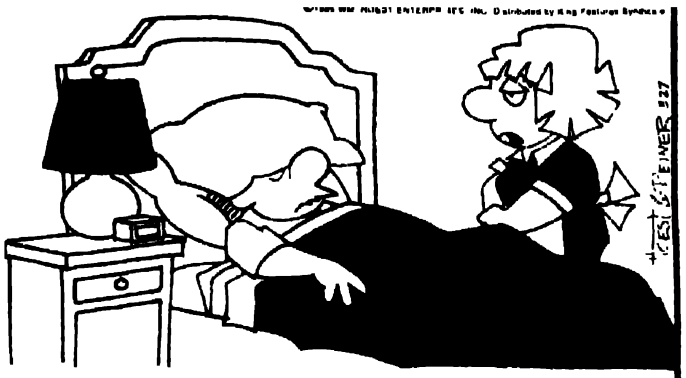
August 3: Moon trine sun, conjunction Saturn: Both the good and the bad are your lot. It is certain that your deeds will be truly glorious. But you will also face flak and opposition.

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

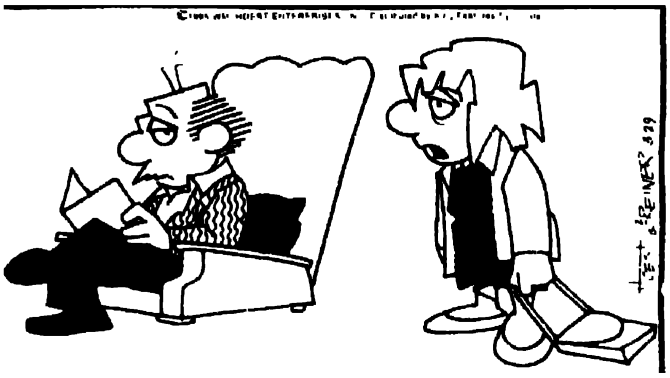


THE LOCKHORNS

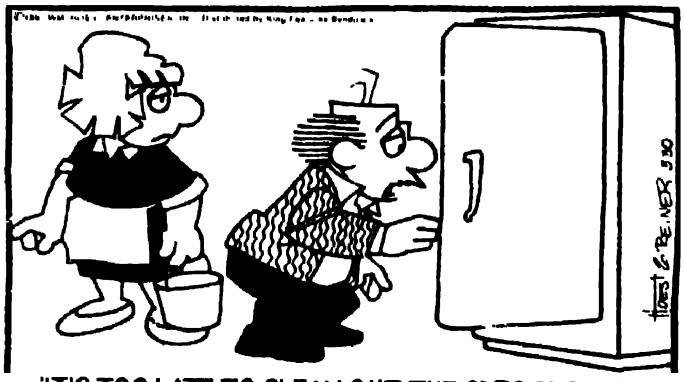


"WELL, TRY RISING NOW AND SHINING LATER."

"IT'S THE BEAUTY PARLOR, LORETTA ... TIME FOR YOUR 20,000-MILE CHECKUP."

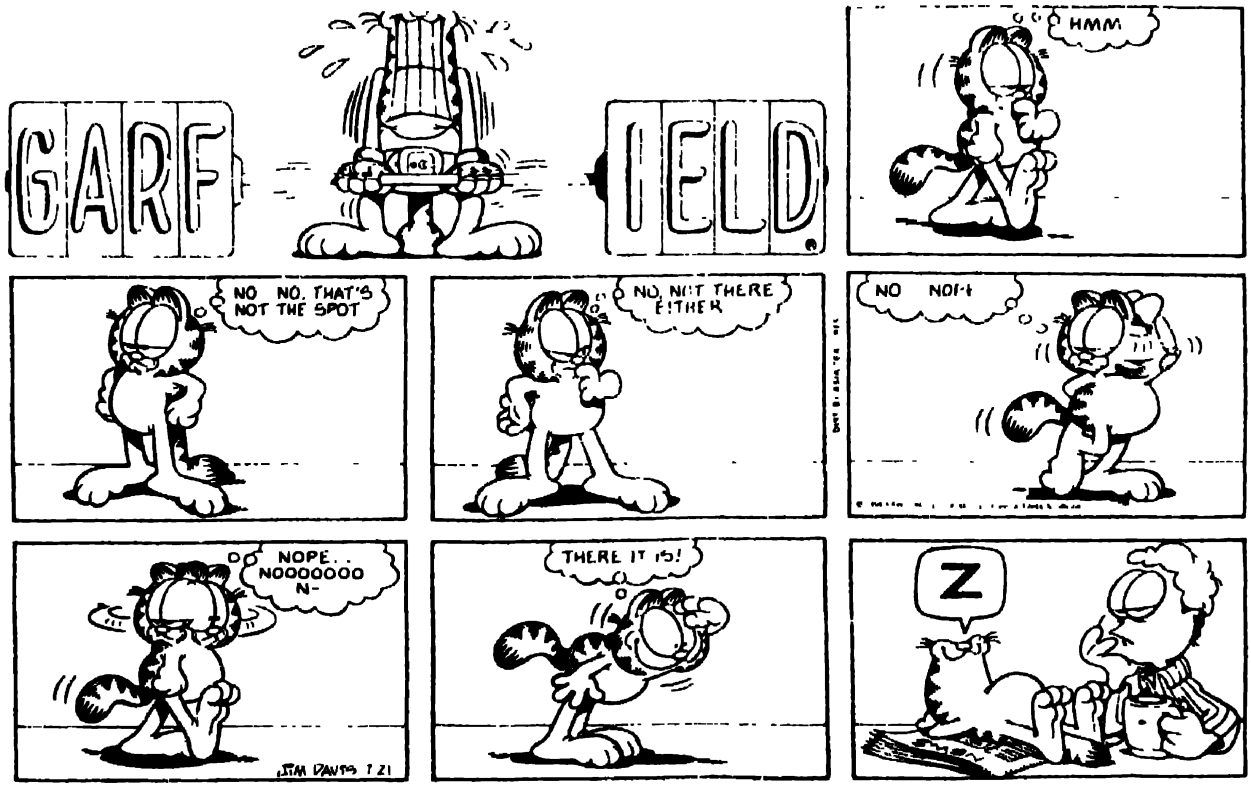


"THEY SHOULD HAVE A CHIROPRACTOR FOR CARS."

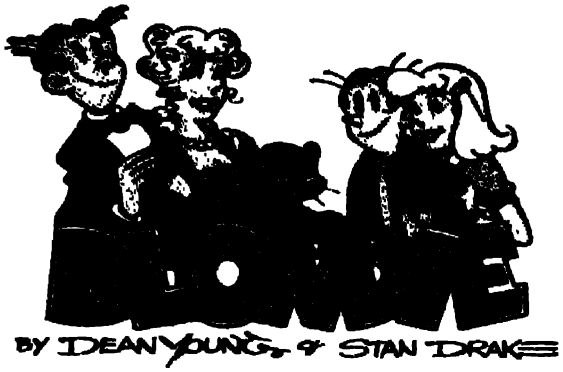


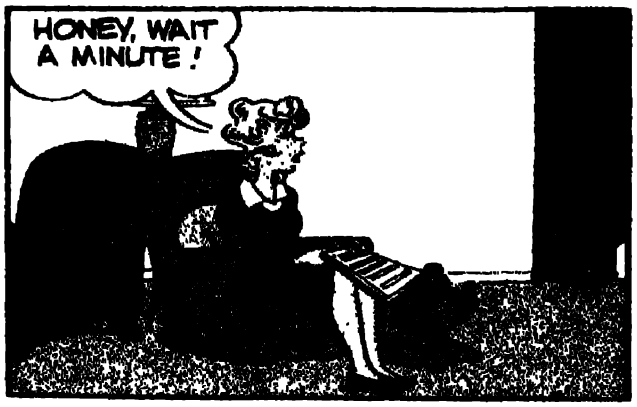
"IT'S TOO LATE TO CLEAN OUT THE REFRIGERATOR, LORETTA ... IT'S DEVELOPING ITS OWN ECOSYSTEM."

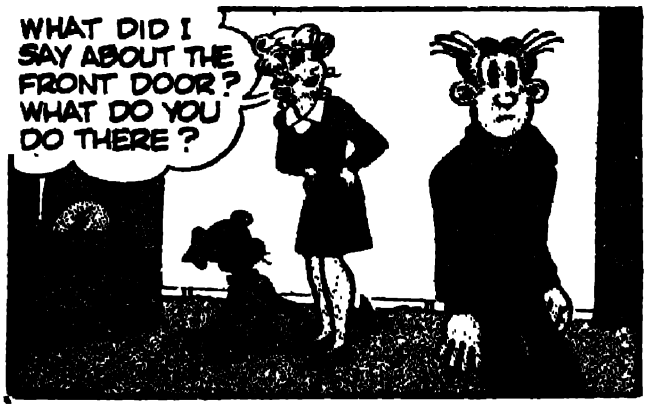
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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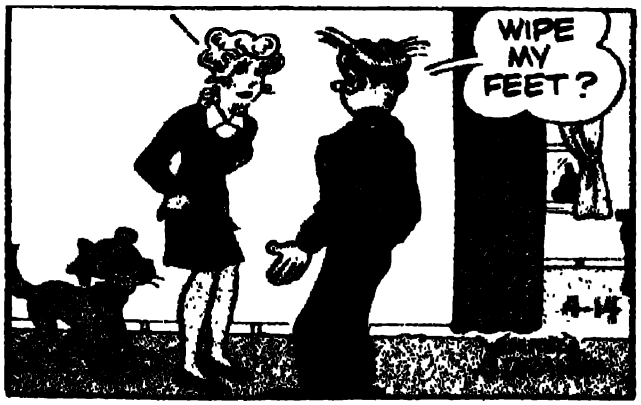


FILMS

NOT QUITE THE SILK ROUTE

***Amita Malik** on Goutam Ghose's new film*

Whenever I think of Goutam Ghose, I think of him with pride and affection. And I remember Oberhausen and Leipzig and the early awards he won at these leading documentary festivals I remember *Maabhoomi* and *Hungry Autumn*. I think of him with affection because Goutam has remained his modest, unaffected, dedicated self And pride, because he has since gone on to major features like *Antarjali Jatra, Paar* and the Indo-Bangladeshi co-production *Padma Nadir Majhi* with such confidence.

Like his documentaries, his features have also dealt with burning social issues and mixed anger and compassion to great dramatic effect I have admired him for not forsaking the documentary medium, as some others have done, and, above all, for not forsaking idealism for commercialism.

So when I learnt of Major H.S Ahluwalia's great *coup* in persuading the Chinese government to give permission to an Indian team to make a five-part documentary film on the ancient Silk Route and that the director would be Goutam Ghose, my joy knew no bounds. And it was moving to find that Hari Ahluwalia, who had got a bullet in the back on the last day of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and been crippled for life after climbing Mount Everest was to be part of the expedition.

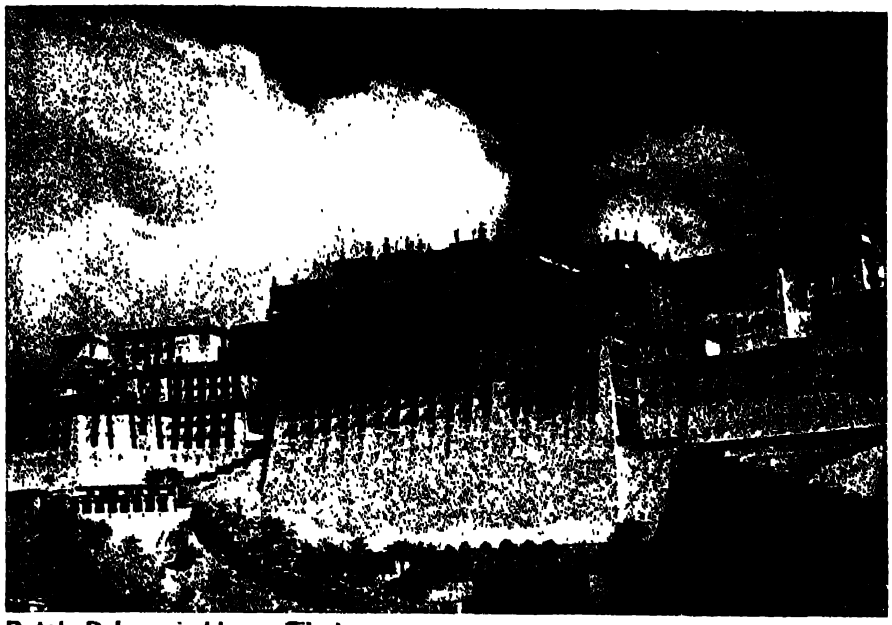
The fact that the president of the Society of the Disabled in China, Mr Deng Pu Feng, was also the son of a top Chinese leader, tipped the balance in India's favour There were to be no restrictions, not even during the halt at Tibet. An exciting prospect and the chance of a lifetime for an Indian film maker to make a film which the rest of the world might well envy.

If, in the event after all I have said about Goutam, I am disappointed with the overall effect of the film, I shall document what I say

The Charminar in Bukhara

For one thing, the film needed formidable advance research by a team of top historians, archaeologists and geographers. when the BBC did a programme on Varanasi as a religious centre, they spent two years of research on it I feel the near total dependence on Michael Haggiag, who also doubled as a narrator resulted in the film getting bogged down in Haggiag's personal preferences. In the episode *In Search of the Buddha*, a long visit to Sarnath was uncomfortably touristy, with the narrator and his wife indulging in some trite observations and througout mispronouncing Buddha as Booda (a common Western mistake which Goutam Ghose should have corrected) and in an even more embarrasing moment, Sujata is first pronounced correctly and then the other party says: "No, it is Soo-jutter." Could this not have been redubbed? Infact, I think the wife of the narrator was a disaster. I suspect Goutam thought the presence of Western people would enhance the international attraction of the film In the event, the main reason for the second episode being something of a bore was its diversion from the Silk Route. I feel much more could have been done in the way of comments by distinguished Indians such as Major Ahluwalia And it seems strange that no attempt was made to introduce the only woman member of the team or let us have her in closeup. Navaz Bathena, is one of India's leading rally drivers and could well have provided some comments on driving in such unfamiliar terrain at such high

Jeeps at Everest base camp



Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet

altitudes. One hopes she was not kept in the background because she was an Indian, because she was a much more interesting personality than the English woman, who was colourless and redundant

In the first episode it is the charm of the people and the fascinating locale which saved the day But, equally, many cultural opportunities were lost. Having visited both Bukhara and Samarkhand more than once, I think one of the highlights of any visit is the feast with the long table under the grapevines with dishes unique to the cuisine of the region Since Ahluwalia was at the head of the table, it certainly deserved as much of closeups and detailed description as the recurring shots of something as unromantic as noodles, once we crossed the Chinese border

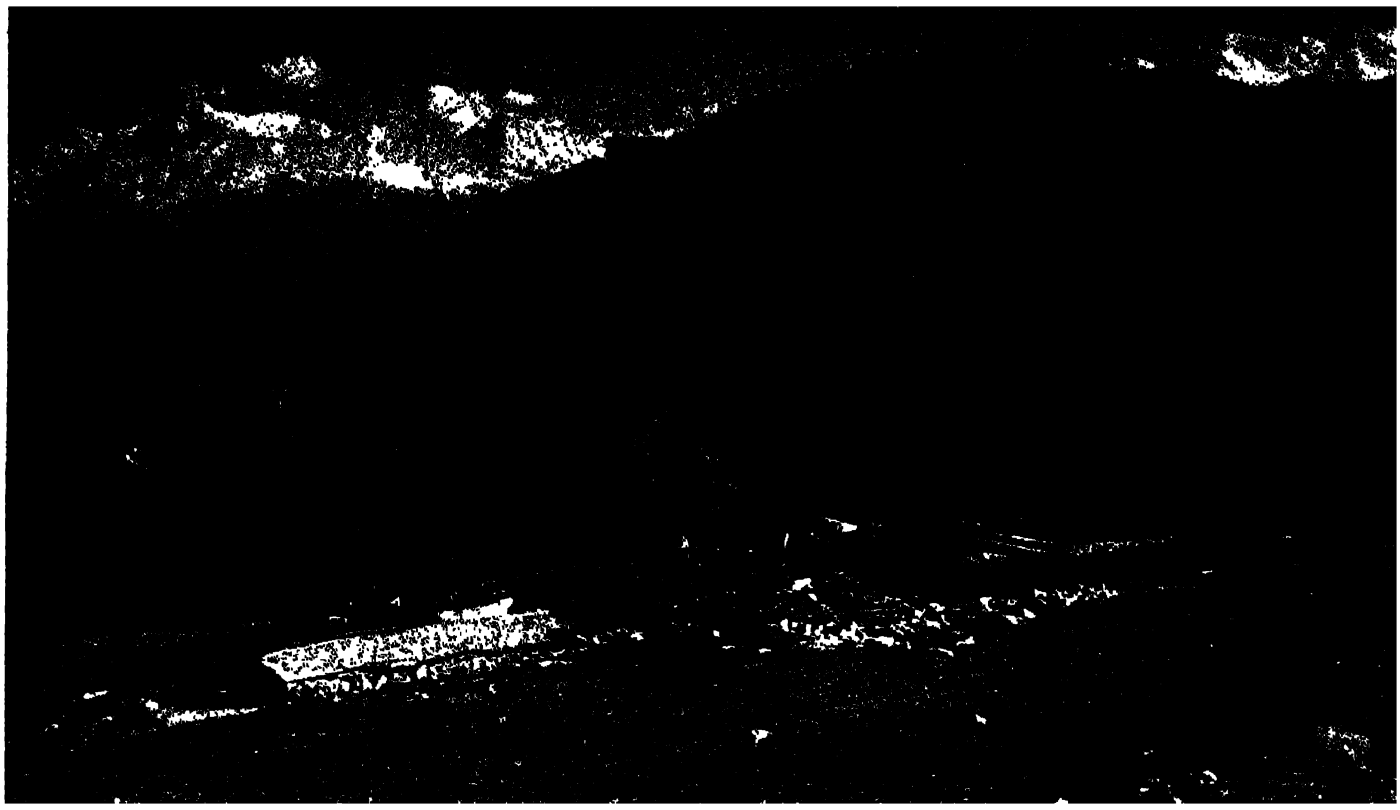
Taking the first episode as a whole, it was a local folk music and dances (the girl dancers mostly having their feet cut off while dancing, as is the Doordarshan custom, but not what we expect from Goutam Ghose) which brought the episode alive This part of the commentary was better written and spoken, although Art Malik is not very good at either Central Asian or Indian names. But the incidental music was confused, ranging from variations on *In a Persian Market* to generalised Western music which did not quite fit into the locale. It was by and large patchy and not supportive of the visuals.

The third sequence, *Tales of the Silk Road*, also seemed to linger too long on Auriel Stein and other Western explorers who admittedly looted some priceless treasures. But it became far too academic and long winded and at the expense of the Silk Route For that matter, one can still get wonderful silks in Bukhara and surely they warranted inclusion in the story? After this came the sequence on Tibet, and this was, in a way, the highlight of the journey because one has not seen much of Tibet's new order, or heard much about the tale of the monastries and the lamas. It was particularly comforting to see that the regime is now much less strict and that some of the destroyed buildings are being renovated and young lamas are being trained in the old manner This sequence held interest in the same way as the first and people did not yawn through it or leave, as they did during the second sequence

And then the road from Lhasa to Everest. Sad that H S. Ahluwalia was affected by the altitude and had to return without the stunning first view of Everest, looming like a Cathedral in a fold of clouds and disappearing within minutes. It seemed a great pity that the co-climber of Everest with Ahluwalia, H.C.S Rawat, and the grandson of one of the first surveyors of Everest, was not permitted to make a single comment although this seemed to be his right. Once again the Indians had been bypassed.

To sum up, I think the coverage was lopsided with moments of intense interest alternating with moments of comparative boredom. Made as it is for TV, the series lacks balance in its episodes. I think giving the major section of the commentary to Michael Haggiag, and more particularly his wife, was a mistake and deprived the Indian members of the team of a chance to make firsthand comments during the expedition.

Beyond the Himalaya is a co-production between Global Arts Production, the Youth Exploring Society of India and Doordarshan. The expedition was organised by YES chairman H.S. Ahluwalia and Academia Sinica of Beijing. ■



A meadow in the Garhwal Himalayas: Captured in *Take a Break* on DD3

GOING AROUND THE GLOBE

Pick your favourite destination from the various travel shows on offer on television, says ***Samita Bhatia***

So you're about to take a holiday? Small problem, you can't decide where to go. Well, just tune into DD3, Star TV, BBC or Zee TV and get a low-down on what may just be the destination of your choice. A case of a veritable everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-choosing-the-right-holiday-but-didn't-know-who-to-ask. But rest assured that these travel shows won't be replete with any such cliches. Your wallet may not approve of a lot of the recommended places, but then you could always play the armchair traveller.

What is it that you're looking for? A much-needed rest far from the pressures of everyday life. Possibly a place that's tranquil and relaxing on the one hand, yet exciting and spectacularly entertaining when you want it to be. The accommodation, depending on your budget, should be from basic to first rate and the dining superb. The service efficient but never intrusive. A price that you must know, even if roughly, in advance, so there aren't any unpleasant financial surprises during your holiday.

BBC's *The Travel Show*: Has class

Looking for a sun drenched-holiday on any one of the world's most scenic beaches, or want to experience the sophistication of Monte Carlo, or even just to kick off your shoes, relax, and have a great time exploring the enchanted islands of the eastern Caribbean then it's *Travel Plus* on Star TV, *Holiday* and *The Travel Show* on BBC that you need to tune onto. Giving you a flavour of places closer home are *Take a Break* with Hugh and Colleen Gantzer on DD3 and *Namaste India* on Zee TV.

Avid travel writers-turned-producers Hugh and Colleen Gantzer return to the small screen after the success of *Looking Beyond*

with Hugh and Colleen Gantzer. And in *Take a Break* they have widened the ambit of the show, by adding a lot of history and increasing the kind of destinations covered.

Namaste India, the travelogue with the difference that was launched on Zee TV a year ago, has run through 52 very informative episodes. The programme came like a breath of fresh air on television when all one associated with travel programmes were documentaries in stilted tones. Suddenly there was a programme that in a word spelt infotainment.

The *Namaste* hosts revel in the wonder of the destinations they sell, enjoy the pleasures of the locale and give you a veritable *masala* mix, a package of sights, sounds and even the smells of the destination. Says Anu Malhotra, producer-director, AIM Television, the creators of *Namaste India*, "The presenters are seen enjoying the place and around their experiences a loose 'story-line' is built up. I wanted to portray India wrapped in it's strengths, in its history, diversity, amazing cultures and traditions as never before, in a format that was completely new--evocative visuals with frame picture post-card perfect."

Like the Gantzers, Malhotra, too, feels that we've had a surfeit of information on overseas travel while little is available on our own country. As the Gantzers ask, "How many of us realise that we are most at home in our own environment, and language? And there is a complete paucity of information on our own country". That needed to be fixed and the Gantzers and Malhotra knew just what was needed to be done in show-casing the country.

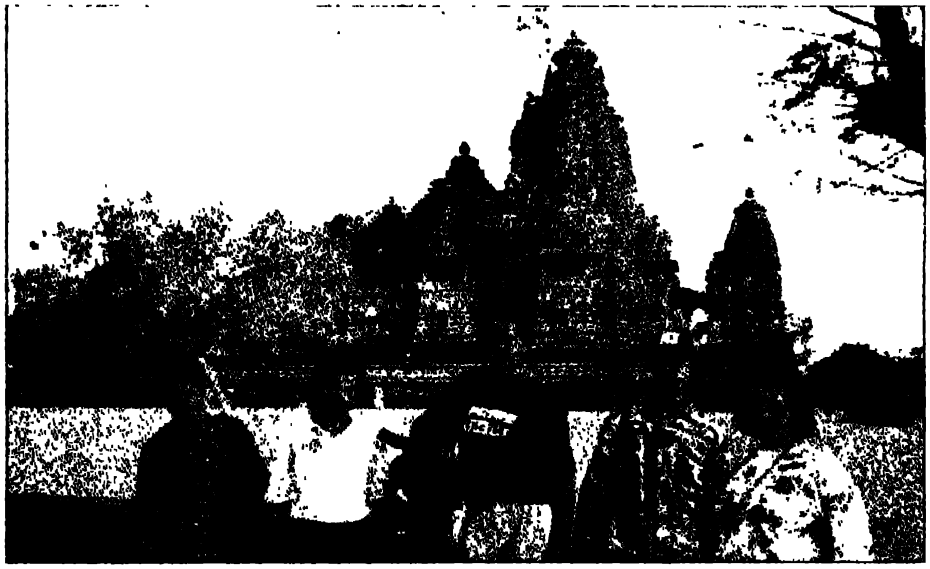
Accolades have poured in for *Namaste India*. The prestigious Onida Pinnacle Award for excellence in the television category for the Best Director, in non-fiction and more recently the Lion's Club, Bombay award for the 'Best Travelogue on Television'.

In all, *Namaste India* has traversed through 80 destinations in the country and recently made forays overseas giving Indians their two favoured destinations—Dubai and Mauritius. Avid viewers have savoured the many-layered history of Jaipur and Benares, the patriotic fervour of Punjab, the ethereal beauty of the Taj, the historical cities of Udaipur and Mysore, the rolling hills and snow capped peaks at Auli and western Sikkim. The list of off-

Shivani Wazir hosting *Namaste India*, a travelogue with a new approach and (below) BBC's *Under the Sun*: Spirits of defiance

beat or lesser-known destinations has included Yuksum and Orchha, wild life sanctuaries at Corbett and Ranthambore and a quick Goa getaway.

Namaste India has not only succeeded in capturing the essence of India but has fired a feeling of patriotism as well. ``I was determined to get Indians to see their country portrayed and painted on the best canvas," says Malhotra. ``So I made sure that there were going to be no snake charmers, elephants, cows, buffaloes and even the done-to-death touristy cliches of the Golden Triangle. It had to be new and it had to be different from the way this country had hitherto been handled by programmes on India on international channels.



Shooting for *Take a Break* with Hugh and Colleen (right) Gantzer

When you look out for the negative points you are bound to find them which is what has been played up at most times. I wanted to project the best the place had to offer in the 20 minutes at my disposal."

The success of *Namaste India* is apparent from the fact that the channel has received letters from as far as England stating that viewers had chosen India as a travel destination only after watching *Namaste India*. Malhotra adds, ``It's gratifying for us when we learn that the Punjabi community in London wept after watching the episode on Punjab or when a delegation from Pakistan confesses to watch *Namaste India* and see India for what it really is after all the negative publicity it normally gets on its National network."

Tourism in Auli, a destination about which practically no information was hitherto available—even AIM had to do some intense research before presenting the destination—got a shot in the arm after the episode was aired. The number of inquiries received by the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) surpassed those received the past five years! ``How many of us know that some of the winter sports facilities available in Auli compare with those in Switzerland?"asks Malhotra.

Obviously, travelogues are more than popular. So will other channels look to such shows to increase viewership? The BBC, which has received several proposals from Indian producers for new programmes, has a travel show included in its scheme of things.

Says Anshuman Mishra, general manager, India, ``People have more disposable income today. Besides, from our research and air travel patterns we find that a lot more people are taking vacations. The domestic travel industry has changed dramatically over the last 10 years and even the hospitality sector is expanding all the time."

Mishra says that their programme will be a mix while primarily targeting the domestic traveller it ``must have a global appeal in keeping with the BBC profile,"he clarifies. Quite *Namaste India*-esque, viewers can finally see destinations with price tags they can identify with on the BBC. ``Off-beat places, touristy destinations and adventure travel will be looked at actively," says Mishra.

Defending programmes like *Holiday* or *The Travel Show* that explore the most exotic places at equally exotic prices, he says, ``Actually the BBC London gets a lot of inquiries from India on the destinations covered on the show. The interest is obviously there. On the other hand there's always the armchair traveller who loves to see what the world looks like even if he can't go there!"

And hopefully this time round, the BBC will redeem itself and not hard-sell India as the enchanted land of elephants and snake charmers. Mishra smiles, ``We will be looking at a reputed Indian producer to do the show. Surely he or she won't slam India. Besides any negativity that may have filtered through in the past has never been intentional."

Though there's the BBC programme hot in the pipeline, Malhotra is not too sure if many other channels will look at travel programmes very seriously. She explains, ``For one, the shows are extremely difficult and expensive to produce. While game shows can pack five episodes a day and soaps shoot for one complete episode in the same time span, one destination on a travel show takes four to five days to shoot. The Sangla Valley, for example, took us eight days to cam. There are huge travel expenses and the innumerable permissions that must be sought can be very daunting. At the end of the day niche programmes like travel shows simply don't get sponsors."

While the viewership and thus the response is ``fabulous"and Zee TV receives 5,000-10,000 letters pertaining to *Namaste India* in a week, while each episode on Zee's *Dak Ghar* invariably has innumerable queries on *Namaste India*, its Television Rating Point (TRP) scores continue to be low. Malhotra explains, ``It's an English programme on a Hindi channel and that's the big problem. "So next time round when *Namaste India* resumes shooting after the monsoons (meanwhile episodes that have already been telecast are being repeated), you may well see its very Hindi avtaar

But no matter what language they are in, travel shows are here to stay. And as India becomes more and more integrated into the global village, and people's disposable incomes go up, the travel bug is bound to bite a larger number of people. And when they begin planning their vacations, guess what they'll do?

Yes, you're right! They will tune into the various travel shows to find out what they have to offer. ■

THERE'S NOTHING ARTIFICIAL ABOUT THIS SMILE: IT'S MADE OF 20 NATURAL HERBS

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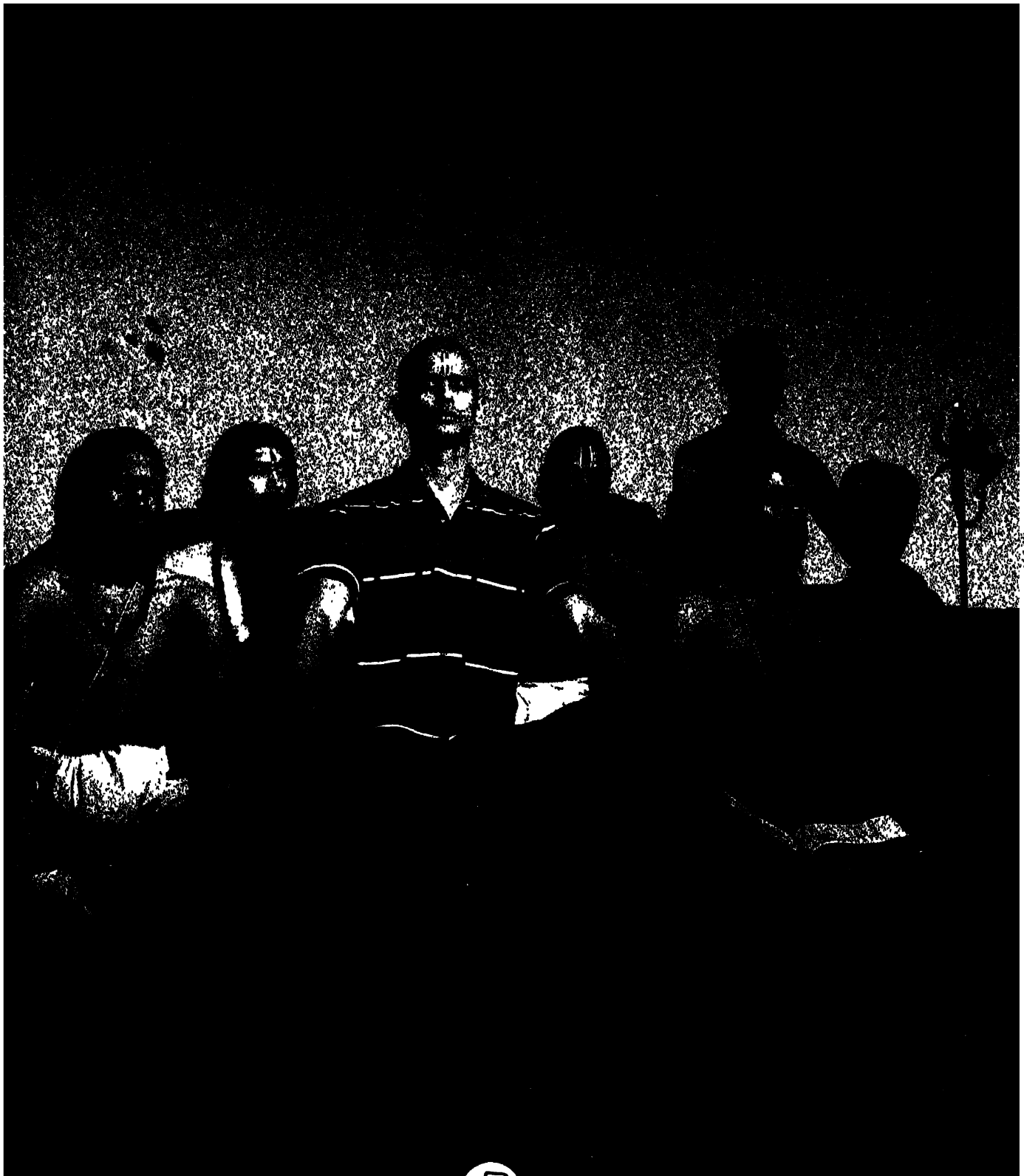

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INDIA'S FAVOURITE T-SHIRT

make it quite irresistable, even to
the most ascetic. Now choose from
a colourful range of plains, stripes,
prints and jacquards. And be on
your way to Nirvana.

The Telegraph

4 AUGUST 1996

POST MORTEM

Her Crowning Glory

■ Fashion and beauty are the two industries which have undergone a metamorphical change in India in recent years; consequently, there is a proliferation of beauty salons and fashion boutiques in the metros catering to the rich and not-so-rich but trendy class of people ('Let Your Hair Down', June 9).

Undoubtedly, hair is a woman's most valuable asset as it frames her visage and the kind of style she sports can either transform her face to a beautiful one or totally mar her appearance. Yet, women, in the past, often neglected this important aspect of grooming.

But thanks to the boom in beauty business and the foray of imported cosmetics, all women have become careful of appearances. Looking beautiful is not only aesthetically pleasing but adds a lot of confidence to the persona.
Sarmistha Sengupta,
Calcutta

■ Beauty care has become almost a craze nowadays with women trying out various lotions and herbal wonders to enhance their beauty. Gone are the days when the grandmother massaged hot oil onto the scalp of the young grand daughter in the hope that she would have long, envious tresses. *Shikakai, ritha, amla* were some of the old favourites for hair care. The only reason why they fell out of use with the modern generation was their time-consuming application process. But thanks to modern cosmetic companies women can have the best of beauty and herbal care packaged scientifically in easy-to-handle bottles and jars. So, women have no reason to complaint about not having time to groom themselves. All they have to do is go to the nearest shop and pick up the beauty aids of their needs.
Gargee Roy,
Calcutta

A hairstyle from Habib's

■ Thank you for the bagful of information on hair care and styling. Habib's was particularly interesting.
M. Khan,
Durgapur

■ The tips offered by the beauticians were most helpful but you listed only those salons which are beyond the reach of the middle-class.

It is just out of the question for a middle-class housewife to get her hair shampooed for Rs 100. She would rather spend that on some essential items that her family may need.
Partha Pratim Modak,
Howrah

■ The kind of beauty parlours that you mentioned were five-star. Obviously, the people who patronise these salons have that kind of a rich lifestyle.

So, doesn't it follow that to look beautiful you must also be rich?
Arundhuti Sen,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Jagdish Yadav

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RITU BERI is now a big name in fashion; the Indian contingent for the Atlanta Olympics will be seen in some of her creations.

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MEET RUPIKA Chawla, one of India's best-known art restorers.

Rupika Chawla

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Cover: Nitin Rai

COVER STORY

BERI BERI GOOD

Ritu Beri is the name to look out for in the field of fashion, says ***Samita Bhatia***

Sunset Chopra

SHE'S SPIRITUAL AND BELIEVES IN GOD, DESTINY AND HER OMNIPRESENT GUARDIAN ANGEL. Some would say that Ritu Beri has arrived, what with a Yuva Ratna award up her sleeve and a controversy of national significance to her name. Remember the brouhaha that resulted when she wanted to hold a fashion show in Delhi's Lodhi Gardens?

But what's far more impressive, is that Ritu Beri is today in international provenance. For when the Indian contingent arrives for the opening ceremony at the Atlanta Olympics they will look chic and elegant, dressed in the colours of the tricolour, in traditional designs crafted by Beri. The men's track suits will have been replaced with elegant off-white blazers teamed with navy trousers while satin saris and embroidered blouses lend the women a touch of sophistication.

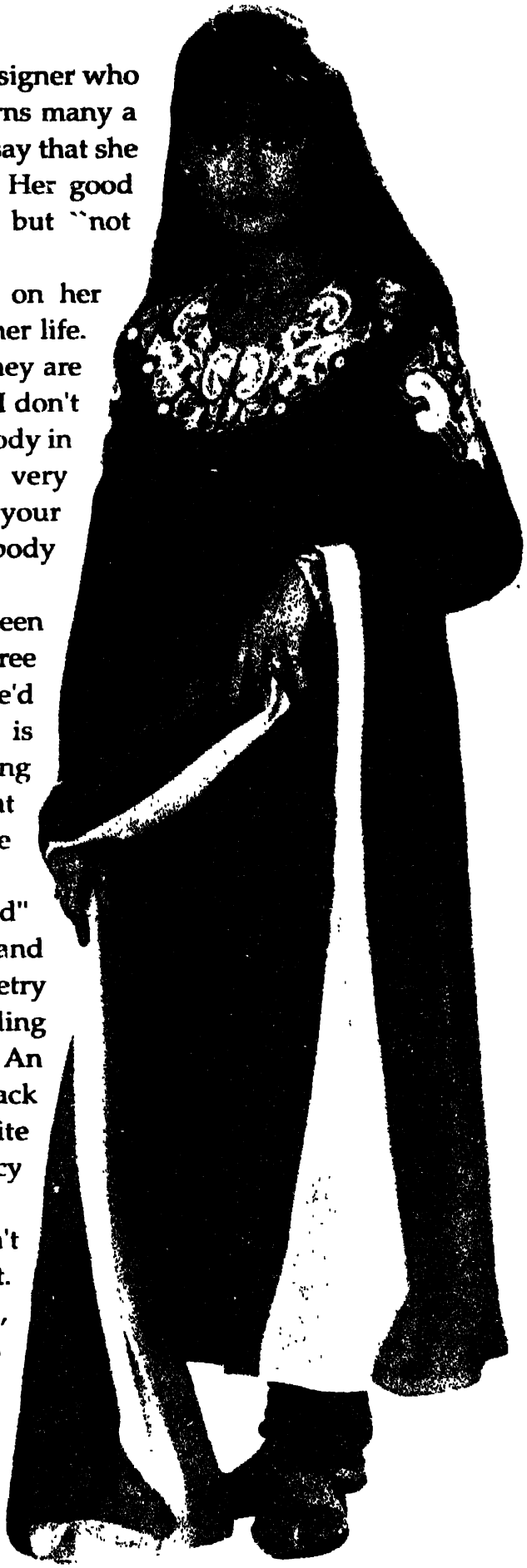
At 28 years of age, Ritu has achieved much. The designer who had dreamt once of growing up to be a doctor, turns many a head wherever she goes. Some even go as far as to say that she could have been a model with as much oomph. Her good looks and semi-celebrity status get her noticed, but ``not hounded" she adds, with a touch of relief.

If a cluster of diamonds and emeralds twinkle on her fingers it's not because there's a special person in her life. She hastens to dispel any such misconception, ``They are just extravagant birthday presents," she clarifies. ``I don't have anybody in my life but I'd love to have somebody in it. But I do believe that relationships can be a very beautiful part of life, it's very important to share your feelings, thoughts, successes, failures with somebody special. Makes life more livable."

The special friends in her life are few and far between she says. A very private person other than her three `best' friends there are few others with whom she'd share her secrets. She loves her own company, is definitely not a party animal and abhors making inane conversation at gatherings, ``And isn't that exactly what one ends up doing at parties?" she asks.

A Taurian, and she confesses, a very ``strong minded" one at that, she enjoys reading fashion magazines and watching movies. Often she buries herself in the poetry of Khalil Gibran. But that's when she's not reading books of her favourite author, John Grisham. An outdoors person, she loves travelling and when back home she's frequently spotted at her favourite restaurants: Ego or La Piazza at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

She may not be particularly social, but that doesn't stop others from seeking her and her designs out. Her Lavanya label has been a sell-out at `Liberty', the up-market department store on London's Regent Street and Rehana's on Green Street. Her couture line has traversed choppy oceans to find clients in New Jersey's `Silk Heritage'. Back home her showrooms in the capital are thronged by



Ritu Beri's design for the Indian contingent at the Atlanta Olympics

Satin sari and embroidered blouse: Crafted by Ritu for the Olympics

college girls on the lookout for 'something trendy' in her shop, while brides-to-be hunt for the right outfit to get married in at her first-floor boutique — the hefty price tags notwithstanding.

Beri has dressed up many a woman in elaborate ethnic and western attire, but you'll find her casually dressed most of the time She explains with a shrug and a winsome smile, "While I do wear a lot of my own clothes, I am so busy designing for others that I tend to neglect myself and end up wearing very simple stuff "

Beri has come a long way — and appears to have taken little time in doing so — considering that she got into fashion designing quite by accident, and "in hindsight, primarily due to a lack of anything better to do" Says Beri, "I got a flavour of colours from my mother who has an amazing sense of dressing and a sense of fastidiousness about clothes from my father." And given the paucity of wearable designer clothes in the market, Ritu began designing outfits for herself which inevitably led to her creating clothes for her friends. And it wasn't long before that she was in business.

However, there is a vast difference between designing on paper and creating a great outfit "After terrible experiences with dealing with cutters and tailors, I decided that I needed formal training," she recalls. So, in 1988, this Delhi University student who had discarded the idea of studying medicine "not wanting to spend a lifetime working with illness" joined the newly-established National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).

NIFT, which was then affiliated to the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) of New York, trained Beri well. The concept of 'fashion', she says, actually arrived in the country with NIFT coming to India. Due to its association with FIT, a lot of the faculty in the first few years hailed from New York. This afforded her vital exposure to the West and gave her a perception that transcended the Indian scenario. "Today NIFT has innumerable branches all over the country and it is trying to reach out to as many people as it possibly can. However, we still need plenty of such other institutes," she says.

Special T-shirts for animal lovers: From Ritu

And the result of her NIFT training was Lavanya, her personalised designer label, with creations that are an extension of her own self. Not surprising for, loosely translated, Lavanya means charm which she has oodles of.

But how does Beri put a collection together?

Says Beri, "I design by impulse, and with the sudden inspiration that makes me scribble designs on paper at all odd hours and in the most unlikely of places. If I were to consciously get down to work at a collection, I could have never been able to bring out the best in myself. An effort at putting it together ends up making the creative process very mechanical and uninspired. I work best when I allow my thought process to run free at all times — right from the time I wake up in the morning, to the time I call it a day. The stimulus is the atmosphere around me. Designing is all about moods, if I'm feeling a particular way then it reflects on my clothes. Otherwise I could just sit and try as hard as I can and get nowhere."

An inspired Beri had returned from France last year, charged with the concept of doing something different. '*France Mesamours*' was the result — her Fall Winter collection'95

"For a designer everything has to be inspired," explains Ritu. "If it's flowers at one stage then there'll be collections that take on the flower motifs in a huge way So you've got to be inspired by a particular look and it's important to find inspiration from a particular motif and adapt it the way you think best. Last year I took my inspiration from French designs."

Ritu: Fond of casual outfits

Sumeet Chopra

The young designer: Beautiful and successful

The latest on offer from Beri's workshops is a very basic collection. It's a mix-and-match of trousers, long dresses, shift dresses, and basic blouses that you just knot up with jeans. The evening look is complete with a lot of French lace and chiffon.

Says Beri, "Since I enjoy the craft of what I do — the fitting of the clothes, draping of the fabrics, making patterns — this last collection has highlighted all these elements," she explains. There are halter blouses, short printed skirts, wrap blouses, cross strap dresses, tunics with embroidery and even saris "I love embroidery which is why a lot of my clothes are heavily embroidered " But what the designer does not do is show too much skin A conservative designer, she firmly believes that a women doesn't have to look like a billboard to show her assets

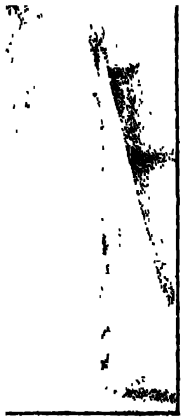
Ameek Chopra

Primarily a designer who creates outfits for women, Beri does men's clothes strictly on order. She has dressed many a bridegroom in achkans, kurta-pyjamas and churidar-kurtas. And this is an area where she's not likely to step into either, for as she explains: "I don't dabble in men's lines for I feel that men are not adventurous enough. I'd love to go wild and give them an orange jacket, but I don't think they are ready for it."

When Beri is not designing for the glitterati she turns high fashion to something even more basic — a tool to sensitise people towards animals. Animals have been her first love going by the fact that she has not just grown up with a cuddly pooch or purring kitten — she's run through a pretty unconventional catalogue: a monkey, a squirrel, a parrot and lots of chicks, besides.

"Given a choice I would rather reach out to an animal than a human being if the two needed help. That's because the treatment meted out to animals, on the one hand, and their own helplessness on the other, really disturbs me The best way I could help them was to use my creativity to convey a very important message — that animal abuse must be fought at a war footing. Besides protecting them, we must give them the love and attention which they rightly deserve," she says emotionally.

Making it big at 28



For the Olympics: Chic and elegant

This 'feeling' for animals has been translated into designer-items for Maneka Gandhi's voluntary organisation 'People for Animals' So there are T-shirts and mugs that declare 'Animals are People too' — products that will find their way into all Archies galleries and other select stores in the near future. With 'Caring means Sharing' as the motto, the collection extends to caps, mugs, notepads, postcards, pens and key chains. For toddlers there are stuffed toys and for children posters and geometry boxes.

Besides the fact that the collection is replete with figures of animals for whom extinction looms large, the line is unusual in its choice of materials. So there are leather substitutes, fake fur, cotton, acrylic and even paper — all of which do not require the killing of animals. At the end of the days the funds that the product line will raise through its sales will be instrumental in establishing additional animal care centres throughout India.

While she has a keen interest in animals, Beri is quick to point out that

With Maneka Gandhi at an exhibition on animal-friendly products for the organisation, People for Animals

she's certainly not an animal rights activist. She says, "Mrs Gandhi approached me to design some T-shirts for People for Animals The idea was to create an awareness about the organisation which has been actively trying to spread the message that animals are people too "

Beri adds, "I didn't do this with Maneka or any other particular person in mind, I did it with a heart and great love towards animals. But as it happens the only person who I think is working actively for animals is Maneka Gandhi."

Trends have changed drastically over the years and fashion has evolved as a way of life. Beri, for instance, has observed that people no longer dress up for a special occasion — they want to look their best every moment of the day. They are dressing to suit their personalities and not just in what is 'in' While designerwear may not be the only component of being up-to-date or fashionable, top-of-the-line designers have found a flourishing market in the country

But Beri feels that they still have a long way to go, "Though we're doing great, I think that the boom in Indian fashion is still to come. It will arrive when we filter down to the masses maybe five years from now "

The masses? Does she seriously think that with the kind of prices that designers charge, they will ever be bought by normal middle class folk?

But Beri has her defence ready. "The price of designerwear depends on outfit to outfit," she says. "It's a fallacy that all designer clothes are exorbitantly priced. While they may be slightly more expensive than garments that are not strictly known labels, the wearer can be sure of exclusivity and of getting his or her money's worth. Such outfits can see you through many seasons without looking outdated."

Some of Ritu's clients would corroborate her view, for outfits from her organdy collection of three summers ago still draw rave comments at parties. Ritu's own prices start at Rs 1,200 (to some a modest price to pay) and inch up to over Rs 1 lakh. One of the show-stoppers of an earlier bridal collection was priced at Rs 1.25 lakh. However, an important part of her range includes lines for young college or single girls that are both affordable and versatile.

While our home-grown designers have carved a niche for themselves in the domestic scenario, do they stand a chance in the international fashion Meccas, the catwalks of Milan, Paris or London?

Somehow one is not convinced on this score despite Tarun Tahiliani's designing a salwar kameez for Jemima Khan nee Goldsmith for what was dubbed to be the wedding of the year (the outfit was rejected by Jemima, who went with Bruce Oldfield eventually) Given the fact that Indian designers continue to plod along with a host of outdated

machines and technology that is crying out to be upgraded? And this, with the kind of manpower which is perhaps just not conducive to producing quality that can vie with international standards

Beri concurs that one of the major stumbling blocks in the business of creating clothes is the complete lack of infrastructure in the country -- a problem that she's trying to overcome Though the country affords a great degree of craftsmanship, a large majority of them Bengali-Muslims from Calcutta, the levels of literacy don't seem to

Sumeet Chopra

Beri: Caring for animals

match. "If our craftsmen were trained, our quality would improve twice over I've gone crazy trying to tell my embroiderers to keep their work environment clean, and to work with clean hands If I work with white it comes back each time looking cream!" she says with a touch of exasperation.

Though she's into exports in a big way Beri feels that given the right work environment she could do miracles with her collections. The ball has already been set rolling and Beri is in the process of changing the machines her craftsmen work on "But any drastic overhaul of a system takes time to bear fruit It is going to be tedious and time-consuming to educate my craftsmen about how things must be done "

Beri is, in fact, quite despondent about the environment in which fashion designers find themselves working in, as it puts them at a disadvantage in the international rink "I would rate Indian designers --- and that includes me --- on the international scenario in two ways The first, in the creativity department I would rate us as 8/10s, but in terms of professionalism and quality, we wouldn't hope to get more than 4/10. No, I don't think we've arrived yet, for we are very good with our traditional clothes but when it comes to Western clothes we are way behind If we had to sell our Western clothes abroad I don't think we stand a chance "

And what of international labels that have set up shop in India? General impression rules that most international designer labels that have arrived in the country over the past few years have not created the wave that they were expected to The reasons are quite clear, says Ritu "The fashion that these labels present in India is outdated as they probably expected Indians to accept everything that was thrown their way. The prices, on the other hand, are phenomenal."

However, the designers she would like to see on Indian soil are Giorgio Armani and Calvin Klein She explains, "Their collections have all that young people are looking for today — they are trendy and have loads of mass appeal "

And what of the future? She says with a lop-sided grin: "I don't believe in five year plans or deciding on things for the future I don't believe in deciding what I would like to do years hence. What is on the agenda must be done today, for I don't know if I'll live till tomorrow. So I must live every moment of my life to the hilt " ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says if news gets misinterpreted, do not bother much. On and after August 4, it clears up. New ties and contracts are definitely on the cards to say the least. House will need your attention for renovation and decoration, so will parents and the elderly.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Take care of the nitty gritties or else work will pile up towards the weekend. The going may not be as easy as all that and you will have to be cautious in your dealings with people. Another outstanding trend will be trips and ties, rendezvous and meeting.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Chances to improve your social standing. Friends, job opportunities and career will figure prominently this week. Your emotions will be deeply aroused and care must be taken in matters of the heart. Family members and friends take up your time.

Cancer
June 21 - July 20

The moon's first quarter focalises your personal matters, ties, attitudes and ideas. Be patient and sociable and do not have preconceived notions. On the plus side, you will make ample progress in work and should have position of considerable importance.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

You will be reaching out to people and definitely going places. Be optimistic, and do put in your best efforts for things to work out smoothly, for they ultimately will in the end. There is a strong emphasis on collaborations, ties, contracts, contacts, letters, calls, ads and flyers.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

You will be giving a lot of importance to children, hobbies, trips, ties, research and socialising. These will help you to win friends and make things easier for you. Finances will be crucial on August 3-8. It would be a wise policy to entertain and be friendly.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

It is necessary for you to be extremely cautious and patient in your dealings with people. For that will ultimately hold you in good stead. It is not altogether an impossible situation. Your friends, well wishers and sweethearts will stand by you assures Ganesha.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Do not take things for granted for you will have to work hard to achieve your desired goals. First two days of this week is best for getting work done. Pets and your own health need immediate care. You could indulge in a bout of socialising as friends will be most helpful during this phase.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Your approach towards your work will be very positive and that may be to your advantage in the long run. Children, ideas, creative use of things, inventions and schemes to get rich quick are what the week is all about. Don't get worked up if people don't see eye to eye with you.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Time to work hard and put in that extra effort because that is what will help you gain an edge over your rivals. Remember, there is no short cuts for success. Family matters could get you down, unless you are careful. Health of elders, possibly in-laws could get you worried.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Do pay attention to the kind of people you mix with. News, contacts, contracts, messages, publicity ventures and travel should play an important role for you. Trips and ties, and a touch of romance complete the scene. This is also the time to take care of pending matters.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

You must try to be rational or else things will go out of control. This is a week for buying, selling, renovation, decoration, socialising, import and export. Pay attention to deeds and documents when they are being signed. You win friends easily. Rely on them.

BIRTHDAYS

August 4: Moon square Neptune, says Ganesha, might mislead you be it in finance, romance or just plain common sense. Change of work or at least pace are foretold.

August 5: Moon trine Jupiter, Mars square Saturn, means you should beware of accidents, sudden expenses and family disturbances.

August 6: Mercury sextile Mars is excellent for lovers, poets, entrepreneurs, fashion designers, architects, housewives and sportsmen.

August 7: Mercury trine Jupiter is an excellent placing for those who have to use hands or words to get work done, earn a living or entertain. Many of your obsessions will be realised and thus you will get over them.

August 8: Moon sextile sun means you will have a few opportunities to push ahead. That very obviously depends completely upon you.

August 9: No strong aspect. That means freedom to do your own thing, be all that you want to be. Friends will stand by you.

August 10: Moon conjunction Venus-Mars indicates the home could well be where the action really is. Expenses and innovations are certain. Do prepare to travel.

EXTRACT

Discovering INDIA

Extracts from ***Anurag Mathur's*** *new travel book*

Calcutta — City of Every Contrast

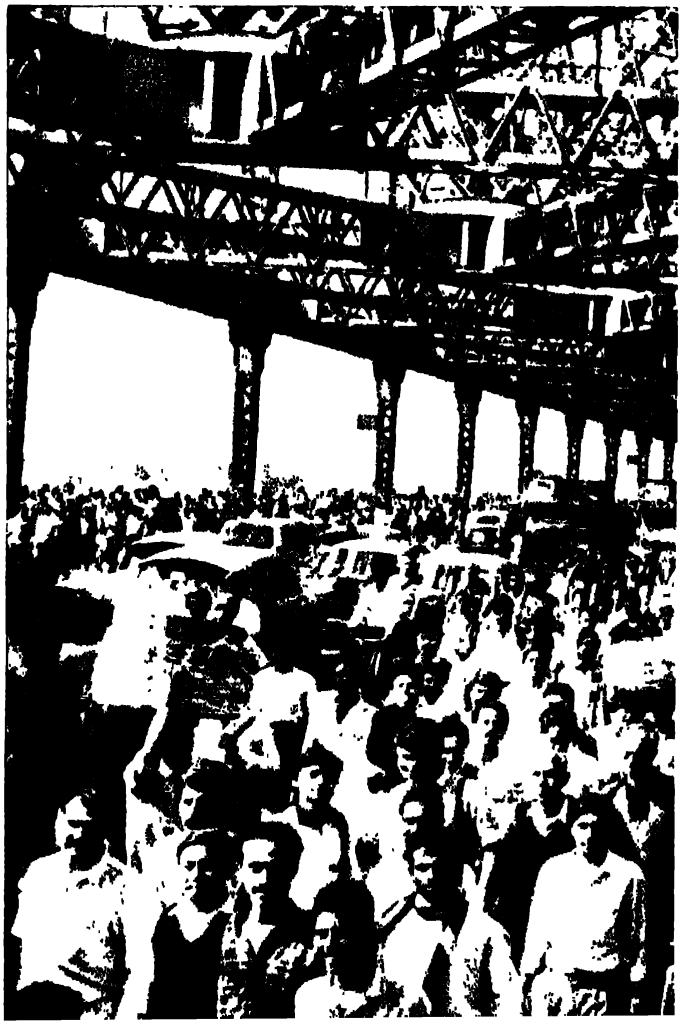
Kali and communism, Vivekananda and vamps Radicals on their way to revolutionary meetings in rickshaws. The greatest poverty and the greatest wealth. The giants of communism and of capitalism. Bankim Chandra and Bhappi The narrowest insularity and the widest universality Marx and Moon Moon Ram Mohan Roy and Sonagachi. Tycoons and Mother Teresa. Clubby conviviality and raging revolts. Tagore and trams Netaji and nightclubs. Calcutta, contradictory Calcutta, a peaceful onomatopoeia

The great Indian renaissance in matters of the spirit, religion, social mores, culture, industry — all have atleast some of their seeds here. If the curse of colonialism was most strongly rooted here, many of the boldest, most passionate, earliest advocates of independence during this century also sprang up here. The great Indian glory that has flowered and fallen so many times over the millennia owes several of the first stirrings of its latest incarnation to now forgotten back streets and crumbling homes in this city of every contrast

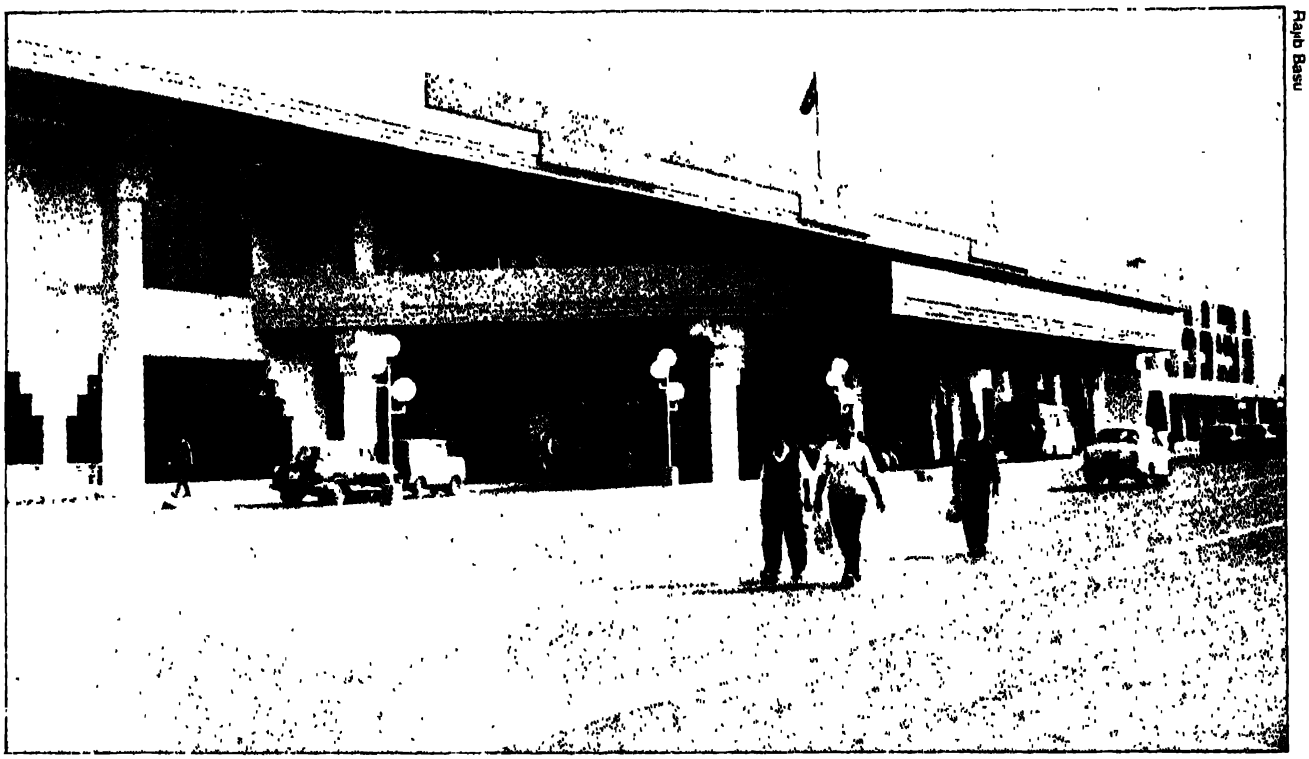
My family lived here when I was a child and I spent long summer vacations here every year, so I have a natural nostalgia. I visited it once after that, but I returned after some 15 years.

Much has changed It's a greatly more affluent city, for one. But its soul is intact—that ability to be civilised yet supercilious, cultured yet passionate. I always felt this passion to be unique, even if it was for taking it easy. Only the Calcuttan could be intense about being lazy. And where else on earth would you find a respectful revolutionary? But for all its genuine fervour, dedication and idealism, the city, even in the worse days of turmoil and violence and sudden death , was never a sad, fear-ridden, desolate place where the heart became a moonscape The restaurants were envied for their music and cuisine, the ladies of Calcutta were legendary through all of Asia and the clubs set

A traffic jam on Howrah Bridge



Extracted from *Travails with Anurag Mathur* ***Published by Alka Paperbacks; Price Rs 95***



Rajib Basu

Netaji International Airport, Calcutta: The right terminal in the right city to start an art gallery

the social pace even among the radical leaders. Only here could Comrade Kali be warmly escorted by atheists for an evening drink with devout money worshippers The reason no one realises how unusual the whole thing is because it appears so normal here.

Among the changes is a new terminal building at the airport with which I am inordinately impressed. It's immaculately maintained and has what appears to be colourful Agnis hanging from its roof Good idea. Anyone making nasty cracks about the city gets tied to one and shot in the general direction of Pakistan But the Netaji Airport is the right terminal in the right city in which to start an art gallery which I think might be beneficial to all concerned, potential buyers and sellers If it works here, other airports can follow.

I had gone to interview Sunil Gangopadhyay, Bengal's greatest living writer, and everything I saw returned me to my youth. The signs in Bengali were no longer intelligible, but the first language I learned to write in Asansol was Bengali I still remember having nightmares when I was introduced to *Pet Kata Sha*, literally translated as the alphabet *Sha* with its stomach slit, that mix of rhyme and revolution at which Bengalis are so good

Driving through Ho Chi Minh Street reminded me that it had been

South Indian priests performing rites at a temple

so named during the Vietnam War It was a sensitively chosen name, since the street is graced by the presence of the US Consulate And I remembered seeing that giant, familiar structure, that the Howrah Bridge had always seemed to have something personal against me Whenever I arrived from school, there would be a huge traffic jam on it on my way home And whenever I was tearfully leaving for my hostel, the damn thing was like the autobahn. It's a structure redolent with legends and history though not sufficiently appreciated worldwide I mean, imagine the fate of the book, if Vikram Seth's magnum opus had been called *Howrah Bridge* instead of *Golden Gate*.

The Ambassador car, so sturdy, reliable, quite possibly eternal, on which I first learned to drive quite illegally on the Strand, is still a dominant presence. The traffic jams continue and I speculated whether the ones I saw were the same ones I had seen 15 years ago, nothing having moved an inch

The delirious interest the city has in the arts continues When Sunil*da* stepped out with us, he was routinely asked for his autograph on the street. Only in Calcutta In every other place, a writer's autograph is usually sought eagerly only when it is on a cheque And most reassuring ly, to show that not that much has changed, everybody still grumbles enviously about the Marwaris

The flights to and from Delhi demonstrated how all the airlines are competing by finding ways to feed the passengers at virtually every moment Soon, I expect a time, when pretty airhostesses will be racing up and down the aisle, hair dishevelled, eyes blazing

"Don't chew," one would bark, "there's no time. Just swallow"

"This one can't drink his juice, tea, coffee and water simultaneously," another would shriek

"Feed him intravenously," the senior one would order

"It has been a long, 15-minute flight," one would gasp, "I've managed to feed my lot breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner, but we're landing, so how do I give them their snacks?"

"Stuff it in their ears while they're waiting for their baggage"

Anyway, it's a great improvement over the earlier days in every way

Punjabi Suits and *Puris* Invade the South

I've just returned from the week long trip to the Konkan and to Madras, my first to either place, and I'm full of initial impressions

For one, the salwar kameez, or Punjabi suit as it's called everywhere, has become the national dress of Indian women. Why couldn't the original Sweety*ji* have thought of Hot Pants? And while the places themselves are flourishing, with rural Karnataka being particularly impressive, compared to the poverty and chaos of their Northern counterparts, the ways of getting there have not improved sufficiently. While airport terminals are physically impressive, their services are not acceptable

But the difference between the city and the small town has almost completely gone. One sign is the guest register at the quite fancy five-storey Sharon Hotel at Coondapur, a *tehsil* town three hours drive from Mangalore It sternly asks, "Relationship with other occupants of room, male/female" Hey, guys, they're swinging in Coondapur

It is now apparently required by law for anyone going near Mangalore to explain with rising irritation to his friends, a minimum of at least five times, "No, no, not Bangalore. I'm not going to Bangalore. I'm going to Mangalore, Mangalore" It's like conversations use to be on pre-liberalisation long-distance phone calls

Another sign of change is that at a restaurant in Udupi, the town being, synonymous with South Indian food, there were no *masala dosas* We could, however, have as many *puris* as we wanted, with what was called *beje* And a final sign of galloping modernity, at a 13th century Shiva temple, the priest, complete with his marks and bare chest, looked at our film crew and knowledgeably asked if the lighting we used was through solar power. I gathered that's what lit his temple.

Madras was all spruced up for the SAF Games and we were greeted with their celebrated giant cut-outs of the Prime Minister with a particular genius for detailing his painful footwear Some of the city was frankly mysterious. Painted signs at various spots demanded, "Bit no bills." Naturally, I immediately promised not to, but the bills in comparison to Delhi are so reasonable that you actually don't need to bite any.

There were so many signs on vehicles exhorting, announcing, urging family planning, that I began to

asks his wife Anju what colour shirt will match with his trousers, if his tie looks right, would brown shoes go better than black. Anju's answer comes pat and Rajnish is not loathe to take it. He says, "People have often complimented me on my way of dressing so I'm confident of Anju's taste. Besides I hate to bother with colour coordination and fashion's latest moves. I'd rather just ask her than have her tell me I look lousy after I'm dressed."

Psychologist Tehmina Majumdar feels, "Men usually shirk from the response a negative opinion could get from the woman. Many times they know what's wrong but can't really pin-point what's right. The question about how she looks puts them on the spot and it feels like a confrontation which they would rather avoid."

So how do we get an honest answer? One way is to rely on a friend who you know will not lie to you for the simple reason she wouldn't want you to lie to her. Mind you, not a mutual admiration society but a mutually respectful one. But ask for an honest answer when you know the other person is in a position to give it, and you are in a position to receive it.

Tell him how good he looks in this suit

Won't you tell me I look wonderful?

Don't ask your friend if you look fine in your little black mini, halfway out through the door, your date waiting in the car. Be fair to the friend. Ask a day before or at least an hour beforehand so that hurried alternatives can be planned out. And don't tell your man his outfit sucks just as he nervously leaves for the big meeting with the boss. All he wants to hear right then is 'you look great'.

So then, when is confession time?

When her hair needs a cut, not when she gets one. "Thank God you went to the hairdresser. Your hair's been looking ghastly long enough," is more than enough to make anyone look at their past with a feeling of horror.

When she wears a wig just for fun, it's not the ideal time for "it's much better than your usual curls." When he comes home excited about the new tie he's just bought for his mauve suit, try not to burst his bubble by saying, "I was going to throw that horrendous looking suit away."

And finally, if she says, "Tell me I look wonderful", without a thought, tell her. ■

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: Models-turned-?

It all began with: That original model-actress, Zeenat Aman. The former Miss Asia was 'discovered' by director-producer-actor Dev Anand, and launched with suitable fanfare in *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*.

Affectionately dubbed Zeenie baby by Dev, her friend, philosopher, guide and love, the name was soon picked up by all the gossip rags, and Aman was well on her way to becoming the first genuinely Westernised star of Hindi cinema —no, Simi Garewal never really cut it.

So, did Aman succeed?: Depends on how you define success. She was never in the Hema Malini or Mumtaz league, but for a heroine with somewhat unconventional good looks she did pretty well.

Her problem was that she wanted to be regarded as a serious actress, and hence badgered Raj Kapoor into signing her on for *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*. But instead of being the crowning glory of her career, it turned out to be her swan song.

Who came next?: There were several models who tried their luck in the movies, but the only one after Zeenat to really make an impact was Juhi Chawla. Chawla, like Aman, was a former Miss India, and made her debut in *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*.

The film was a box-office success, but somehow Juhi's career never really took off. Until, of course, she shed a couple of kilos, raised her hemlines, dropped her necklines and turned glamorous with a vengeance. Then, suddenly, she was presenting stiff competition to Sridevi and Madhuri Dixit. But her recent bereavement—her mother died in a road accident in Prague—seems to have made her

Juhi Chawla: Model-turned-star

Zeenat Aman: Former Miss Asia and the first Indian sex siren

thoughts turn to retiremen

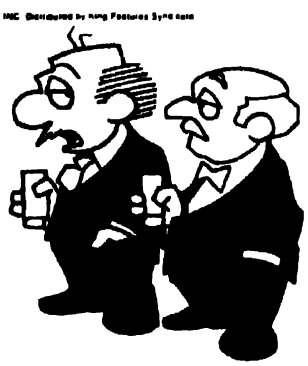
The latest models: Are, of Sushmita Sen and Aishw who have both entered th world of Bollywood, and signed movies down sout

Much has been writte about the two former bea and their respective chan land. All we would like t that neither of them is lik Manisha Koirala sleeples

The wild card: Is, undou Pooja Batra, both former ex-girlfriend of film actor Kumar. She has been sig the Amitabh Bachchan C Limited (ABCL) for one forthcoming releases, an things are expected of h she can live up to these is, of course, another st

Pooja Batra:Very promis

THE LOCKHORNS



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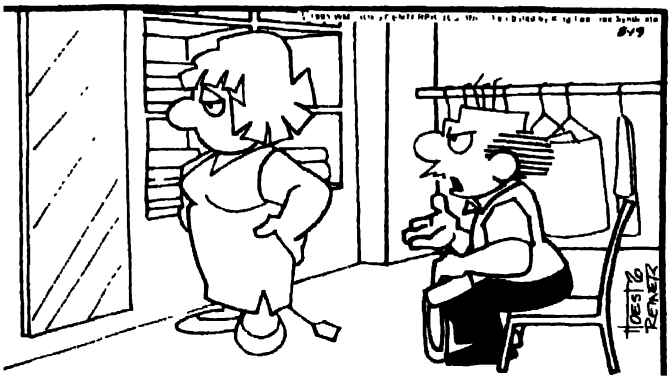
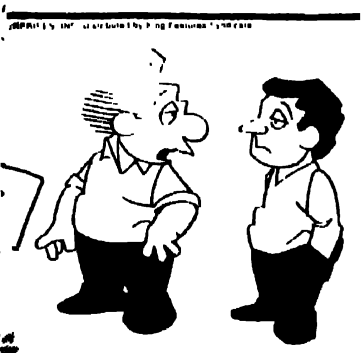


"IT'S A SIZE TOO SMALL AND A PRICE TOO LARGE."



A CHOIR. THAT WAY,
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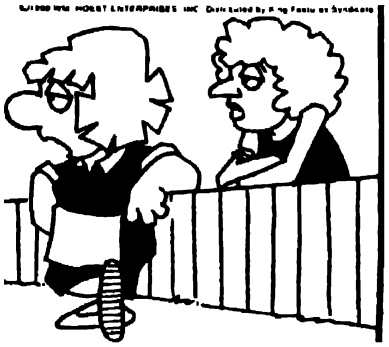
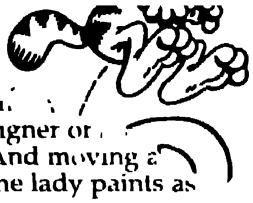


"LEROY'S MOVING TO HIS SUMMER QUARTERS."

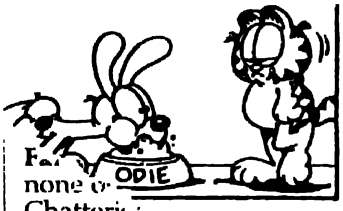
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



on
choreo
worked on
every designer or
country And moving a
fashion, the lady paints as

Small screen sirens: They include among their number, the former Miss India Manpreet Brar The daughter of a defence services officer, Brar was a surprise winner at the beauty contest, the general consensus was that she was too gawky and awkward to stand a chance. But Manpreet had other ideas; and while everyone watched open-mouthed, she walked away with the crown.

Since then, Brar has given modelling a miss for a chance to veejay her own show, *Sansui Mangta Hai* on Channel V. She isn't really the stuff of which television show hosts are made of— she could, for instance, do with some extensive elocution lessons over the next couple of years. But Brar has the necessary celebrity status, and these



F
none o
Chatterje
with long rin
exquisitely made-u
her the usual forays
or even into television
Chatterjee has set herself u
'celebrity manager', in a ven
up by Anupam Kher.

In case you're wondering what 'celebrity manager' means precisely, well, it means just that Novonika will, in her current reincarnation, 'manage' the careers of various celebrities, or even people who have the potential to become famous This would entail negotiating with agencies and companies on their behalf, seeing to it that they're not ripped off, ensuring sufficient media exposure to all their ventures. well, you get the idea ■

SKETCHES

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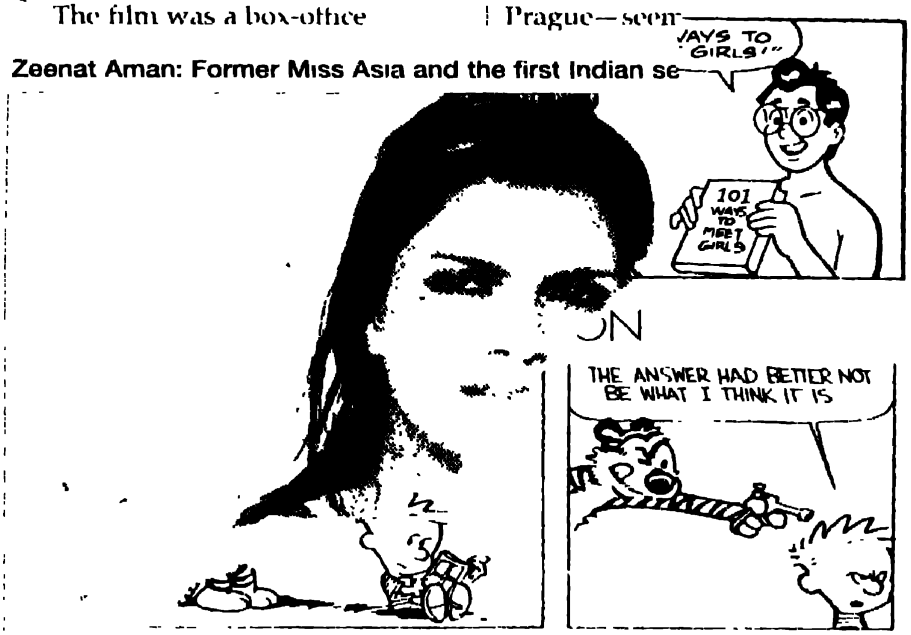

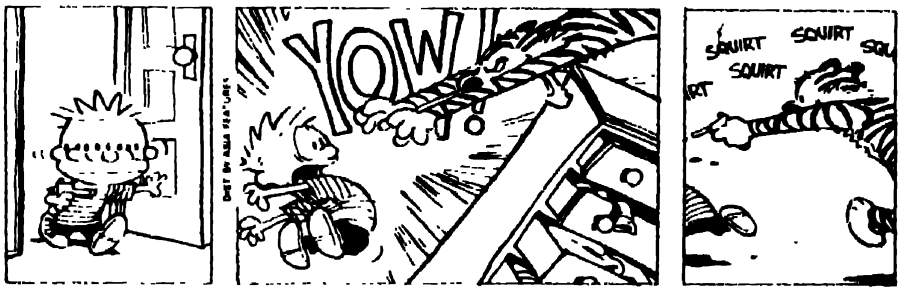

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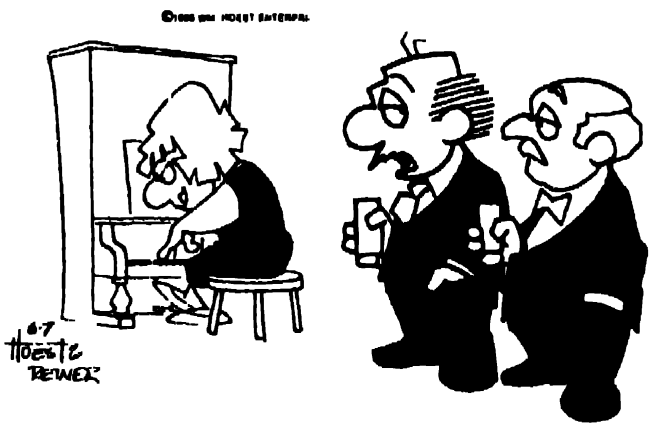
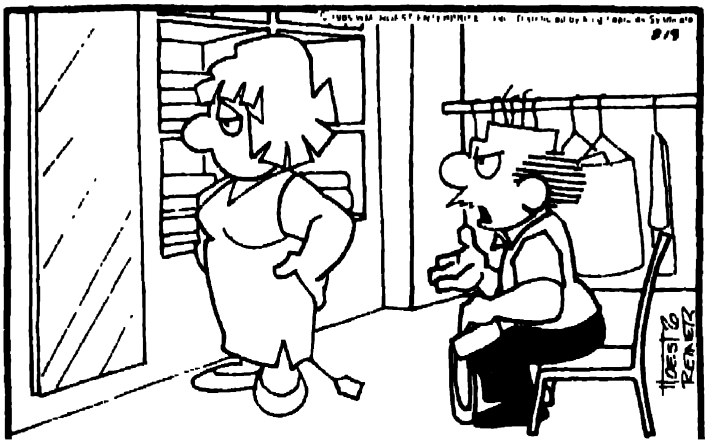


"LORETTA SHOULD ENTER SOME SORT OF COMPETITION . . . LIKE THE GOLDEN GLOVES."



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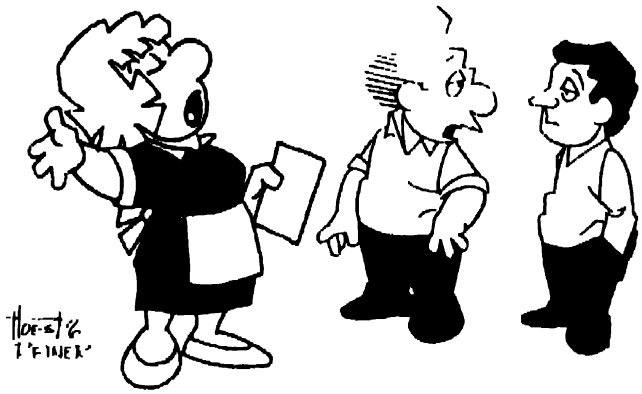
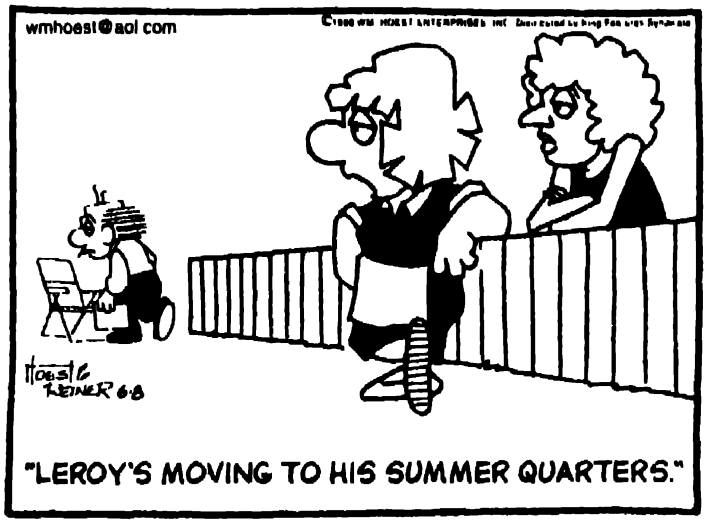


"LORETTA SINGS IN A CHOIR. THAT WAY, THEY CAN SHARE THE BLAME."



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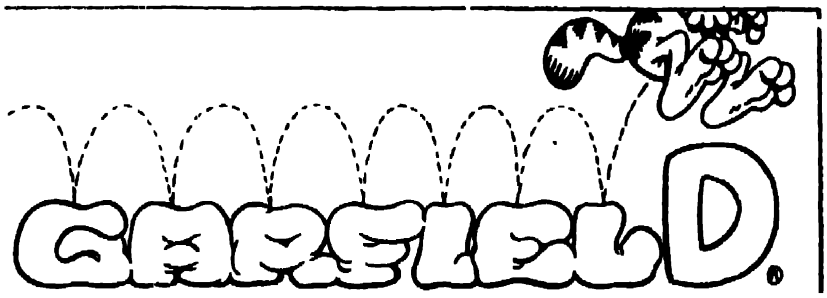
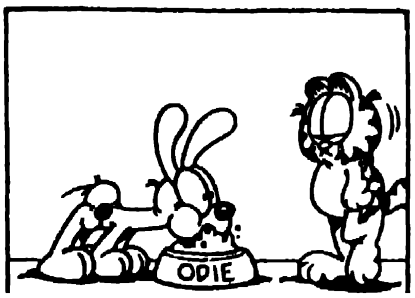
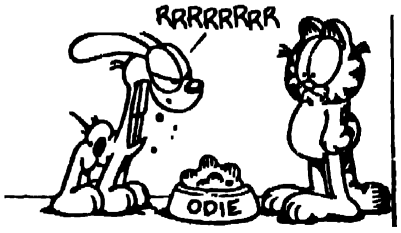
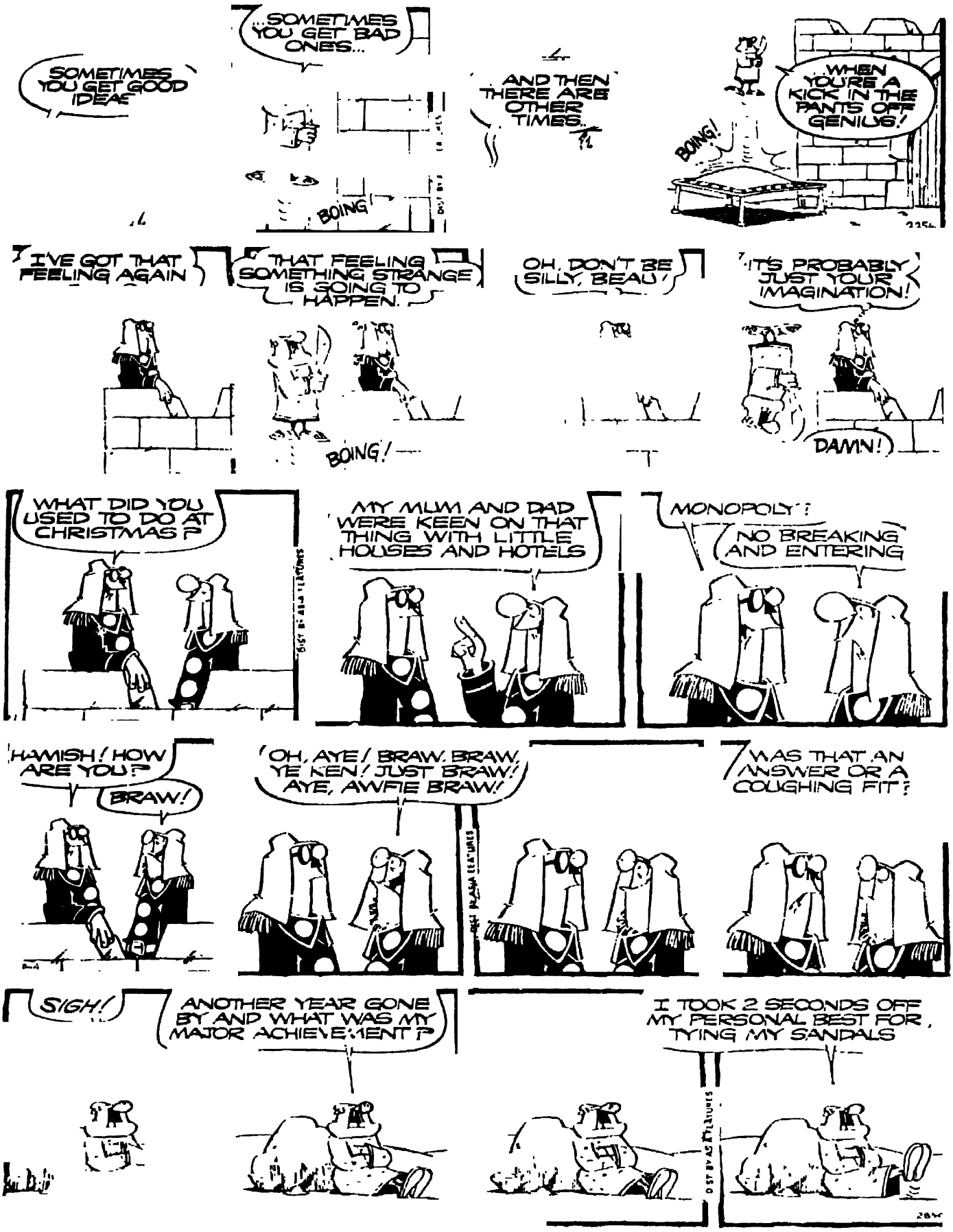
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

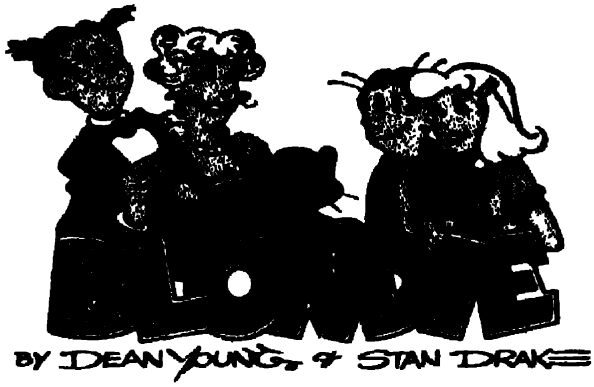


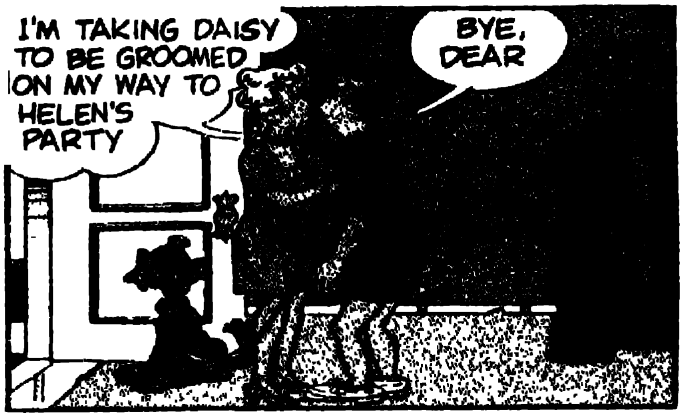




THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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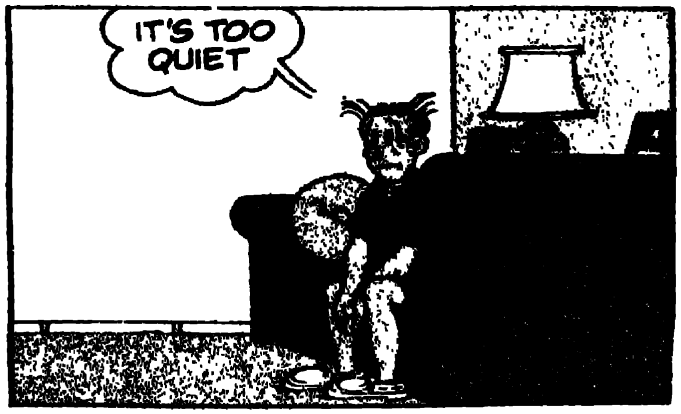


CLEANING UP HER ACT

Rupika Chawla is one of India's leading art restorers; ***Geeta Sharma*** *profiles the lady*

Rupika Chawla: Busy at her work of restoration

The moment the white Datsun wheels into the wide driveway and she alights from the self-driven car, Rupika Chawla is all apologies for being a trifle late. "So sorry, I got held up at home," she says while breezing past to open her studio door for you. "But where is the painting?" comes the question, even before you can say a hello. Then, catching sight of another lady waiting in the porch, she realises that you're not one of her clients, and another stream of apologies pour out as we are ushered into the studio, stacked from top to bottom with old and not-so-old paintings.

It is business first, as she turns to the woman with a 3 feetby 4 feet painting of Husain in tow. The painting of three women huddled together, has a cut running through its dust-laden canvas. "Oh! This is so filthy! So filthy! I cannot believe this," Chawla exclaims, as the lady stands quietly, almost like a child being reprimanded. "I must know if someone has done something to it, there are layers of varnish on the back; so obviously, someone has tried a hand at it. I must know what has been done to it before I work on it," Chawla says. The lady, on the defensive now, promises to get back after checking with her husband and leaves.

She then turns to you. Seeing you stand quietly in a corner, she is back to her gentle self as she arranges the stools around her huge working table. She lifts four weights of five kg each lying on a painting kept upside down on the table and asks you to make

Before and after restoration

yourself at home.

"If only people were more open about how they have tried to have their collections restored, it would be much easier for me to try and put back the painting to shape," Chawla mutters. The first thing most people owning a precious work do is to call in any artist and ask him to help restore the damaged or dirt laden work. "And the easiest way out for such a person is to apply generous coats of varnish or thick paint to hide the cracks and wipe the dust" she laments.

The fact that Chawla is among the bare handful of art restorers in the country at a time when art has never had it so good, seems to be of little consolation to her. There can be no short-cuts or brutal compromises in restoration. What is needed is ethics, commitment and above all patience, she feels.

Little wonder then that many of her clients, who come to her from far-flung corners of the country, get tired of asking her when they would get their works back. But that is not what Chawla is concerned about. "I need and take time to think, decide how to go about the work and then get down to it," she says. "Many a time a painting, just does not seem to respond so at times I just keep looking at it and talk to it. If it does not respond, I keep it aside and then go back to it with a different approach."

Chawla's small studio, that she set up at her parents' house in the posh Golf Links residential area, about two decades ago, bears testimony to her statement. Works of past and present masters, from Raja Ravi Varma, M.F. Husain, Manjit Bawa and Hemant Majumdar are lined in various stages of repair and restoration. The countless number of bottles of chemicals, and solvents, paints and brushes and her working table occupy less than one fourth of the space in the little studio.

Getting Chawla to talk about herself first and not restoration, is a tough job. With slight prodding, she reveals that her foray into conservation was by accident. A B.A. in English literature from Lady Shri Ram College and a masters in French literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Chawla had settled down to domesticity after her marriage to an IAS officer, sitting at home, looking after her two daughters.

One day, a friend of her's from France, settled in London, visited her and prodded her not to sit idle. Realising that a regular job would be difficult with small children, he brought her books on conservation and art and suggested that she give it a try. "That was my first introduction to conservation," she recalls.

As her interest grew she began

Jagdish Yadav

to look for a place where she could learn the art. The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), then under L.P. Sihare, had a huge conservation laboratory headed by her teacher Shukanto Das. "We were about six of us and would sit around a huge table discussing conservation techniques and observing him work and talk about ethics, how they affect one's work and its final outcome on the painting," says Chawla

The students were encouraged to read a lot and were allowed to touch a work only after six months of observing. When Sihare moved on to the National Museum, the group too moved to the museum laboratory. In 1987, Chawla branched out on her own and set about collecting her tools and equipment such as scalpels, tacking irons, solvents,consolidators, weights and measures and even carpenter's tools at her little studio at her parents' house

Once that was done, work simply came Chawla's way. She never had to pitch in with any ads or spread word among friends. Even before she had finished one painting, another arrived, and since then there has been no looking back

Chawla, essentially a restorer of oil paintings, says that paintings quite

often run into danger when they are transported, as they quiver along in shaky vehicles. There are also several inherent dangers such as damp walls, extreme temperatures, bright daylight, proximity to lit fireplaces, gloomy and dusty rooms that leave the paintings slashed and with endless tears, canvases smoked and shattered, dark and obscure paint surfaces and mottled and patchy canvases afflicted with fungus

But even a seemingly simple and routine task like removing dust and fungus from a canvas can be a very cumbersome job, says she. Pointing out to a 6 feet by 4 feet Manjit Bawa

THE FINE ART OF RESTORATION

And how best to practise it

While there are a handful of private restorers in the country, the National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology, the only one of its kind in the country, has been churning out a small band of art restorers over the past six years. Many of these restorers have joined the INTACH conservation centres or are working on government-sponsored convservation projects around the country. Some have set up their own private studios.

The institute, which provides a two-year course in conservation to graduates in Fine Arts and Science, has developed various techniques of conservation in art objects of differing mediums. Professor I.K. Bhatnagar, a senior professor at the Institute, elucidates some of them:

Terracotta

Terracotta figurines and pots and vessels, both of which have been exposed to the elements and which have remained buried in soil, are prone to damage because of absorption of moisture. If there are some salts, such as calcium chloride and calcium sulphate present in the soil, they can lead to cracks and water-logging in the objects. Such objects are treated with a layer of paper pulp soaked in water that is wrapped around them. The pulp absorbs all the moisture and salts embedded in the object and once it dries up, is removed. The process is repeated three to four times till no moisture and natural salts are left in it. It is then given a thorough wash and given a protective preservative coating to prevent further damage.

For objects with broken parts and edges, if the broken part is available it is stuck back with synthetic adhesives. But if not, the object is left with minimum interference to maintain its originality.

Stone

Stone figures and sculptures make sound materials but like terracotta, are prone to damage by absorption of moisture and soluble salts specially during rains and humidity that leads to cracks. So they too are given the paper pulp treatment. Stone figures are also prone to fungus and algae layers forming on their surface, leading to black stains. These are cleaned with a mild solution of an alkali and brushed and wiped before being given a preservative coating. But before that, the objects have to be washed thoroughly to remove all the chemicals that have been used.

Bronze

The metal apparently looks strong but is not so resistant to decay. It is prone to corrosion that leads to a lot of surface tarnishing. The corrosive layer, an oxide of the metal itself, is scraped off and mixed with adhesives to fill up whatever cracks there are in the object. If the corrosion is uniform, it is best left as it is. But if patches of various shades form over it, they are removed with a mild solution of Roshelle's Salt mixed in water.

Water colours

Are prone to flaking as the colours begin to wear off from the surface. So a loose adhesive is applied to strengthen the colours on the surface. If there is any loss of a painted part, in keeping with the basic conservation thumb rule that there should be minimum interference with the artist's work, the damaged areas are re-touched with light tones which only a discerning eye can make out. If the painting has a cut or a tear, it is mounted on an acid free board.

While mounting, care has to be taken that it does not come in direct contact with the glass surface in front as that may lead to moisture absorption.

Ceramics

Ceramic objects generally break and are joined together with epoxy raisins. The cracks and gaps are filled with powder made out of the broken pieces and adhesive. They are also given a thorough washing in a mild detergent and do not need any protective coating.

Wood

Wood has dimensional properties and tends to swell up with moisture in the air and develops cracks. It is also susceptible to insect attacks and fungus. So wooden objects are best preserved after cleaning in a glass case in which some absorbent material like cotton wool is kept to absorb moisture. Cracks in wooden objects, too, are filled with adhesives mixed with saw dust.

canvas whose once bright yellow base has turned pale and dull with fungal layers over it, she says cleaning a painting is not like wiping dust off a piece of furniture. Paintings have to be cleaned inch by inch, with a small cotton bud dipped in solvent and touched with saliva. "I take out the painting, which was apparently hung on a damp wall and work on it from time to time because it can be a very laborious and time-consuming task," she says.

Many a time , it is also the artist's neglect — some of whom may be unaware of the material they are using or are in the habit of painting on a surface before it dries up — that leads to a painting's untimely decay. More than the material, it is the stretcher, (the skeleton of the canvas) that can cause irreparable damage to a painting.

"If a stretcher is made of substandard wood or shoddily constructed and made into weird shapes, it is sure to bend and twist with climatic changes. That in turn plays havoc with the canvas which can go slack in parts, get taut and crack in others," says Chawla.

M. Vandar

Though she has worked on contemporary and past masters, Chawla's eyes light up when she talks of the dozen-odd works of Raja Ravi Varma she has restored. Most of his works have suffered the vagaries of time and human interference over the century The master, she explains, often used a coat of varnish over his work to give it some luminosity and clarity. The varnish darkens over the years, hiding the real colours and details beneath. "Not many have understood these changes and have actually talked about Varma's 'dark' paintings and mellow colours!" says Chawla.

A typical example of one such work that Chawla restored is a canvas depicting Sita's '*Bhumi Pravesh*'. All that one could make out from the canvas when it first arrived for restoration were blurred images of Sita being held by Bhumi Devi and entering the open earth. Ram, Laxman, Luv and Kush, stood watching in bewilderment.

Once the painting was cleared of the dark varnish and dark coats of brown paint (conveniently applied by another restorer) was painstakingly removed, a whole lot of dramatic details of the emotive drama came to light. The fine details such as tiles flying out of the earth, Sita's sari fluttering in the impact, her eyes red with burning tears that flowed down her cheeks, and her mouth taut with control and grief came to light.

"All these aspects were hidden because some restorer whom the work was sent to first, had found the easy way out of simply applying a thick coat of black and brown paint to hide the cracks of time," says Chawla. But a restorer's job is not to wipe out the traces of time on a work. "It has to belong to the moment of time but it has to have the signature of time and artist on it," she asserts.

Contrary to what one may come to believe after a conversation with her, Chawla, has interests other than conservation. She has authored two books, *Ramachandran — Art of a Muralist* and the more recent *Surface and Depth's* besides others on conservation. Bharatnatyam, is her other passion, that takes upto two hours of practice every morning The last three months that she has had to stay away from it due to bad health have left her feeling a little out of sorts.

But as Chawla says herself, as long as she has her work, her studio and the canvases to turn to, nothing can really be amiss for her. ■

FIRST PERSON

SABYASACHI CHAKRABARTY, *shot into limelight as the ebullient Gora in the TV serial,* Tero Parban *and went on to portray myriad characters in serials such as* Rudra Sener Diary, Udaanchandi *and the latest hit,* Irsha. *He has also starred in feature films like* Sweth Patharer Thala, Kakababu Here Gelen *and played Feluda, the popular detective created by Satyajit Ray in Sandip Ray's tele-film* Baksha Rahasya. *But theatre, according to him, remains his first passion.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Perfection and happiness don't mix.
What is your greatest fear?
Deforestation—I fear it would lead to the end of the world.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My father, Jagadish Chakrabarty.
What do you dislike most in others?
Snobbery, haughtiness and high-brow attitude.

What do you dislike most in yourself?
My erratic temperament.
What is your most precious [illegible]?
[illegible] do you always carry?
My wallet, handkerchief and car keys.
What makes you most depressed?
Children and animals suffering.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
The whole of it (But I have no choice).
What is your favourite word?
No favourites in particular.
What is your favourite journey?
Into the wilderness.
What is your favourite dream?
I don't remember dreams.
What is your nightmare?
[illegible]ition explosion.

What do you dislike your appearance?
[illegible] of it [But choice]

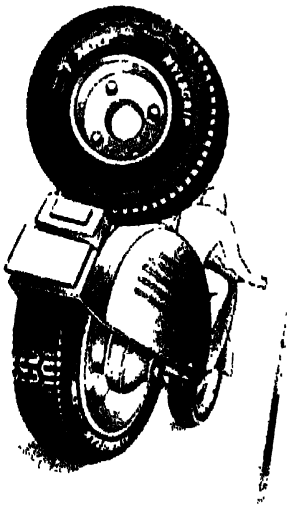
What is greatest regret?
Not getting an opportunity to [illegible]

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My wife Mithu.
What is your source of sustenance?
My mother Monika Chakrabarty
On what occasions do you lie?
On rare occasions.
What is your greatest regret?
Not getting an opportunity to work with Satyajit Ray

What has been your happiest moment?
Many of them, in fact.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Care, concern and faith.
How do you relax?
By sitting in a jungle and listening to nature.
What do you envy most in others?
Their ability to keep their cool.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a man who was not selfish.
How would you like to die?
Working.

The Advantage ...NO SCOOTER CAN BE DENIED

MRF NYLOGRIP



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POST MORTEM

Made for Each Other

■ When celebrity marriages are crumbling globally, the marriage of sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and Subhalakshmi, has proved to be an exception ('The Maestro's Muse', June 23).

Of course, to make a marriage work there has to be strong commitment from both ends. In this case the credit goes more to Subhalakshmi who sacrificed her career for the sake of her husband and family.

As wife and mother she has reached total fulfilment. No wonder she looks so happy and radiant!

There is no conflict in the family even in terms of religiosity; thanks to the parents the Khan children have a perfect secular approach to life. If only all Indians could view religion in the same fashion as the Khan's then there would be no communal violence in the country.
Sujit Banerjee,
Calcutta

■ It is said that behind every successful man there is a woman. And the saying could not have been more true in the case of Amjad Ali Khan.

Though Khan saab tasted success early in life (even before meeting his better half), it was only because of her homely attitude, mature love and sacrifice that the maestro's married life and career did not experience any crisis.

She's an ideal wife and mother. The women of this generation should learn a few things from her: the importance of the home-maker.
Sanchari Ghosh,
Howrah

Perfect match: The khans at a function

■ Without his wife's support and sacrifice Amjad Ali Khan would not have been that successful. For a musician with a career as demanding as his, the sarod player looks a happy family man.
Sumanta Ghosh,
Burdwan (W.B.)

■ Apart from being the 'better-half' of Amjad Ali Khan does Subhalakshmi Khan have any special qualities to warrant the kind of attention that is lavished on her?
Arta Mishra,
Calcutta

■ Subhalakshmi Khan is indeed an admirable personality. The kind of social circuit she hails from generally has women busy in their personal life; partying and shopping. They are unable to spend quality time with their husbands and children. But here she is a devoted wife and mother controlling the home.
Sujoy Karmakar
Madhyamgram (W.B.)

■ It is true music knows no barriers. The Amjad Ali-Subhalakshmi pair is a perfect *sangam*: a meeting of two minds that has overcome all hurdles of caste and creed. Mr and Mrs Khan are a true symbol of national integration.
Md Tanweer,
Calcutta

■ Subhalakshmi has once again established the fact that it is the woman, always, who makes or breaks a home.
Tapan Chowdhury,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Noyonika Chatterjee

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NOYONIKA CHATTERJEE, the model with the unconventional good looks, turns to celebrity management

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BRISTLING WITH ideas, culture secretary B.P. Singh is the bureaucrat to watch out for.

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Cover: Kakoli Dorjee

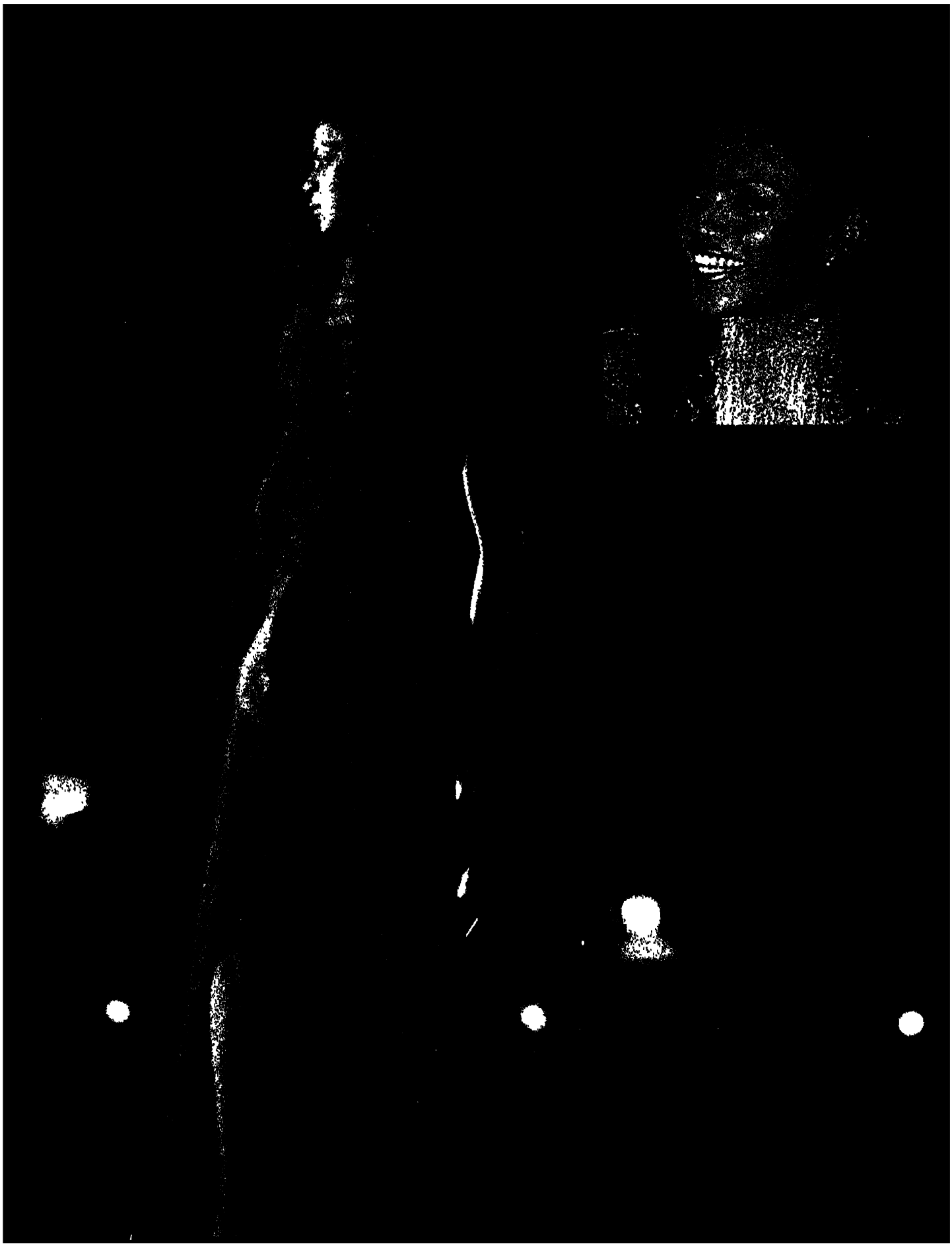
COVER STORY

Tall Dark and Beautiful

Noyonika Chatterjee's unconventional good looks are a big hit. ***Anita George*** *profiles the model-turned-celebrity manager*

BY INDIAN STANDARDS SHE HAS UNCONVENTIONAL looks — a total contrast from the waxen buxom wide-eyed doll-like beauty that draws fans and adulation like ants to honey. Eight years after she appeared on the modelling scene for the first time, Noyonika Chatterjee, the reigning queen of the ramp, sits in an office in the suburb of Andheri at work in her new role as celebrity manager in Media Entertainment, the company set up by Anupam Kher.

At the peak of her career Noyonika is cutting down on modelling assignments to pursue other interests. "Actually, I have always been doing something alongside modelling," says the unassuming



Ranjan

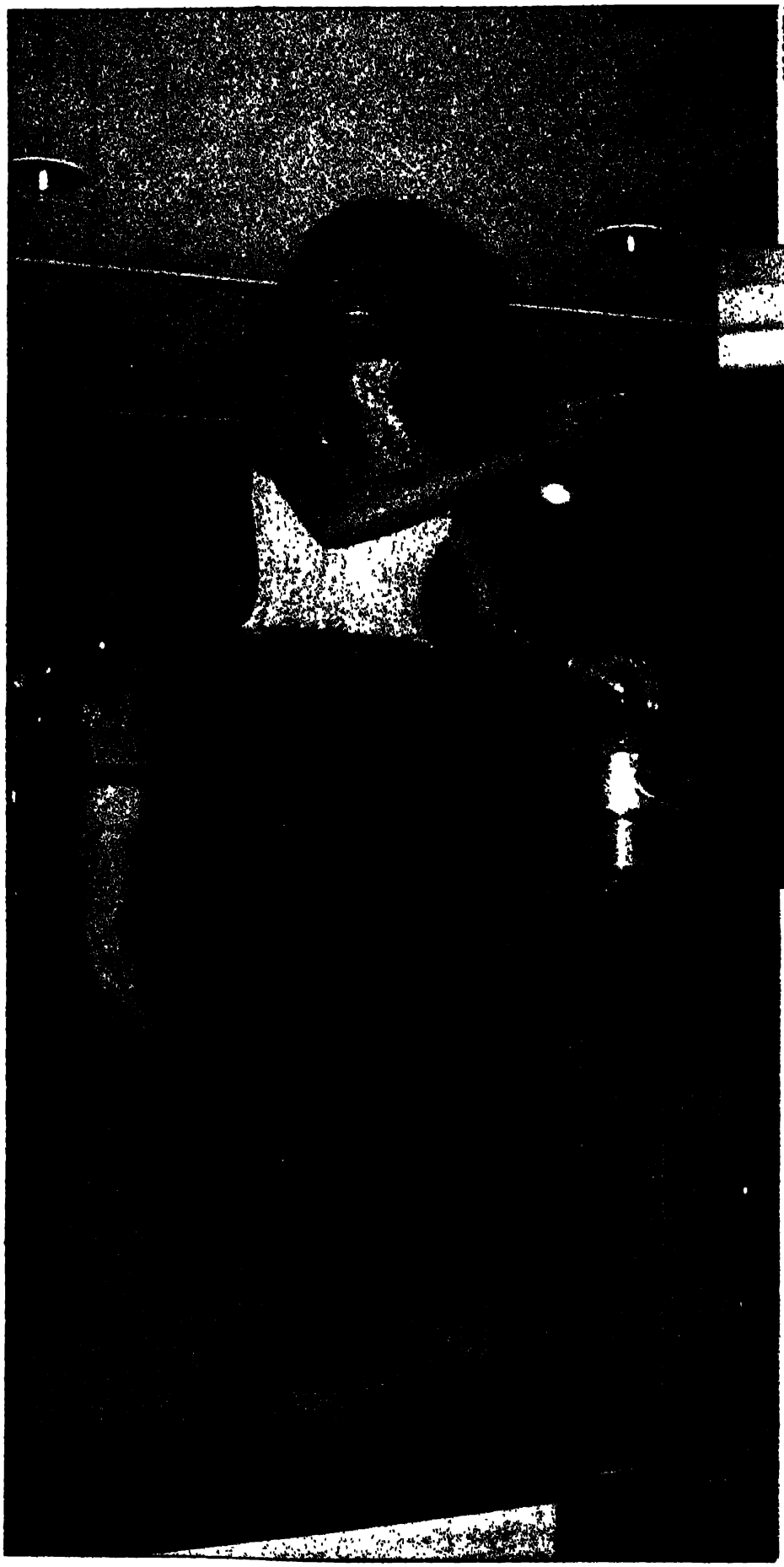
lady in her soft spoken manner. "First I was studying, then I went to the NID in 1989 to learn ceramic design. I began modelling in college, but not with the intention of making a career of it." Modelling shot her to fame, but as she puts it, "I didn't get carried away with the glamour of it. In fact," she adds, "for a while when I stopped studying and did just modelling it really bothered me! I felt I wasn't using my full potential."

As a student of St Xavier's College, Noyonika got into modelling as a hobby. One show led to another, and a full time profession. "Apart from the excitement of doing shows, there was all the travel, seeing different cultures. I love walking the streets of a new place, taking it in, eating off the roads. I love food, and no, I don't have any regimen or diet. I just control my eating when I start putting on weight. And I'm not too excited by clothes, I don't spend so much time shopping for them. Modelling also made me very independent," she adds. "Even though I was living with my parents, it

Ashok Sallan

was as good as living here on my own. It really taught me to manage my affairs!"

On stage she cuts a different figure from the rest, with her dramatic curly hair and sultry looks. "She has absolutely international looks,"



Pradipta Das

says Mehr Castellino, who took Noyonika to Germany in September last year. "They thought she was European or African!" With her stride and poise, with an unforced regality about her appearance, Noyonika appears a natural personality for the catwalk. Photographer Gautam Rajadhyaksha raves about "this miracle on the ramp. Not everyone has the ability to display

Pradipta Das

the potential of a garment or fabric when worn — some people develop it, but she understands it so well, even when she started out."

Despite everything Noyonika has restricted her appearances in print advertising saying: "I personally enjoy ramp modelling, it is fast, it gets over, unlike shoots, which go on and on! Being on the ramp is like a performance, with the music, the audience, everything." Rajadhyaksha disagrees with her decision about limiting her appearance in print advertising. "She has the personality. At the time she entered the scene maybe people were more conservative, but look at the scene today, the kind of ad films and still photography being done! Personality counts today. I would love to shoot her. She is an artist in every way."

An appropriate choice of word, since Noyonika has always been artistically inclined. She paints, and loves to collect art material — brushes, pens, paper. "When I was young my parents were always sending me off to

some workshop or other! And one of them was a pottery workshop. Perhaps that somewhere struck a chord, because I later on enrolled at the National Institute of Design for a course in ceramic design."

And so to the subject that makes an otherwise rather quiet interviewee visibly light up "You have at your disposal all this clay and a wheel, and these shapes take place in your hands. The feeling is like magic!" When she decided to train in pottery back in 1989, when ceramics wasn't as popular as it is getting to be today, the general reaction to her decision was a bemused one. What, pottery?

"And after my studies at the NID, I realised that it couldn't be a full time occupation " She held two exhibitions in the city, though, one at home and one in a gallery. A great break came when she wrote to the famed 'potter architect' Ray Meeker in Pondicherry asking to work with him. "I literally begged him in my letters" she says,

Pabitra Das

smiling And eventually went to Auroville in 1992. Working with Ray Meeker — who developed the technique of firing mud houses that he designs, after packing them with bricks, as one would do in a kiln — was "a brilliant learning experience" The following year she returned to Pondicherry for another six months

"I would eventually like to start a

Pabitra Das

Noyonika Chatterjee with model Achla Sachdev

pottery studio here, but it demands too much, specially with space being such a problem here." Going by the rates that studio potters in Delhi and Bombay charge for their pieces, it would appear that ceramics is an elitist exercise, leaving the average buyer unable to indulge in some good taste. Noyonika is keen to prove the notion wrong. "I want to give people an opportunity to buy. I do believe it can be made affordable — in my exhibitions, mugs were priced at Rs 25, and the most expensive item was a coffee table for Rs 1,500." Which is, by any standards, reasonable "The thing is that abroad everything handmade has a special value, is a novelty, so it carries over here!"

Her new challenge though, is handling Celebe, the celebrity department of Anupam Kher's company, Media Entertainment, a job she took up two months ago. Set up two years ago, Media Entertainment began as a television software company, then diversified into celebrity management, with advertising films, event management, and feature films as well, in the pipeline

"I got into this when Anupam and I were working on a television serial, which was put on hold He asked me whether I would like to handle this department. Basically what we do here is manage people's careers — mostly people who want to work in the entertainment business. We handle two kinds of people, celebrities and potential celebrities," says Noyonika.

Noyonika is responsible for meeting and sizing up hopeful entrants into the world of entertainment — actors and actresses in films and television, singers, even some models. "We manage everything about their professional life — their shooting dates, promotion and publicity, photofeatures, payments. It's a job I really identify with, because, having been through it all myself, when I look back I wish I had had someone to manage my career I wasn't good at promoting myself, and I'm really diffident about discussing money. A lot of people have problems discussing money and getting payments on time. And I want to make it very clear that we are choosy about the potential of the people we take. Though there is a registration fee, if we feel that someone is genuinely unable to pay it, we forego it."

Well known personalities like Madhu Sapre and National Award winning Bengali actress Debashree Roy (Chumki) are under the Celebe wing too. "In the case of established names we manage their schedules, payments, if necessary do a re-imaging or relaunch. Celebrity management is a new concept in India. Professionalism has got to come in!" Years of experience as a model have come in very handy. "It has taught me to deal with people, I can handle all sorts without getting ruffled. Besides, I know people in the business, I'm aware of the problems that crop up." Her ability to relate to people is well appreciated by those who know her, who describe her as very professional and with an excellent attitude despite all her success.

David Dobson

She puts her success down to her parents, "who are always there for me. We are extremely close; I know whatever I do they will never let me down!" So whenever Noyonika decides it's time to make the move into ceramic design as a profession, she will be banking on her own pragmatism and level headed approach to life, and the bulwark of her family's affection that has sustained her. ■

EXTRACT

The Modern-day RAMAYANA

Extracts from ***Shobita Punja's*** *new book in which she reinterprets several myths of the Hindu tradition*

Who is Ravana?

In the *Ramayana* he was handsome, very seductive, influential He became very powerful and the planets, the earth, even the gods were terrified of him.

Ravana is our greed. He has ten heads, one body with ten mouths to feed. He is our over-indulgent pampered self-perception, our obsessions, our excessive consumption, our unbridled greed for more, our extravagant lifestyle, our exorbitant taste, our immoderate demands, our superfluous entertainment, our voracious appetite, our gluttonous greed.

One quarter of the food purchased in the United States is never consumed; it either rots in the fridge or is wasted on the plate.

By the year 2000 more than 588,000,000 people on this planet will be seriously undernourished

Ravana, our lust Eventually Ravana is left lying dead on the battle field where his lovely wife Mandodari finds him Her lament is one of the most moving passages of the *Ramayana*. She talks to Ravana as if he were alive, chastising him for his fall You had everything: a beautiful wife, a huge empire, faithful courtiers, enormous power; the earth trembled whenever you walked. Why should someone with a beautiful, talented wife want another? why should one with so much power be destroyed by a woman who refused to compromise? Why should lust trip up someone as mighty as Ravana? Why should someone who has everything want more?

Ravana had ten heads which means he also had 20 eyes. Twenty eyes for looking and lusting. Twenty eyes to covet and crave with. Twenty eyes to express his desires Twenty eyes. Why do we, who have everything, have a limitless appetite for more?

Ravana's downfall was his lust· his obsession to possess another man's wife. You must understand that Ravana is not some corny hero; not even the classic villain of Western cinema He is handsome, extremely well brought-up, educated and suave In other words, one of us That makes him, Ravana the character, more frightening and more convincing. What is terrifying is that Ravana and the *Ramayana* have been around for over 2,000 years Yet no one seems to have recognised Ravana and killed him. Ravana looks suspiciously and dangerously like us

Ravana's greed, the object of his passion, was Sita, He lusted after the earth, the fertility of the soil, the bounty of nature, the abundance of the land. The *Ramayana* clearly demonstrates that Sita cannot be possessed: she will not be subjugated, coerced or forced to yield. We cannot forcibly possess or own her. We do not possess the earth, just as we cannot possess innocence, cannot retain our youth

The relationship of human beings and the earth is described in much of Indian literature The alliance is still understood by many A village story-teller in Khajuraho was explaining the relationship to a group of villagers. I cannot improve on his sentiment. He said, "In the village market today I heard the two brothers were fighting over a piece of property. The land was given to them by their father to share and nurture together. Now each one wants the land for himself. How strange, I thought.

The earth is Parvati, Shiva's beautiful, often temperamental wife.

How can we fight over the earth?

She does not even belong to us.

Extracted from *Daughters of the Ocean*
by
Shobita Punja
Published by
Viking Penguin India
Price Rs 300

She is Shiva's wife not ours to have and hold.

Our ideas about nature, the way we look upon the earth, also reflect how we understand human nature. Is nature something to be suppressed, controlled, manipulated? Must we strive to reap as much as we can from the earth, to exploit, dominate, tame it. If this is how we think of the earth, then it is not surprising that we have the same attitude about people and children, and about our own bodies How do you look upon your body; how do you respond to the earth, to Sita, to Parvati?

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion ofthe land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on He leaves his father s grave behind, and does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children and he does not care His father's grave and his children's birthright are forgotten He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother the sky, as things to be bought and plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the whole earth... .

—Chief Seattle, the Sacred Earth.

Abduction of Sita

Sita was abducted. Ravana, symbolising all the tantalising pleasures of the world, is the abductor, the seducer, Sita's kidnapper. Sita did not go willingly but was taken by force. Your innate goodness, childhood, your dreams, your innocence will be lost, and taken by force. Schooling, socialisation will ensure the abduction of your true nature.

Over 10,000 women were raped last year in India; nearly 25 per cent of them were children.

What is the world's record?

Sita was abducted; kidnapped. My reading is that the fertility of the earth is being taken by force every day. You want to know why I say this Look around you, not at politicians or what governments are doing. Take a good look at me. Take a look at some letters from friends.

I have re-done the bathrooms of my house in California with Italian marble. I bought an afghan hound for my apartment in Bombay....In the country I have a macaw that has come all the way from the jungles of South America.... My husband went to Japan and bought me a necklace

The author, Shobita Punja

of five rows of natural pearls . . I love your coral necklace, is it from Naples?

Every year over 200,000 parakeets are illegally exported from India One out of three arrive alive at their destination.

Sita Said 'No'

We can also read the metaphor of Sita as our ability to say 'No' Ravana offered Sita everything; promised the world on a platter He wooed her, sought to seduce her, threatened and kidnapped her. He took her to his palace and showed her the wealth he had accumulated. the riches, the jewels and the power that would be hers if she would just give herself to him Very tempting! But like Sita, we have to say 'No' It is tempting but you have to resist and refuse to comply. It is an indecent proposal, if you succumb, it will shatter everything that you value and hold dear

Ravana is the promise of a life of ease, a life of power, a life of war, a life of hatred, a life of indulgence, a life that causes the destruction of so many other lives.

An innocuous looking hamburger The cost. the earth

A world where everyone eats as much meat as the Americans is a recipe for ecological disaster.

Refusing to compromise, refusing a gift, refusing to comply when you realise its actual cost. What is the cost of eating meat: the loss of forest land, home to so many species, that has been converted into poor grazing fields for a single species. The cost of aerated drinks in aluminium cans. the loss of forest cover, the ruins of the earth's watersheds, displacement of tribal communities in order to mine bauxite to make cans that hold a drink that ruin our teeth. The cost of individuals driving private cars to and from work each day: the loss of unrenewable resources, congestion and pollution of our cities, the systematic destruction of our health

What would you do if you were given a mink coat, a pair of snakeskin boots, a string of corals? We have to start saying 'No'

We have to teach our children that tiger penis soup, bird's nest soup, ox tail soup, and frog leg soup are no longer fashionable

The rate of extinction of species has now reached at least one species per day By the middle of the next century we could lose one quarter of all species with whom we share the planet today

What you wear, what you eat, what you use every day will insidiously destroy you Greed breeds violence. What we eat, what we wear, what we say, what we do not say, all breed violence. Be Sita and have the strength to say 'No'. Drop the pretence, be confident There are many Sita's today There are many who have started saying 'No' Begin at home, and see how much you have done in the name of progress, sophistication, class, fashion, or just to keep up with the neighbours Know when to say 'No'. Learn when to stop --when enough is enough

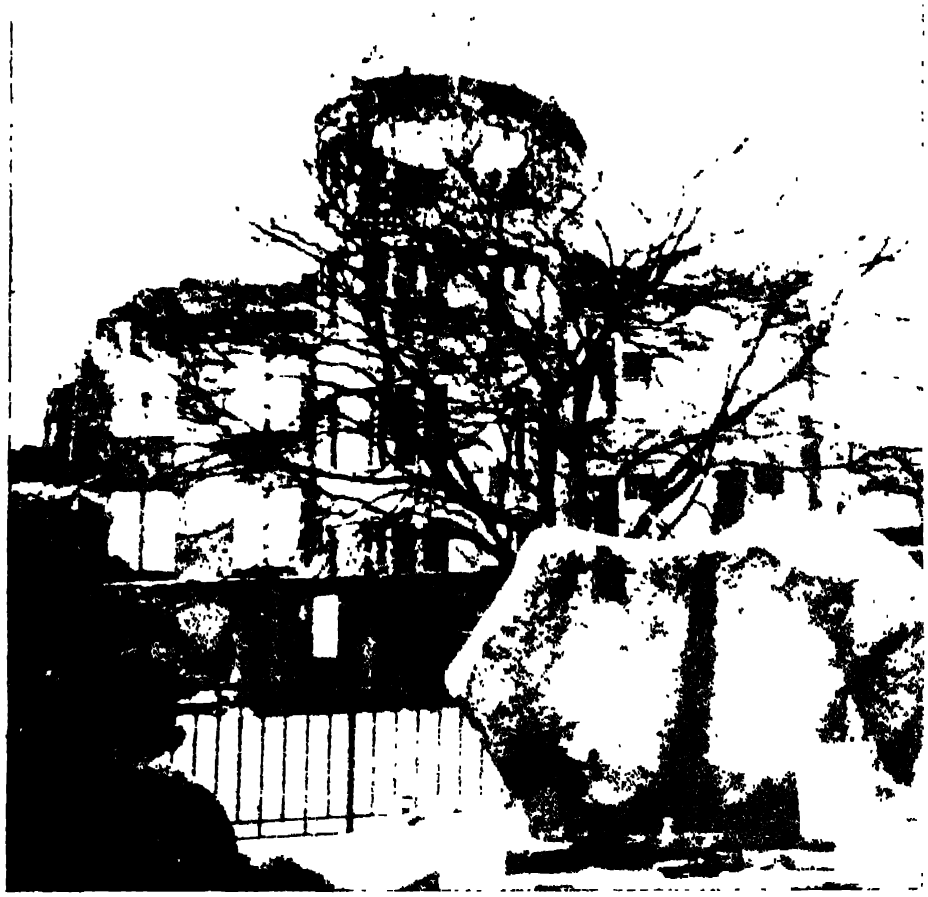
How many lives support you? How many death are necessary to keep you happy? How many deaths will you cause in a day: one cow, ten square kilometres of forest cover, one lobster, twenty prawns, one goat, one chicken, a small section of coral reef, one oyster, one tiny little snail? How many deaths do we cause each day?

Be Sita Just say 'No'

Unheeded Messages

When Sita was abducted by Ravana she left messages with the animals, the birds, the plants, the trees. "Tell Rama," she said, ' that I have been kidnapped."

Rama cried out, "Where is Sita?" in a voice broken by sobs. Thus addressed by the Lord of Men, the deer rose and turned their heads towards the south, looking upward, thus indicating the



A gutted dome structure at Hiroshima

path by which Sita had been borne away... then the deer emitted cries, running in front of the two brothers seeking to attract their attention

—The Ramayana of Valmiki, Aranya Khanda, ch 64

Rama failed to understand the messages. Only too often so do we.

Nature is transmitting messages all the time —symptoms, signals, signs.

Seeing that great vulture, like unto a crest of a mountain, Rama said to Lakshmana, "Without doubt there is the titan who, ranging the forest under the guise of a vulture, has destroyed Sita. Having satisfied himself by devouring that large-eyed princess, he is resting at ease; I shall pierce him with my dreaded, fiery shafts that fly straight to their target."

Vomiting blood, that great bird Jatayu, addressed Rama the son of Dasharatha in the mournful accents of one about to die. He said, "O thou of long life, that divinity whom thou seekest in the great forest, as one does a healing herb, has been borne away by Ravana, as has my life also.

—The Ramayana of Valmiki, 'Aranya Khanda', ch 67.

Jatayu the great bird was a friend not foe. The brave bird lost his life trying to save Sita. Fortunately for Rama, the dying bird was able to provide him crucial information about Sita in time. At least he listened — and eventually Rama heard what was being said to him.

Human beings have been using animals and birds as indicators of environmental disasters.

Coalminers carried canaries in cages down mines to test for dangerous air. If the canary died, the miners knew that oxygen was in short supply or of the existence of a pocket of poisonous gas. With the death of the bird they knew, sometimes, that they just enough time to escape. In much the same way, the decline in animal and bird species throughout the world is a clear indicator that our lives are in danger.

Today over 25,000,000 people die each year of polluted water and water borne diseases.

How many floods, famines, disasters, tragedies or deaths must occur before you realise what is happening to the earth.

The Sleeping Gargantuan

When the fortunes of war turned and Ravana felt he was losing, he woke his brother, Kumbhakarna. The giant who slumbered was awakened for a day and he destroyed whatever he could.

The world had been at war for many years. The ambiguous nature of victory eluded both sides. In a desperate attempt to settle the issue and claim themselves victors they awoke Kumbhakarna.

On the sixth day of August 1945 the weather was fine. A gentle breeze was blowing over the land and sea. The day began as normal; people who were going to work, children were walking to school.

A message was sent to the American B-29 plane Enola Gay. "Fair weather ready for the air raid."

At 8.15 am that morning an atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima. A huge 'mushroom cloud' was seen rising over the city. Half an hour later a conflagration broke out. Then the fire-storm erupted. Between 11 am and 3 pm that day the fire reached a climax, a powerful tornado developed. Rumbling thunder was heard from afar.

Black clouds and smoke drifted towards the north—west. 'black rain' poured. For over an hour it rained over an area of thirteen square kilometres around the bomb's hypocentre. As 'black rain' fell, it was sticky and people thought it was oil pouring from the sky leaving a black spotty pattern wherever a raindrop struck. The river turned black. Fish died, cattle that ate the grass on which the black rain had fallen, died.

The temperature fell rapidly and people shivered. 200,000 people lost their lives in Hiroshima.

The devastation was caused by a combination of heat rays, blasts and fires. The total area of 13 square kilometres around the hypocentre was reduced to ash. People died of thermal injury: intense burns, their skin fried and charred like charcoal. They died of blast injuries as they were blown against walls and crushed to death. They died of radiation injury. They died because of the decimation of the environment. Fifty per cent of those seriously injured died by the sixth day. Another 25 per cent died between the seventh and twelfth day. Ninety per cent of those injured died by the fortieth day.

Today, two generations have been born and brought up on radiation in the soil and in the foetus; 50 years later the people of Hiroshima

A Ram Lila being staged in New Delhi

bear the scars—leukaemia, anaemia and cancer. The loss to the fertility of the earth cannot even be estimated.

Today the world has the equivalent of one million Hiroshima bombs; enough to kill four times the present global population.

Khumbakarna is like our Sleeping Devastation. Our Hiroshima, the nuclear holocaust, the sleeping giant with an appetite for destruction.

You may say, "I did not start the war." That's not true. As long as you are silent, as long as you don't say 'No' to war, you are guilty as I am. The giant who devours innocent people and children lies asleep.

You may say, "I do not care; it did not happen to me. I was not there; nothing can happen to me." The Inert Violator is asleep, not dead. It is alive, and only a day of wakefulness can devour this planet.

Like Rama, we have to dismantle it completely, limb from limb, so that we, the human race as protectors of the earth, can live without fear of our Kumbhakarna.

Life Without Sita

The war was won.

Rama questioned Sita's innocence. Once, twice; once too often.

Do you accuse Rama for having questioned Sita's innocence? Do you think it was unforgivable that he doubted her loyalty? In a day how often do I betray Sita? I have done nothing to prevent trees from being cut, to limit my greed, to stop wars, to make this planet a safer place for my daughter to inhabit. I stand accused of far worse crimes.

By the time my daughter was three years old she had learnt that swimming was in the confines of a pool, not amidst the expanse of the ocean; that flowers grew in pots on a balcony and not wild on the hillside; she has seen tigers only in the zoo, not free in their natural habitat, the jungle.

My daughter will never see the exuberance of a tropical rain forest, the sparkling loveliness of a clear uncontaminated river, green valleys that have not been converted into crop fields, a million twinkling stars in an unpolluted sky. Will Sita who has such faith in me, abandon me? I stand accused of denying, debasing and banishing Sita.

Someone gave my daughter a toy gun.

I did not destroy it.

Will she forgive me?

The tale of *Ramayana* is alive: it is still being told, retold, acted, enacted, lived and relived. Every year in India we celebrate the defeat of Ravana and the return of Sita with much festivity. The myth of Rama has great depth and lends itself to endless interpretations. This is how I wish to annotate it, for the significance of the *Ramayana* will always remain very precious to me. I can tell you many epic stories with the same message. Will you listen? ■

VIEWPOINT

THE EIGHTH DEADLY SIN

Views differ on what that might be. ***Manisha Gulati*** *takes a quick poll*

What sin should be added to the seven deadly ones already existing? How often have we heard people turn around and talk about something as being a sin? We see a beauty married to a beast and consider it a sin Our child wastes food at the Taj Bengal and we tell him that's a sin. Are we then all sinners in the guise of moral citizens, or has 'sin' become a synonym for day-to-day slang for high society no-no's?

Views differ. Some consider that nostalgia is the real killer. Housewife Reema Sharma, for instance "Why do people think that the past is better than the future?" she asks. "They're always talking about what was, what could have been, and how things in the past were always better Hindsight is always 20/20 But one should look forward, not back.

"That's our country's biggest mistake. The days of fuel for 50 paisa have gone. Now think about today and make the best of what is there. It's the only way to progress."

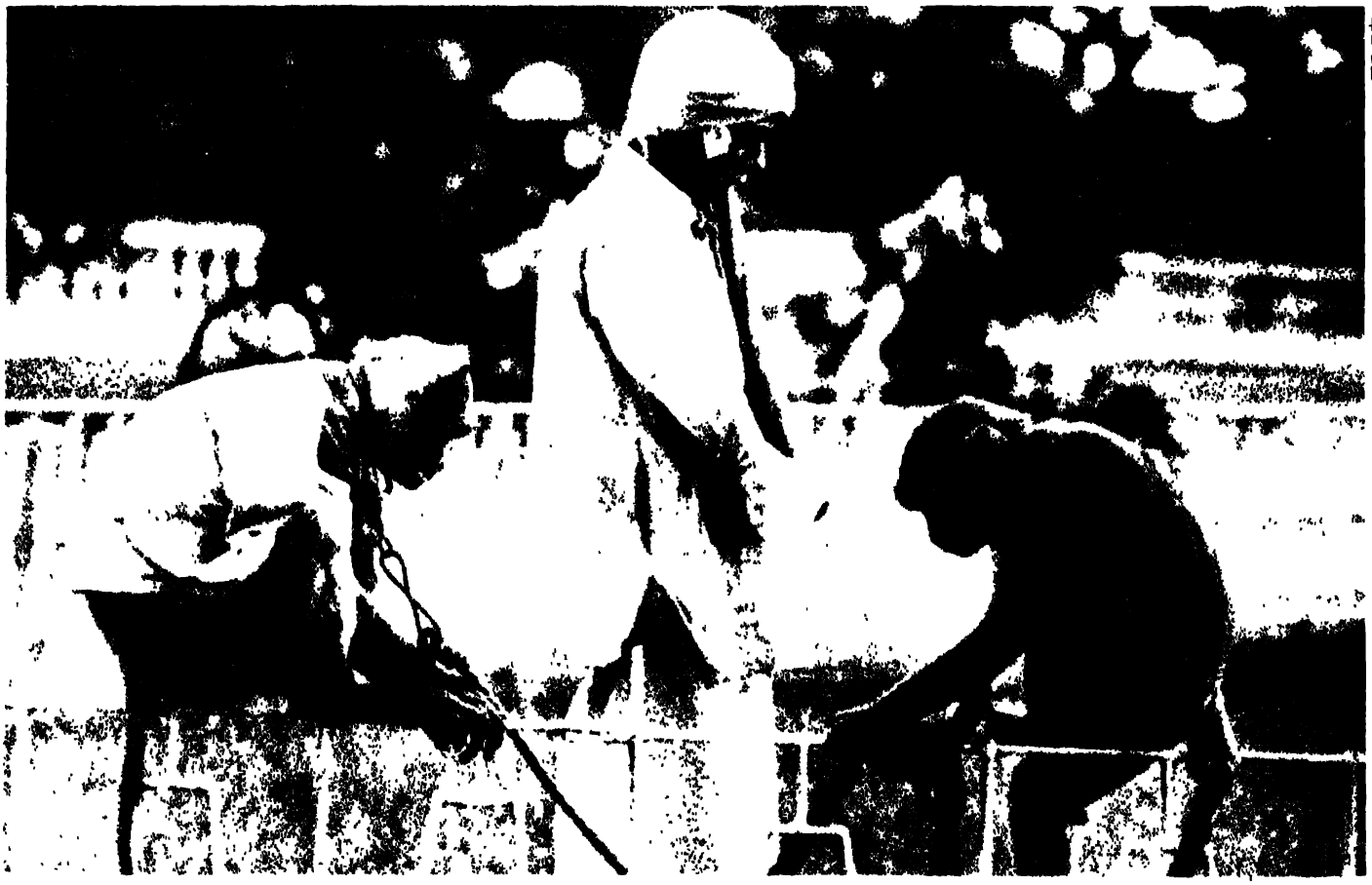
Varsha Diwan, a producer, takes a different view of the matter According to her, hypocrisy is the eighth deadly sin. Saying things like "How lovely to see you again", "Of course I remember you", "We must get together for lunch some time", "Promise I'll call you in the morning"

"Why do people say things they don't mean? No one is sincere any more. You don't know whom to believe and whom not to As a result you end up taking the wrong people seriously and the right ones you treat like dirt," she says.

Mohini Sethi, professional cook and teacher, says in her book that "overpowering delicate food" is a sin. She hates it when people take delicate tasting food like fish and prawns and douse them with all sorts of *masalas*. "If you want that why don't you cook mutton or pork. They lend themselves to all this flavouring. People in India don't know the first thing about subtlety," says Sethi

Ajit Shinoy, a journalist, votes for intolerance — as far as he is concerned, at least. "I don't suffer fools gladly and I am not proud about that because everyone is not made the same way," he confesses. "I'm always expecting people to be or behave like me. After all, I am not God and I should not forget that I dread to think

Cruelty to animals, according to Maneka Gandhi, is the biggest sin



Tapan Das

For others, terrorism is the greatest sin of all

of the day I'll make a boo boo, I'll have 20 people to stab me in the back and front."

Gurbani Malik, a social worker with Menaka Gandhi, considers cruelty to animals to be the eighth deadly sin; though, no doubt, in Menaka's book, it rates as the first.

Model Nidhi Sharma plumps for jealousy. She says, "Agreed, imitation is the best form of flattery. But when someone thinks you look great and is only resentful of the fact that you do, without wanting to look like that themselves, that's dangerous and harmful. It's the 'I don't want you but I don't want anyone else to want you either' syndrome. That scares me."

In model Stuti Chandok's book, however, having silicon implants qualifies. "God made you in his image, why tamper with it?" she asks. "In the end when you're showing off your cleavage in that skimpy halter, it's all false."

Ajay Mehta says that being orthodox is a real drag. "*Arre*, go with the flow," is his advice. "If your child wants to have a divorce because his marriage has failed, let him. Why hold on to the sanctity of marriage when there is no marriage."

And Mehta should know. He has a son who got divorced recently, and for whom Ajay paid Rs 8 lakhs as part of the divorce settlement.

Neena Chawla, who is an American citizen, votes for the 'British incapacity to be surprised', while Harmeet Singh, whose father was killed during the Delhi riots, considers terrorism to be the greatest sin of all.

Manish, a deejay on FM radio, is more concerned about health — both his own and that of the general public. It is no surprise then that he thinks that there's nothing worse than chain smoking in public places. "It should be banned," says Manish forcefully. "And as for chain-smoking at the table, it quite kills the treat for the people with you — and those seated at the next table."

Pradipto Nandi, choreographer, says that "being told that the cheque is in the mail" is the biggest sin of all. Well, at least, his sense of humour is as healthy as ever, even if his bank balance isn't.

Colonel Vaid, who is a regular at the Gymkhana Club, holds the 'invention of the swizzle stick' to be a sin. "The ladies in the Gymkhana Club use them to kill the bubbles in the champagne," he complains. "Can there by anything more sacriligeous than that?"

Clearly, the Colonel never had the good fortune to meet Bubbles Rothermere, wife of the media tycoon, Vere, who got her nickname from her habit of swirling a swizzle stick around to get rid of the bubbles in her glass of champagne. This kind of trick appears to go down a treat in high society.

Vidya Batra, the 83-year-old social worker and general secretary of the National Association for the Blind, takes a more serious view of the matter. She says, "There are none so blind as those who will not see, none so deaf as those who will not hear, none so dumb as those who will not talk against injustice, cruelty. What sort of a world are we living in where poeple are so involved in their own lives that they cannot even see if their next-door neighbour is dead or alive, let alone care? Everyone is selfish and no one feels another person's pain. The country can't heal if there is no one to heal it."

In photographer Sharad Bhandari's view, "trying too hard" is a sin. He is, therefore, greatly opposed to "those fashion slaves who try so hard at being trendy, but only end up looking like wannabes. Those who can't speak English too well but speak it nonetheless because it's the language of upper class India." Bhandari also condemns hobnobbing with the elite, or at least trying to, by hanging out in the 'right' places.

Poverty is the eighth deadly sin in 13-year-old schoolgirl, Tanya's book. But P.P. Bindra, the owner of Moets Restaurant, is more concerned about prohibition, which may well end up impoverishing him if it were ever extended to Delhi.

"Ever since this wretched prohibition happened in Haryana," he moans, "my life has been ruined. I used to go there to my friend's place practically every evening. Now I don't even want to call him on the phone in case he invites me over because now we can't sit and drink and enjoy ourselves the way we used to. We aren't drunkards, so why are we being punished? Even the doctors say that one drink a day is good for your health."

But the last word rests with Anil Sethi, of *The Times of India*. According to him, the biggest sin of all is not sinning at all! ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ❶ MONDAY ❷ TUESDAY ❸ WEDNESDAY ❹ THURSDAY ❺ FRIDAY ❻ SATURDAY ❼ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC-741	0620	1 2 3 6	IC 742	0845	1 3
			IC-742	1010	4 7
IC-743	0945	daily	IC-743	1200	daily
AHMEDABAD					
M9 304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1300	1 2 4
AIZAWAL					
PF 301	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1550	2 4 5
			PF 302	1635	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	1030	1 3 7	IC 722	1405	1 3 5
IC 721	1250	4 7	IC 722	1530	4 7
D2 181	1330	1 3 5	D2-181	1600	1 3 5
BANGALORE					
IC 771	1600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2130	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 402	0700	1 6	D5 401	1030	1 6
IC-544	1115	3 7	IC 544	1635	3 7
IC-769	1615	1 2 6	IC 770	2120	1 2 6
BOMBAY					
IC-763	0630	daily	M9 433	0830	daily
9W 902	0645	daily	9W 901	0925	daily
M9-304	0850	daily	[illegible]	0925	[illegible]
IC 402	1115	daily	IC-401	0955	4 7
IC-856	1330	4 7	IC 401	0955	daily
M9 302	1945	daily	M9 301	1900	daily
9W-912	1950	daily	9W 911	1115	daily
			IC 764	2210	daily
CHANDIGARH					
D2-182	1425	1 3 5 7	IC 702	1640	1 3 5 7
IC 701	1240	1 3 5 7	D2 182	1525	2 4 6 7
COIMBATORE					
IC 257	1145	4 7	IC 258	1550	4 7
PF-301/305	0645	2 4 6	PF 306/310	1355	2 4 5
DIBRUGARH					
IC-703	0610	4 7	IC 704	1220	4 7
D5-601	0630	daily	IC 230	1310	daily
PF 301	0840	1 3 7	9W 512	1310	daily
IC-229	1600	daily	PF 302	1500	daily
9W 611	1620	daily	IC 764	1805	1 3 5
IC 703	1500	1 2 5	D-605	2015	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W 511	1100	daily	IC 778	2115	3 5 7
IC-777	1615	3 5 7	IC 778	2120	1 2 6
IC 769	1615	1 2 6	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC-255	0645	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC-213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
KANPUR					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4
JAMMU					
M9 304/119	0850	2, 4	M9-128/301	1900	1 2, 3 4 5 6
JORHAT					
IC 25	1145	4 7	IC 257	1550	4, 7
LILABARI					
PF-301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF-304/302	1635	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 810	1030	1 3 5	IC-811	2100	1 3 5
MADRAS					
D5 402	0700	1 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1115	1 2 4 5 6	IC-545	1635	3 7
IC 544	1115	3 7	D5-403	1155	daily
D2 173	1540	1 3 5	D5-403	1730	3 5
D2-174	1545	2 4 6 7	D-705	2200	daily
IC 765	1720	1			
MUMBAI					
			IC 675	0820	3 7
9W 202	0715	daily	D2 191	0850	daily
IC 576	0730	daily	9W-201	0935	daily
D2-192	0920	daily			
AI 304	1350	6	AI 305	1745	5
9W 212	2000	daily	IC 774	1855	daily
IC 273	1145	daily	9W-211	1925	daily
D2 194	2005	daily	D2 193	1945	daily
NAGPUR					
IC-769	1615	1 2 6	IC 770	2120	1 2 6
PATNA					
D2 406	1330	3 5	IC 249	1820	2 6
IC-249	1445	2 6	D5 406	1835	3 5
IC-810	1620	1 3, 5	IC 811	2100	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC-285	0640	1 3, 5	IC-286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 249	1445	2, 6	IC 249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0700	2 4, 6	IC 254	0940	2, 4 6
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
SRINAGAR					
M9 304/119	0850	2 4	M9-142/301	1900	2 4
TEZPUR					
IC 213	0140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5-402	0700	4 6	IC 541	1030	1 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1115	1 2 4, 5, 6	D5-401	1240	3 5

FLIGHTS

BANGKOK					
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 184	0705	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0325	7	KL 875	0140	7
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0850	2 5	KB 106	1020	3
			KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0855	2 5	TG 415	1240	1 3 6
			IC-732	1505	2, 5
IC-855	1105	4 7	IC-856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1825	6
BRUNEI					
RO 076	2130	5 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC-225	0700	1	IC 226	0920	1

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG 697	1655	2 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0650	4 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3 6 7
IC-723	1400	1 3 5 6	IC 724	1520	1 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3 5, 6 7	BG 093	1825	1, 2 3 5, 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1000	1	Q7 060	1230	2
DUBAI					
BI-107	2100	6	BI-106	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC-747	1035	1 2 4 6	IC 748	1350	1 2 4 6
RA-214	1525	2, 6	RA 213	1425	2 6
LONDON					
BA-142	2115	3 7	BA 141	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
SU-538	2100	4	SU 537	0930	1
[illegible]					
KB-106	1105	1	KB 105	0810	2 6
KB-108	1325	5			
[illegible]					
BI 106	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	2 5	SQ 416	2230	2 5
[illegible]					
[illegible] 504	1750	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
TOKYO					
AI 406	1910	[illegible]	[illegible]	1615	6
YANGON					
IC 727	1510	4 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	[illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	[illegible]	2312
3007	[illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	7-55	3006
3003	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	[illegible]	3004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Grand Chord Dep [illegible] Thurs & Sun Arr [illegible] Wed & Sat	10-15	2482
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Main Line Dep [illegible] & Sat Arr [illegible] Fri & Sun	10-15	[illegible]
2301	16-[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Grand Chord Dep Mon Thurs Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tue Thurs Fri & Sun	10-45	2302
2305	13-45	**Rajdhani Express** via Main Line Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	17-50	2306
2307	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4-10	[illegible]
2019	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21-10	2020
3073	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** on Weekly Dep Tues [illegible] & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11-45	3074
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati Express** Dep Wednesday Arr [illegible]	12-25	3046
5049	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr [illegible] day	11-35	5050
5047	3-0	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4-30	5048
3009	20-[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	[illegible]	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18-15	3008
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11-55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	[illegible]	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3031	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3032
3071	[illegible]	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun, Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	1172
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-30	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Friday Arr Tuesday	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-30	[illegible]
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20 00	**Kaithar Express**	4 15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBC Loop	17 30	3134
3103	18 25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5185	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4 25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20-30	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
6002	19-20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	5-20	6001
2850	12-30	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15-25	2856
2021	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	[illegible]	2022
8034	20-40	**Ahmedabad Express**	5-15	8033
8030	11-20	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	15 20	8029
2841	14-05	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	1[illegible] 05	2842
7003	[illegible]	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express** Dep Sun Tues & Fri Arr Mon Thurs & Sat	14-40	7004
6311	22-35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6312
8013	[illegible]	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8111	[illegible]	**Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express**	21 25	8112
8005	20-55	**Titlagarh Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21 45	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	5 10	8016
8007	22-15	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8409	19-00	**Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 25	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	10 25	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 10	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	11-35	8018
1030	15-50	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep & Arr on Sunday	5-15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only,	16 10	
	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10-45	2422
6321	22-35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Monday only	22 15	
	14 05	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah Guwahati Express** Saturday only	13 45	6221
	14 05	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	
6316	[illegible] 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah, Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri	13 15	6315
6570	22-35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	[illegible]	-
	14-05	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	6519

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

FOCUS

AMBASSADORS OF GOODWILL

*Five Calcutta businessmen double as honorary consuls of various countries. **Sujoy Dhar** finds out what their second jobs entail*

What do Sanjeev Goenka, Harsh Neotia, Abhijit Sen, Amiya Gooptu and J P. Chowdhury have in common? Yes, they're all big names in the corporate world. But that's not the answer we're looking for.

What binds all five men together is that they are all honorary consuls for one country or the other While Sanjeev Goenka, son of the venerable R P. Goenka of RPG Enterprises, does his bit for Holland, Harsh Neotia represents the interests of Israel J.P. Chowdhury, the chairman of Titagarh Industries Limited, is honorary consul of Switzerland Amiya Gooptu of the Everest Group of Industries, represents Hungary while Dr Abhijit Sen, managing director and co-chairman of the NICCO Group, is the honorary consul for Sri Lanka.

And all five men, despite their busy schedules, devote enough time to fine-tuning their diplomatic savoir-faire, replying to trade enquiries that various nations might have, and facilitating cultural exchanges.

Sanjeev Goenka:Does his bit for Holland

While for the foreign nations, one of the reasons behind the appointments is economic—they save on maintaining full-scale consulates in the eastern region of India—for the appointees this means a lot of social prestige.

But how do these nations decide on who would best represent their interests? Amiya Gooptu, who represents Hungary, explains, ``Well, besides a man of means, they prefer a businessman who has links with various stratas of society and possesses a good knowledge of his country's economic and cultural background."

Adds Harsh Neotia, honorary consul for Israel, ``Business interests being the thrust area other than cultural ties, we businessman can convey their message more expeditiously to the concerned people by dint of our affiliations with the various chambers of commerce."

Small wonder then that most businessman are thrilled to be approached with such an offer. Gushes J.P. Chowdhury, honorary consul of Switzerland, ``I was caught unawares when the offer came to me, but it was indeed a pleasant surprise."

It is not necessary, however, that the person appointed have any cultural affinity or business interests with the country in question.

Gooptu's ties with Hungary, for instance, were marginal at best. As he says, ``I personally had been a great admirer of the vigorous cultural life of Hungary which despite being a small country has produced so many Nobel Laureates. But I was quite surprised when they offered me the post."

Dr Abhijit Sen got his offer when he visited Sri Lanka a few years

Arko Datta

Harsh Neotia: Representing the interests of Israel

Arko Datta

J.P. Chowdhury: Pleasant Swiss connection

back with a FICCI delegation But Harsh Neotia's honorary consulship of Israel came about as a result of the businessman's own initiative after he met the Israeli ambassador to Delhi on some occasions

A honorary consul's job includes such ceremonial duties as observing the national day of the nation in question, receiving their dignitaries, etc. But it also entails doing such tough jobs as promoting business and cultural ties, and looking after the problems of tourists from that country.

Says Dr Abhijit Sen, ``Currently Sri Lanka is on a privatisation spree of its tea companies and they want to negotiate with Indian industrialists for that purpose. So, as a honorary consul, I have to help in the process, providing such trade information as is needed to prospective Indian buyers ''

Harsh Neotia too sees his job in much the same way. ``The growing importance of eastern India,'' he says, ``will result in a lot of business ties between Israel and states like West Bengal and Orissa in the field of agro-industries.''And in his capacity as honorary consul, Neotia will facilitate this process

According to Gooptu, the need for honorary consuls arises when a country has potential business interests in a particular area, but the requirement is not substantial enough to set up a permanent consulate. And most people prefer to appoint businessmen, because such a person is associated with his country's economic changes, and can help dispel various apprehensions of a foreign country.

For example, when the minority BJP government came to power (a short-lived stint, as it turned out) at the Centre recently, it was up to Chowdhury, who has held such posts as the president of CII and the Indian Chambers of Commerce in the past, to allay the fears of the Swiss authorities that liberalisation would be discontinued in India. ``I was able to convince them,'' he says, ``citing the examples of states where non-Congress governments were in power, that our economic policy is irreversible whatever party forms the government.''

Business interests apart, cultural interaction plays an important role in the selection of a consul. And more often than not, such interplay between nations improves after honorary consuls are invited.

For instance, soon after Dr Sen took over the consular responsibility of Sri Lanka, the government of that country donated gold railings to the Buddhist shrine at Bodhgaya, where dignitaries and tourists from predominantly Buddhist Sri Lanka come in large numbers.

Thus, it is not surprising that one finds Harsh Neotia organising Israeli film festivals at Nandan. Says Neotia, ``Only recently, the Israeli band, Gathering, famous for its synthesis of eastern and western music, performed to a good response at Kala Mandir.''

Likewise, Amiya Gooptu, the former Sheriff of Calcutta, has to coordinate with such organisations as Asiatic Society for the exchange of scholars. This, in addition to doing

Arup Datta

Abhijit Sen: Improving relations with Sri Lanka

such jobs as looking after the upkeep of the grave of a famous Hungarian scholar in Darjeeling; a site that most dignitaries from that country visit when they come to India.

Indian artistes, too, benefit from the good offices of the honorary consuls For example, when Tanusree Shankar wanted to perform in Switzerland on her way to London, Chowdhury's office came riding to her rescue Visas for the troupe were arranged at the last moment, because of Chowdhury's intervention. So impressed was Shankar, that she later acknowledged this debt in a letter to Chowdhury

But that's not all that honorary consuls have to do. They also have to maintain their independent database, to cater to any enquiries that may come in. While some of these businessmen have their own official staff look after their consular work, Harsh Neotia works as consul out of an annexe to his corporate office, and has an information officer on his consular staff. But, even if extra people are hired, in most cases it is the consul himself who bears the expenses.

Moreover, living up to the dignity of the office also makes honorary consuls extra cautious. Says Gooptu, "I have always believed that I will never use my honourable office to push my own interests." And this sentiment is echoed by all the other honorary consuls as well.

Nor do these people want the fringe benefits associated with becoming members of the diplomatic community. the use of CC plates, imported cars, duty-free liquor. And they feel that the powers or immunities that career diplomats are entitled to remain a grey area.

Amiya Gooptu: Improving ties with Hungary

The government of India, too, is no less fussy in giving its approval for such posts. Despite these businessmen being respected members of the community, most of the honorary consuls were given clearance by the intelligence department only after a thorough checking. For most, it took nearly a year to get the clearance.

The businessmen were also careful about choosing the countries of their appointment. As Chowdhury explains, "I would have thought several times before taking up the job if the offer had not been from a friendly nation."

So, should India follow the example of such countries as Holland and Sri Lanka, and appoint honorary consuls in other countries. According to Gooptu, most certainly. He feels that for strategic reasons alone—if not for business considerations—India should be represented in places like Central Asia and Africa.

Perhaps, the success of these Calcutta businessmen will make our South Block mandarins think afresh one day. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

The moon's quarter energises you and those interested in romance and finance, and I am sure the majority of you are. So the gain will be considerable. Ganesha says the house will have a strong influence on what's going on now in your life. A few of you will be winners all the way.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

While the law of averages is not against you, be sure you know what you want, because you might fall between two major streams and that would be real nasty. Like the Arieans for you, too, home buying and selling will be mighty important. This is a week of pressures.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Mercury your ruling planet is superbly placed, giving you just that extra edge, which makes for champions everywhere. Your income will augment from various sources. While kids and family will make unusual demands, be sure you will be able to cope with them.

Cancer
June 21 - - July 20

If you have been knocking on the doors of opportunity, now is the time when it will open wide and you can step in. Be sure to utilise the opportunites to the hilt. You will be doing the social merry-go-round and interesting contacts could result.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

There's a lot of catching up to do, and if that's not enough, new ventures and activities do take your time and talent. This is a week of moreexpenses than gains though secret help and benefits are also predicted. Travel stars are in the ascendant. You will be taxing your health.

Virgo
August 22 - - September 22

You could well be in an introspective mood, and here, you are in your true element. The paradox is you will be almost forced by circumstances to reach out to people and places. Never a dull moment though the pulls and tugs could wear you down a little.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

The right time to cash in on past favours and endeavours and all that you have done for others. People will be co-operative. Money should exchange hands, flow freely and that's very encouraging. Property affairs go with a swing be it house office or land development schemes.

Scorpio
October 23 - - November 22

Ganesha says a round of love and laughter awaits you, also some opposition to plans and maybe conflicts, and that's the complete picture for the week. Marriage, engagement are the possibilities to be considered and if on the lookout for a collaboration, this is the time for it.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Plenty of movement, hustle and bustle, and in the bargain upward mobility for Sagittarians. The focus now is on finance, work, religion, ceremony and travel. You will have to cover a lot of ground and though you are pretty good at it, a lot will remain to be done.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

Finances will dominate and so will family and the two could well be interconnected. There will be quite a few distractions and attractions for you and the next month could show you the way the wind is blowing. The name of the game will be attachments at all levels.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

You will find the wherewithal and the energy to push ahead despite restraints and a certain hostility. Your relationships and work are the areas which demand your immediate attention. August 11-12 is for making headway. A minor wish fulfillment is possible.

Pisces
February 19 - March 20

Healthwise there will be some improvement but work piles up and you could be hard put to cope with it the first few days. After that, you should be able to manage it rather efficiently. The few days hold great promise of not only satisfaction but positive joy and elation.

BIRTHDAYS

August 11: Moon sextile Mercury helps teachers, writers, artists, designers and all those who live by the written or spoken word.

August 12: Moon opposition Uranus, trine Pluto shows though there will be unexpected changes and difficulties, rest assured you will be able to cope with it.

August 13: Moon trine Saturn indicates your leadership qualities will surface. In matters of the heart, you will find joy.

August14: The new moon helps those in the arts and governmental service. The important note is that the full beneficial effect will be felt on and after February, a sort of amalgam of gains and goodies.

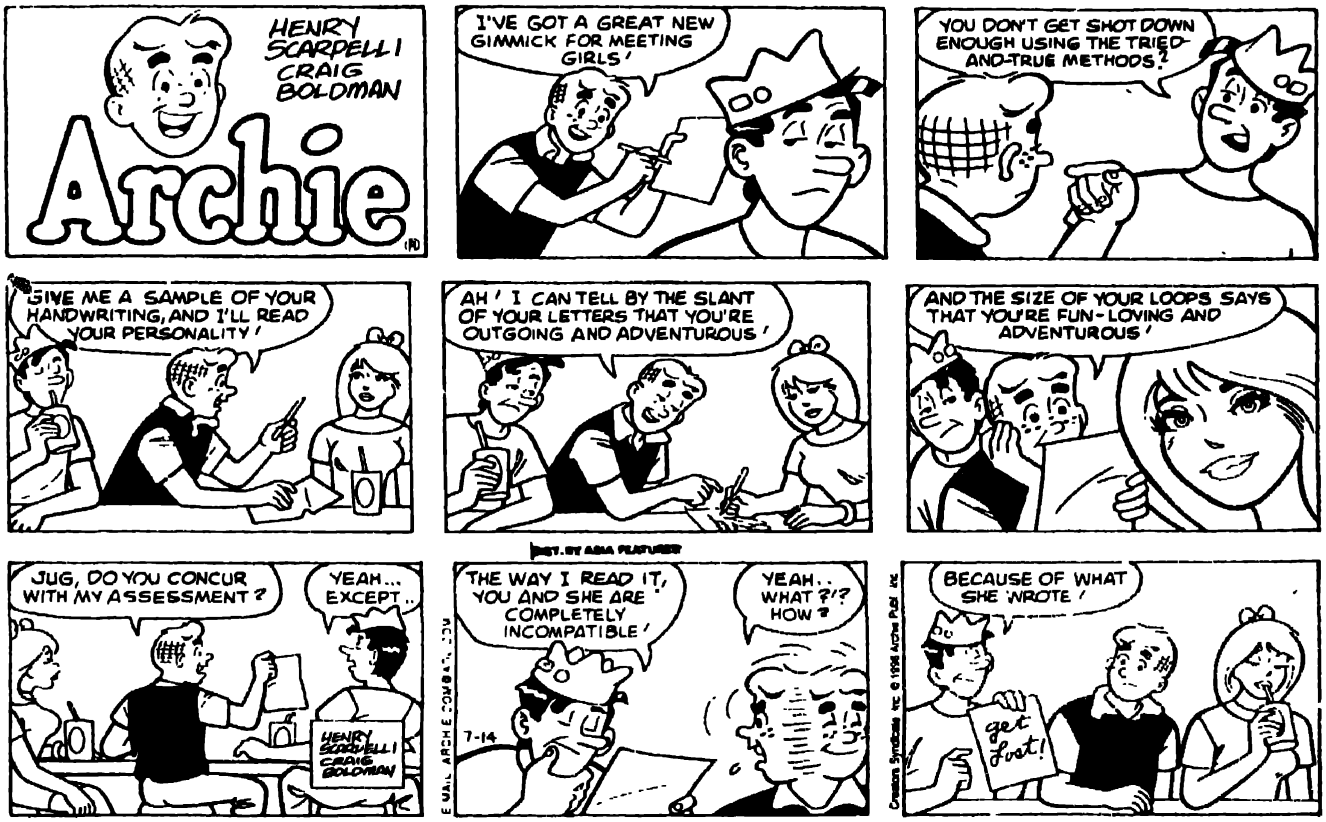
August 15: Moon trines Jupiter giving you material benefits and probably spiritual uplift. Those in business gain considerably.

August 16: Moon sextile Mars means politicians, sportsmen, bankers, importers will be in the limelight of publicity.

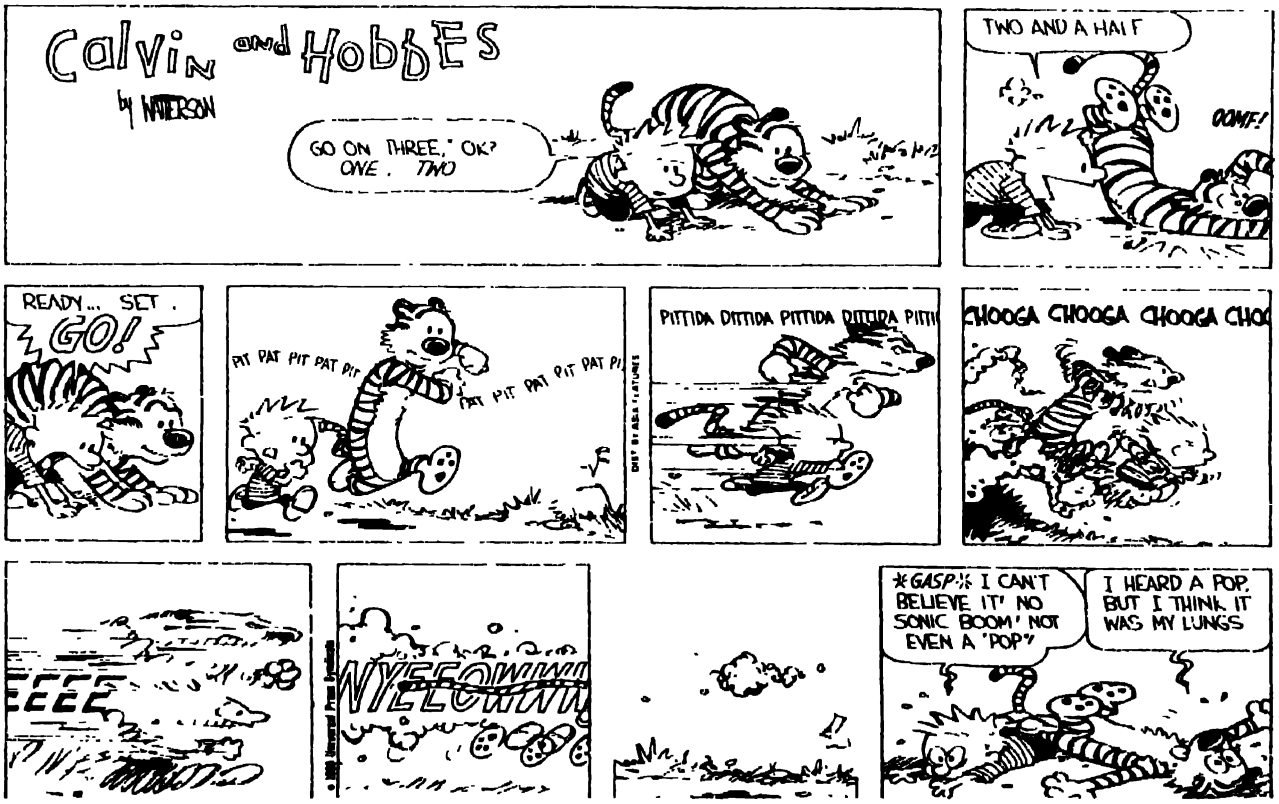
August 17: Moon trine Uranus is excellent for industrialists, artists, researchers, lovers and explorers. For others too, the chances of success are excellent.

COMICS

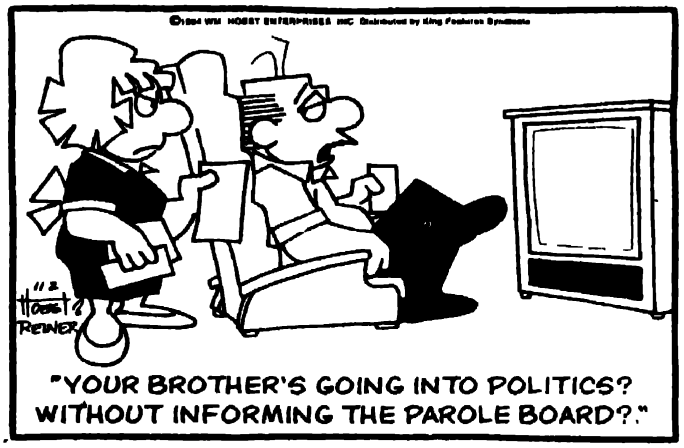
ARCHIE

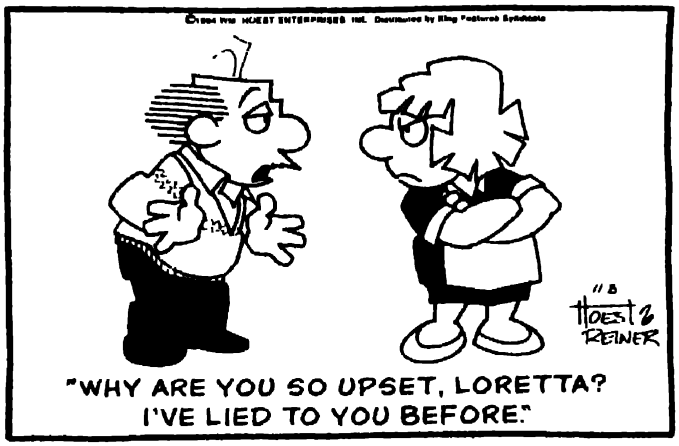


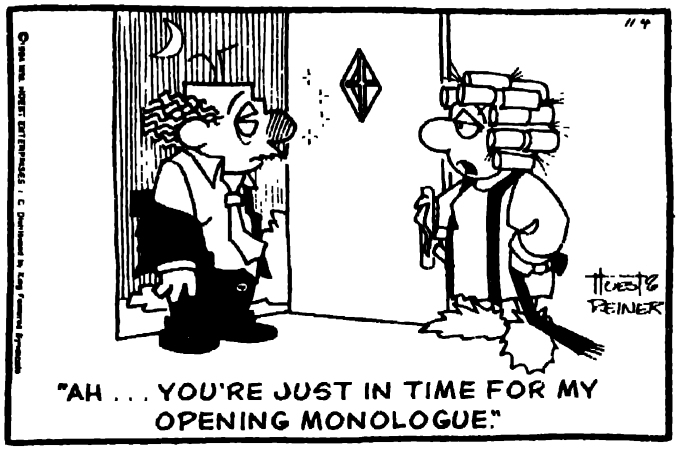
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



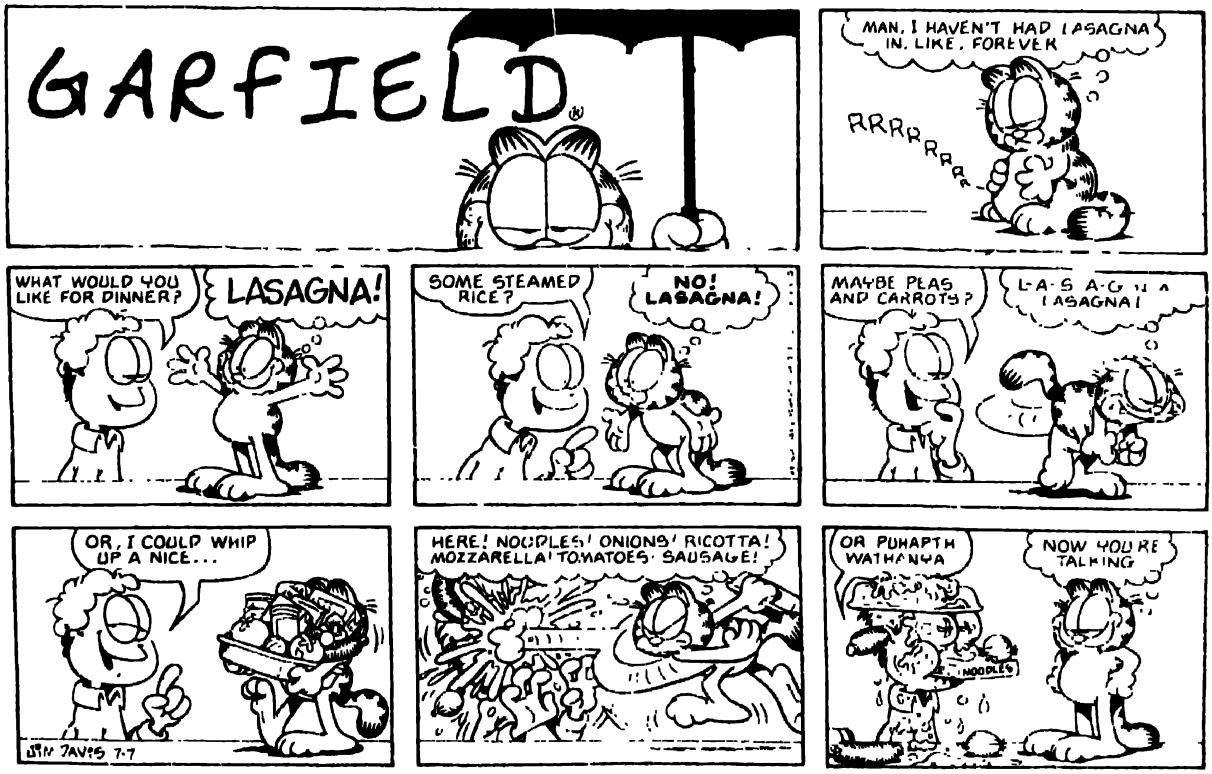
THE LOCKHORNS



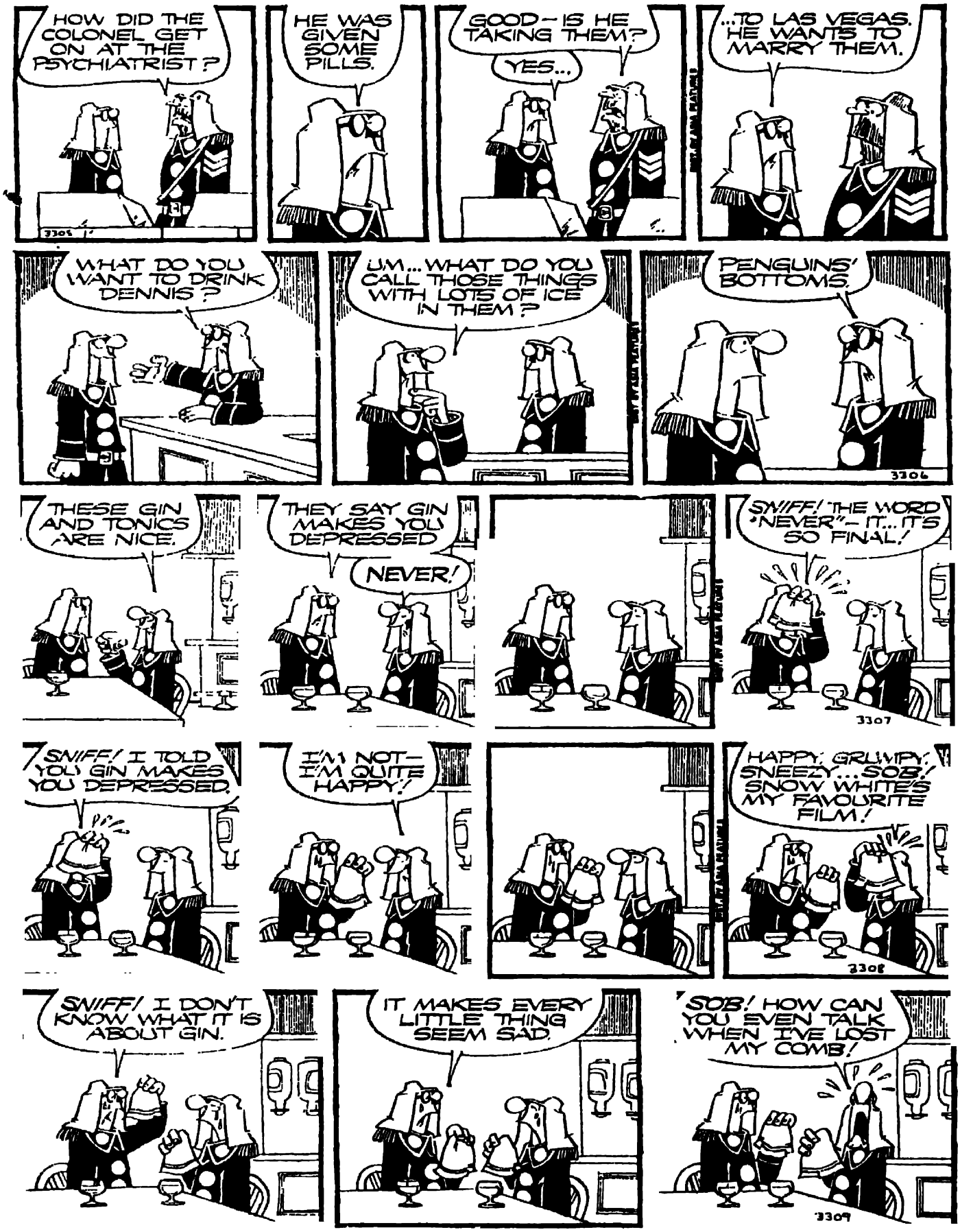


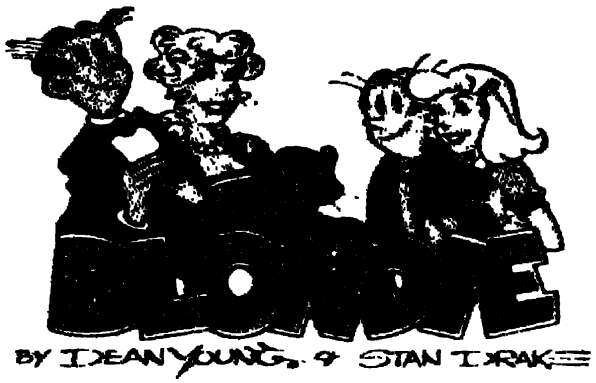


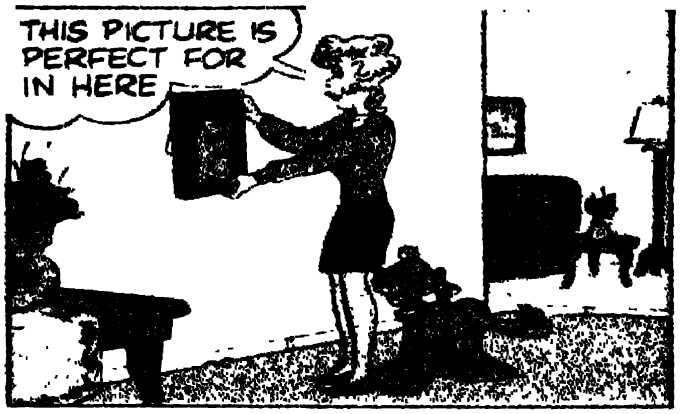
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

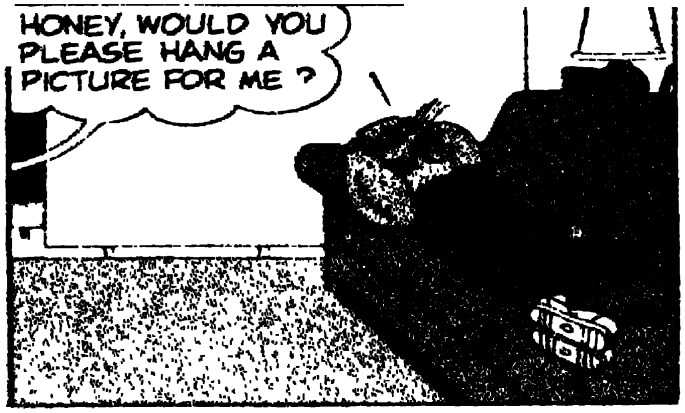


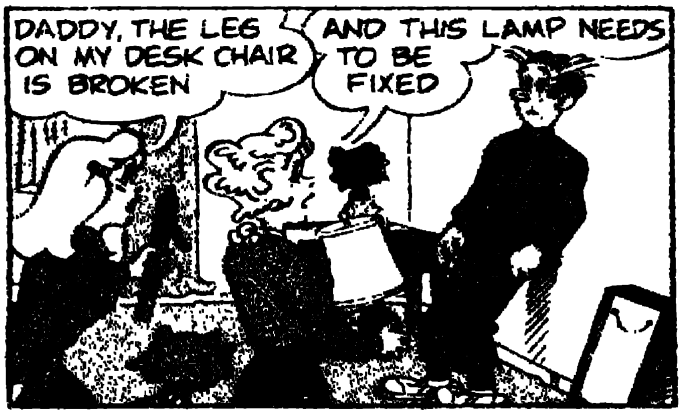
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

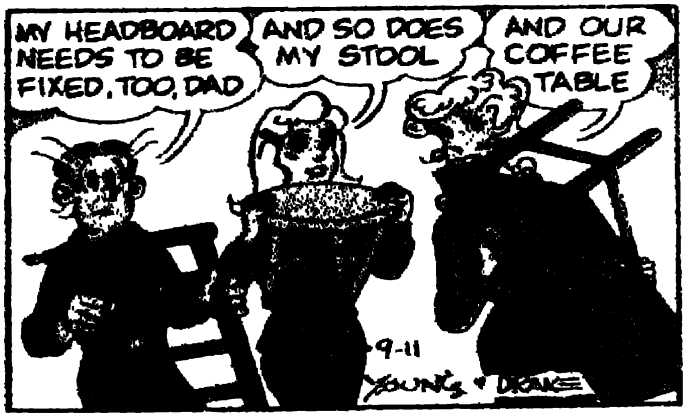












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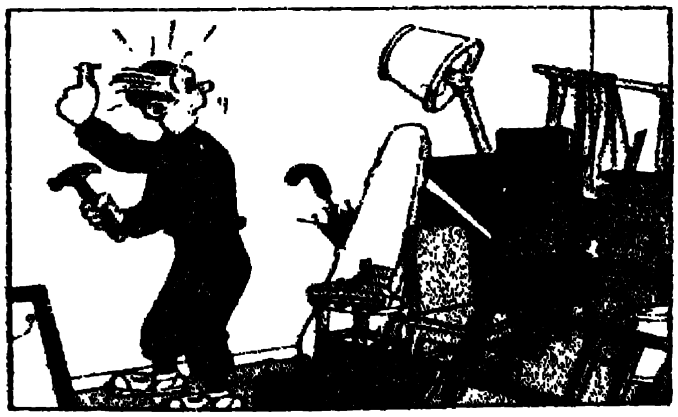

A MAN OF CULTURE

With his numerous new projects and ideas, B.P. Singh, culture secretary, is the man to watch. ***Geeta Sharma*** *reports*

Several decades ago, in Bihat village of North Bihar, a young boy of eight, accompanied by his older cousins, was taken for admission by his grandfather in a new school that had been set up in the village by Gandhiji. The boy, unlike his cousins, who were migrating from another school, had had no formal education. The headmaster gave them three sheets of papers to answer three questions on. The task done, all the three, including the little boy, were admitted to class VIII.

When the little boy's father, a lawyer, heard of this, he was furious that his son, barely eight would have to cope with the strain of studies much above his age and level. But the grandfather prevailed and an agreement was worked out wherein the boy was not to read or write after sunset so that his childhood would continue.

The ban on the boy's studying after dusk was lifted only when he was halfway through college at age 16. A year later, he passed out with flying colours—by topping in his college and ranking fifth in Patna University—with an honours degree in political science. Barely a year later, he was teaching students much older than him in Patna University where he was appointed as a Lecturer—a record he holds along with an American, which has been acknowledged by the Guinness Book of World Records.

No. This is not the story of a child prodigy who went on to perform endless academic feats. But of Balmiki Prasad Singh, Secretary in the Department of Culture (DOC), in the Human Resources Ministry. Unlike his predecessors, Singh, in his quiet silent way, has within months of taking over, set about putting the much neglected house of the DOC into order, right from clearing the mess in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to getting things finally moving on the long awaited National Cultural Fund.

B.P. Singh: Contributing towards culture in his quiet, low-profile way

For the 56-year-old bureaucrat, whose mild demeanour and unassuming style, betrays little of the tough assignments he has handled in the past, much happened early in life. This includes marriage at age 19, three children soon after and selection as an IAS officer, from the Assam-Meghalaya Cadre at age 20. In the service he saw Assam through its most turbulent years of violence and insurgency, that later earned him the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru fellowship in 1982, besides senior posts in the ministries of defence, environment and forests and steel and mines at the Centre.

Many of these assignments resulted in several close brushes with death, the most recent being when a bomb was planted in his car after he ordered a probe into ULFA activities in the forests of Assam. In another incident—way back in 1974, when Supercop K.P.S Gill was also posted there—in one student agitation, about 400 college boys were held holed up inside a college building in Guwahati while the BSF held siege outside. Thousands of anxious parents also stood outside.

As Deputy Commissioner, Singh offered to go inside to talk to the angry students despite being advised against it. He drove into the college gate with an armed constable and his driver who were asked to wait outside the main door and fire if he was attacked when he stepped inside. But once inside, he was able to pacify them and ask them what they wanted.

"I asked those who wanted to give the exams to stand on one side and those who didn't on the other," he recalls. "After a long pause, three boys raised their hands to say yes to exams, so I took them aside and asked the rest to leave." Outside, the moment the boys came out, the BSF rushed in, but he shouted across that they were to be allowed to go.

"It was a moment when I could have been killed but it turned out to be a moment when my efforts to resolve the tangle without a single

shot being fired, triumphed. The blessings the sobbing parents showered on me was my reward," he says.

Challenges and close shaves aside, his present avatar, as culture secretary —an assignment he took up last October—is something Singh is most pleased about "I came to culture, not as any expert but with some general awareness of poetry, an interest in literature and the need to further nurture the creative environment in the country," he says.

"But once I took over, I began to realise that India was a developing economy but a developed nation because of its rich cultural heritage and environment," says Singh. He firmly believes that in the post-Cold War scenario and specially since 1991, trade and market and not military capability are the deciding factors of the power of a nation Along with this, culture is also going to become an important factor in determining that status "So the world is going to respect us not only because our foretathers had created a great culture but because we have created a conducive environment for it to grow further," says Singh.

And Singh has set about contributing his bit, in his quiet, low-profile way. The most substantial among them is the filling up of more than 50 posts of Assistant Archaeologists that have been lying vacant in the Archaeological Survey of India for over five years now, and had badly affected the excavation work of the ASI across the country. But unlike his predecessor in the DOC, Singh, in his capacity as the acting Director General of the ASI, has been able to unravel the technical snags that had made the UPSC hold up the recruitments, and have the interviews conducted last month.

Singh, realising the mess the ASI is in today, has decided to provide all superintending archaeologists with two assistants, a fax connection each and an additional vehicle to give them more mobility and better communication facilities

Another challenging job Singh has taken up is setting things right in the Lalit Kala Akademi, the National Akademi for the Promotion of Fine Arts, that has earned itself the dubious distinction of being controlled and run by an art mafia of mediocre artists in the name of democracy. The Akademi, governed by a 'Democratically' elected General Council, was the only among the three Akademies which had rejected the Haksar Committee recommendations for their revamp as these would have taken the control out of their hands. It has been enmeshed in controversies about awards being given to and purchases being made of the art works of the council members and their relatives. As a result, eminent names in the art world have distanced themselves from the Akademi.

Singh has, however, got the

Ashoke Chakraborty

Kelucharan Mahapatra: A much sought after guru

Akademi officials to agree to many recommendations of the Haksar Committee though he is tightlipped at this stage about how and what he has got them to agree to. Insiders, however, say he had first tried to convince the Akademi officials to come around, but when they refused to relent, he withheld the annual grant to the Akademi till they saw sense.

Not all cultural issues are that easy to resolve. There are, for instance, more complex problems since culture rates the lowest on the government's list of priorities. As many as three of the four premier cultural institutions such as the National Museum and the National Gallery of Modern Art, have been lying headless for years now and are just one pointer to this trend.

Singh explains that the situation is due to faulty recruitment rules that have rendered many professionals in these institutions ineligible for the top posts. But he is also baffled why his predecessors could not find a way out. Singh involved experts, senior artists and others in the field to examine the issue and came to the conclusion that creating a separate cadre of four services —Indian Archaeological Service, Museum and Art Service, Anthropological Service, and Libraries and Records Service—to man such institutions. Singh was encouraged by the example of the forests management that was once in a chaotic state. But once a separate cadre was created, the situation improved immediately.

"I have already put the proposal before the Pay Commission and the Planning Commission. Both have responded favourably to the idea and am hopeful that it would become a reality in a couple of years," says an optimistic Singh.

In the meantime, Singh is trying to find ways out to do away with some of the recruitment rules and fill in the posts in the next couple of months Singh has even recommended a much higher allocation to the culture department in the ninth plan—Rs 5,000 crore as against Rs 700 crore in the current plan.

Singh recalls that when he was in Bhubaneswar recently, he had called on Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. Singh was amazed to find that parents of young girls from Bengal, Maharashtra and U.P had rented rooms there during vacations so that their daughters could learn dance for a couple of hours from the Guru. "I was most touched to see the love the parents had for their daughters and reverence for the guru. That day I felt that we need to create conditions so that each city has such gurus and maestros," he says.

Almost as a sequel to this, Singh, reveals that the National Cultural Fund, on the anvil for some time, will soon become a reality. Under the fund, which is likely to have 100 per cent tax exemption, business and corporate houses will be invited to sponsor cultural and conservation projects. They will have a choice not only to select the project they want to finance but also to have a say in the people they want to be involved with the project. Institutions such as ASI or the Sangeet Natak Akademi, would provide the expertise in the running of these projects.

Even though he has cut down the number of his working hours to 10 to 12 hours from upto 14 a day earlier, Singh has still set a long list of tasks to be accomplished. And knowing him, he will not rest easy until he has tied up every last loose end ■

PROFILE

WHAT'S COOKING?

***Paromita Mukhopadhyay** meets Joyce Westrip, who has written several books on Indian food from her home in Perth, Australia*

"oyce Westrip was seven years old when she bit her first chilli. It was a game that she usually 'ayed with her sister and

Every night at dinner as the children were having their soup, they would be made to close their eyes. A chilli was dropped into one of the soups and whosoever scooped the chilli had to eat it. This time it was her turn.

The tingling taste of that chilli led to her passion for Indian food and recipes. Westrip today has a library of over 700 Indian recipe books in her collection back home in Perth, Australia. She has given audio visual presentations on India's art and culture. And her radio talks and cooking classes —Indian food, of course—too are very popular Down Under.

Westrip's links with India goes back to her grandfather William McCosh. An officer in the British army, McCosh lived in Calcutta. His mansion, Khilani Lodge on Camac street, still stands on that busy Calcutta thoroughfare. Her parents, Alec and Doris Cave, too met in Calcutta. It was at a fair held at the Calcutta maidan. The 15-year-old Doris was afraid to get on the big ferris wheel while her mother was keen on it. Luckily, Alec Cave, a British officer, was around and he was given the task of looking after the teenager till her mother returned. "Ever since," Westrip laughs, "my father had my mother on the wheel."

By 1926, Cave had left the army and joined the Kolar gold field at Tamil Nadu and remained there till 1946. "My mother's speciality was the brinjal pickal which she learnt here," recalls Westrip. She studied at the Bishop Cotton School in Bangalore and later went to England for her graduation.

But she missed Indian food there. "On one occasion," she says, "when I tried to make a curry, it turned out to be a shame." It was only after her mother sent her the spices from India that she was able

Rupinder Sharma

Joyce Westrip: A passionate admirer of Indian cuisine and recipes

to do justice to the dish.

Her royal hunt for Indian recipes began then. "It was very difficult to find recipe books then as it was mainly a verbal tradition but I never gave up," says Westrip. Her prized collections include antique books written for the *memsahibs*, one in Marathi for the Maharaja of Baroda and a little book written in the 18th century by a Nawab.

Westrip's recently released book *An ABC of Indian Food - From Aab Gosht to Zeera* has been widely acclaimed. It is a dictionary of colloquial Indian versions of various food and vegetables. "I have spoken to many tourists and found that they often don't know what to eat and so I thought this is what they need," says Westrip.

Her second book on Moghul cooking is due to be released in England in October. It contains 100 recipes of Moghlai food including drinks and desserts. But it's not like any other regular cook book. Every recipe has a tale behind it—how it came about. "A chicken dish to be named after emperor Akbar had to be cooked over 200 times till His royal highness approved it" says Westrip

Getting all the information was a difficult task.

Westrip travelled extensively—including a trip from Istanabul to Kashmir just to understand the Persian influence on Mughalfood "I have spoken to the descendents of a number of chefs at the nawab's kitchens," says Westrip. It took her 10 years to research and finally write the book.

And that's not all. Westrip has also co-authored another book with Peggy Holroid which awaits publication. It's called *India Down Under*. As the name suggests, the book deals with the links between India and Australia. "Anyone would be surprised by the similarities between the two countries," she says.

Both the authors travelled through Australia interviewing different people whose ancestors lived in India. "I've heard the tales of an Anglo-Indian matron who cycled through cities during the riots and the nanny of many officers' children. The eighth Nizam of Hyderabad has property in Perth—there are so many others," she says.

All through it was her husband, Charles, who stood by her. He has been in the building industry in Australia and, says Westrip. "He knows the taste very well and is my best critic." Asked whether his wife is a good cook, Charles replies, "She's excellent," adding, "doesn't it show," as he points to his paunch He favourite dishes include Dal and Chicken Kashmiri.

nder Sharma

Joyce Westrip with her husband Charles

'It was very difficult to find recipe books then as it was mainly a verbal tradition but I never gave up' says Westrip. Her prized collections include antique books written for the *memsahibs* and a little book written in the 18th century by a Nawab

For Westrip, cooking is all about love and sharing She considers this the essential ingredient in any recipe. The uniqueness of Indian food lies in the freshness of the contents, the spices, and the aroma She has travelled all over the world and visited Indian restaurants "But Indian food in India is much better in India than anywhere else in the world. It is the loss of oils and the freshness of the flavour that makes the difference," says Westrip.

Another fascinating part of Indian cuisine is the regional variations. "Take the sauce-based dishes, for instance, each one has its own flavour. You will never find this in any country in the world," claims Westrip.

However, her favourite are the Hyderabad dishes."The sweet and sour taste of tamarind base is fascinating Dopiaza and Bagarebaigan are dishes that you'll never find anywhere in the world."But rice tops her priority "You can torture me to any extent and I won't let out a secret but put a bowl of rice in front of me and everything will come pouring out," she laughs

Back home at Perth, Australia, Westrip cooks Indian food at least twice every week Luckily, most of the ingredients are available there. After planning what to cook, she spends a day shopping. Next comes the preparations—chopping, grinding and laying out everything in proper proportions on her tray. When there are guests, her sister, Maureen, helps her out.

In fact, guests are a regular feature at home Often the Westrips entertain important dignitaries. Just before her recent trip to India they had the Indian High Commissioner over for dinner."I always prepare a buffet and give at least eight dishes so that there is enough to choose from," says the enthusiastic cook

Westrip's cooking classes are famous. She also gives radio talks and has personally introduced hundreds of people to Indian cuisine. And she hasn't given up—writing another recipe book on Hyderabadi food is next on her priority. "My heart is there and I want to do it well," she says, going a little misty-eyed at the thought. ■

FIRST PERSON

NAMITA GOKHALE *made her debut with* Paro: Dreams of Passions, *a novel which pre-dated the much hyped* Socialite Evenings. *But, then, Gokhale has always been a trend-setter; she edited* Super, *a film magazine that gave* Stardust *a run for its money in the late Seventies. A couple of years ago she published her second novel* Gods, Graves and Grandmother. *Her latest book,* A Himalayan Love Story, *is due to hit the stands this month.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A winter afternoon, in the hills, and staring at the blue sky above.
What is your greatest fear?
I'm terrified of lifts; my greatest fear is that I'll be stuck in a lift and everyone will forget about me.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My husband, Rajiv, who died last year.
What do you dislike most in others?
Complacency.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
I recognise that I have a tendency towards social hypocrisy.
What is your most precious possession?
The full moon reflected on a still lake; I'm not good with possessions.
What objects do you always carry?
My favourite hairbrush and the *Hanuman Chalisa*.
What makes you most depressed?
A friend wrote this poem for me a long time ago: *"Reclining on my fair love's heaving breast*
When she inhales I am a bit depressed."

What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My crooked front teeth.
What is your favourite word?

What do you dislike most on
y crook
front teeth.

A writer's life is a daily struggle with words. They can't afford a favourite word.
What is your favourite journey?
That's easy—the familiar journey to Nainital which I've described in *A Himalayan Love Story*, my soon-to-be-released novel.
What is your favourite dream?
Almost every night I dream of 'Primrose', our old house in Nainital.
What is your nightmare?
The last four years of my life have been a waking nightmare.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
I fell seriously in love with myself when I was two years old. Anyway, all writers are narcissists.
What is your source of sustenance?
Cognac and the company of friends.

On what occasions do you lie?
I'm the worst liar in the world— I get a silly smirk which is a dead giveaway when I lie.
What is your greatest regret?
That I missed out on a formal academic education.
What has been your happiest moment?
Watching my daughter Meru's unblinking stare as she came out of my womb.
What brings tears to your eyes?
The sight of anybody trying against insurmountable odds.
How do you relax?
Vegetable shopping and my evening swim.
What do you envy most in others?

How do you relax?
Vegetable
shopping and my
evening swim

Old couples enjoying each other's company.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a strong person who could give strength to others.
How would you like to die?
With my eyes open, eager and curious about the passage after death.

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8 SEPTEMBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Good Lord!

■ Cricket pundits should henceforth refrain from criticising players without assessing their capabilities or they will be forced to eat their words as in the case of Sourav Ganguly ('All Rounder', July 14)

There can be no doubt that cricketers from the eastern zone have been made victims of regional politics. Subroto Banerjee and Utpal Chatterjee started their careers well but were dropped from the team soon after when their performances were found not up to the mark. Had they also been treated sympathetically like Raju and Ankola, they too, could have proved their worth.
Kajal Chatterjee, Dhanbad

■ Bengal has always been neglected in the national cricketing scene. It is not that the state could not produce any player of repute but the so-called anti-Bengal lobby did actually mar the careers of many a promising cricketer from Bengal. But Sourav's success will inspire Bengal cricketers.
Debanjan Banerjee, Calcutta

The Maharaja': Sourav at a felicitation function

■ Sourav's brilliant performance brings to mind Azharuddin's debut when he scored three successive 100s and made it to the headlines. The only difference between the two is that Sourav played at Lord's and Azharuddin in India.
Jawad Nehal Qureshi, Calcutta

■ Bengal, too, can now take pride in its wonder boy, Sourav. Overcoming all criticisms and hurdles, Sourav proved that Bengal could also groom cricketers. Really, Sourav is Bengal's *gaurav*.
T.R. Anand, Sarangabad (W.B.)

■ Sourav should not forget that this is just the beginning and that he still has a long way to go. Media hype and excessive praise should not affect his performance.
Manohar Mandal, Nabadwip (W.B.)

■ After a long hiatus a Bengali has made his mark in world cricket and that too, at Lord's. His success also proves that talent cannot be suppressed. With perseverence and patience, it will find recognition.
Anup Kumar Garai, Calcutta

■ Sportsmen from Bengal are finally coming into the limelight. First, it was Sourav, then Leander Pais. This shows that with the right attitude Bengal too can produce good sportsmen.

Perhaps, while we were rejoicing over Sourav's feat we forgot another player from Bengal, a chess prodigy by the name of Suryasekhar Ganguly, who could not attend the Asian sub-junior chess championship in Doha because of lack of funds. Neither the Central nor the state government came forward to assist him monetarily. Sometimes, we concentrate on one sport while neglecting another.
Nirmalendu Chakraborty, Cooch Behar

INSIDE

Amit Datta

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RIYA AND Raima, Suchitra Sen's two granddaughters, make their debut in show business. What plans does Mama Moon Moon Sen have for them?

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INDUS CREED is the first Indian band on the Internet.

Moon Moon Sen with her daughters

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Cover Amit Datta

COVER STORY

Family Pride

Raima and Riya, Moon Moon Sen's daughters, are the family's third generation entrants into the glamorous world of show business.
***Rajlakshmi Bhattacharyya** reports*

YOU HAVE TO GRANT MOON MOON SEN THIS MUCH AT LEAST; IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FAZE HER. YOU may walk in on her, as she emerges from her bathroom, fresh from an invigorating shower, with only a towel to preserve her modesty. But rather than shriek loudly, and insist that you leave forthwith, she merely raises an eyebrow and asks you what you're doing there. You remind her that you have an appointment.

"Oh yes," she says, "Well, just wait for a minute. I'll get dressed and join you."

Moon Moon is as good as her word. A few minutes later she comes and sits beside you, wearing a pair of jeans, with her thick hair falling down her back in a deluge of curls. With the lightest of make-up and in the glare of sunlight, she looks amazingly good. Amazing, because Ms Sen is the mother of two grown-up daughters, Raima and Riya, both of whom have already made an entry into the world of showbiz.

And Moon Moon is already playing the proud mother. "Two big companies," she tells you, "are fighting to get my daughters to model for their shampoos." And when Dolu and Buri — as the two girls are called at home — arrive, dressed to kill for the ensuing photo-session, you can understand why.

Raima is resplendent in a lime green skirt and a matching brief top, while Riya is dressed in a black and white mini skirt, paired with a skimpy white top. They come trotting in on stilletoes, their heels clattering in the corridor outside. Their silky black hair is left loose, as they perform for the camera with consummate ease.

But then, they have the perfect model to follow: their own mother. A photographer in her

own right, nobody understands camera angles better than Moon Moon, and she gives the benefit of her vast experience to her daughters, instructing them to turn this way or that, and flash "those pearly-white teeth". The daughters obey with alacrity, even as their mother beams with pride.

This kind of encouragement was what Moon Moon lacked sorely when she herself was a teenager. The only child of Bengali film actress — and living legend — Suchitra Sen, Moon Moon had a very protected childhood. Photographers were prevented from shooting her when she accompanied her mother on the sets. And under this protective umbrella, Moon Moon grew up to be a shy, introverted child, who kept out of the limelight and wanted nothing more than to concentrate on her studies.

The idea of joining films hadn't

even occurred to Moon Moon then. She dabbled in everything from teaching to photography, but then the inevitable happened: she was asked to model for a toothpaste ad. (It is one of life's amazing coincidences that Suchitra Sen also began her career with a dental ad; as did her granddaughter Riya.) Films were a natural progression, and Moon Moon made her debut with *Rajbodhu*.

Then began the long — and in the end, thankless — struggle to come out of the long shadow cast by her mother, Suchitra, who was Bengal's leading heroine thanks to such films as *Agniparikshа, Deep Jele Jai, Haarano Sur* and *Saptapadi*. Moon Moon did well enough to bag an award as a non-Telugu actress in K. Vishwanathan's *Sri Vinela*, and her performance in *Satyajit Ray Presents* was a personal milestone.

But like her mother before her, Moon Moon never succeeded in con-

quering Bollywood. Suchitra had tried to break into Hindi cinema with first *Mamta*, and then *Andhi*; but only met with limited success. The same story was repeated with her daughter, who despite playing in several movies in Bombay, never really made it to the top bracket, though she was a constant fixture in the gossip columns.

Moon Moon now concedes that her career was "very accidental and haphazard", but she wants her daughters to go about things in a more systematic manner. "And while I am not idiot enough to think that they are the most beautiful girls in the world," she says, "my celebrity status may give them a break in showbiz. As for the rest, they would have to work very hard."

But films is not what Moon Moon wants for her daughters right now; she would rather they spent three four years studying. "I am looking forward to their reading Kafka," she says,

Riya at J.J. Valaya's fashion show

"listening to Western classical music, visiting coffee houses, or arguing endlessly over a wide spectrum of topics — as most students do in college. To have to think of a profession at that stage would be terrible."

Motherhood is, clearly, something that Moon Moon takes very seriously. Having lost her first child because of a miscarriage, she considers her two daughters to be "beautiful gifts of God", and regrets that she missed a lot of their growing up because she was away working so often.

Even now, Moon Moon says, she finds it difficult to devote as much time to her children as she would like to, flooded as she is with offers to act in films, serials and even a *jatra*, *Sundarbaner Rupashi*. "What we are doing to our kids is criminal," she says, "for there is no substitute for the time that a mother should devote to her children — which is always."

But then, Moon Moon had help in bringing up her daughters: from her husband and mother, Suchitra, who is devoted to the two girls. Though Sen Senior now lives like a Garboesque recluse, the only two visitors who are truly welcome are her two granddaughters

As Riya puts it, "*Amma* is a very quiet and caring person, and she thinks we are these delicate creatures who need to be constantly nurtured. There are times that she visits us, and in the not too distant past we would go over and spend long weekends at her house. But at the moment, exams are keeping us away from staying overnight with her."

Raima, an ardent admirer of her grandmother, adds, "She is a very private person, who can have a bad temper." But, she says a moment later, "Though frankly, mother's is worse."

As in most families, the grandmother is more prone to spoiling the kids than the mother. Moon Moon recalls asking her mother — in pure jest — why she had no objections to Raima and Riya coming under the arclights, when she never encouraged her own daughter. Suchitra replied "They are my granddaughters." End of conversation

Like all grandmoms, Suchitra believes that Moon Moon is too strict with her daughters. And Moon Moon for her part, says that she has left it to her mother "to ingrain into them the

basic values of life" before they leave the warm centre of their family to make a mark in the world. For, at the end of the day, Suchitra is her daughter's best friend, with whom she can share her "closest thoughts" in a way she can't with anyone else

Moon Moon insists, despite appearances to the contrary, she is very much a family person. She calls up her daughters from wherever she is, accompanies them to discos, and gives them tips on how to walk, talk, dress and jive.

Moon Moon was only in Class VIII when she met Bharat Dev Varma — who went on to become her husband — at a friend's party in Calcutta But no, sparks didn't exactly fly and several years passed before Moon Moon's and Habi's (as Varma is popularly known) paths crossed again, at yet another friend's place, where she was invited for lunch.

The friend, who had just been crowned Miss Calcutta, was Varma's date for the evening. But he offered Moon Moon a lift back home. And soon, they were dating regularly — going for picnics, dinner and dancing — in an increasingly romantic courtship. It wasn't long before Habi (who had had a short-lived first marriage) proposed; and Moon Moon accepted.

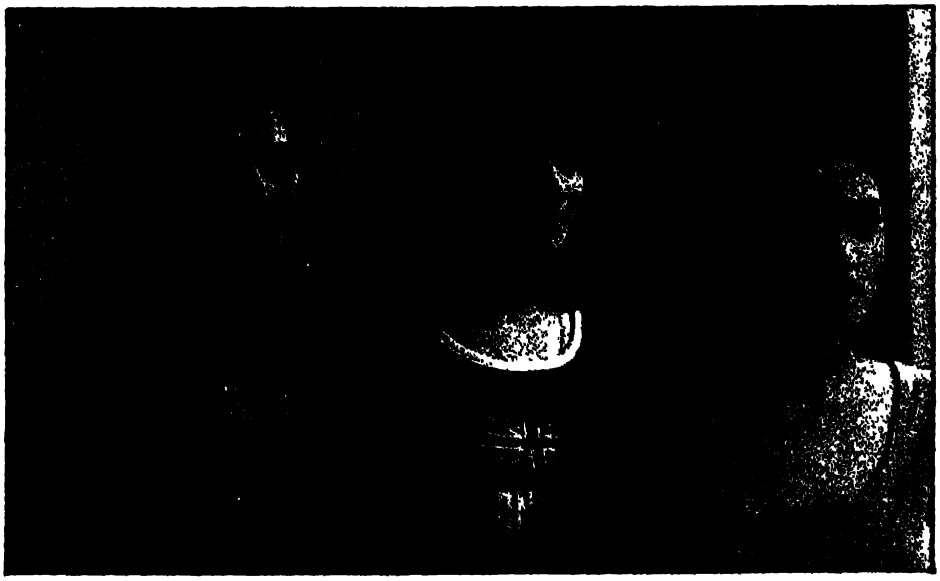
Moon Moon miscarried her first baby, and was not allowed to go out for several months. "As I had to lie the whole day," she recalls, "my mother's portrait that hung from one of the walls on my bedroom made me wish for a daughter who would look exactly like her." And when Raima was born, her resemblance to Suchitra proved to be striking, much to Moon Moon's delight.

Raima's introduction to the world of show business came early. Moon Moon's face breaks into the fondest of smiles as she remembers the time when she modelled as a young mother putting mosquito repellent oil on to her child's bottom. That child was, of course, Raima.

When Raima was only nine years old, she acted in a movie, *Saaper Chokh*, and later enacted her mother's childhood role in *Swagat*. Ashit Sen, who directed the movie, is perhaps the only film maker to have worked with all three generations: he directed Suchitra in *Uttar Falguni*, and both Moon Moon and Raima in *Swagat*

Riya's brush with films came with *Vishkanya*, when she was only seven. "I acted as the young Pooja Bedi," she recalls, "hating every moment of the shooting which got whirring some time around 3 o'clock in the morning."

"In the sphere of acting," adds



The romantic duo: Suchitra Sen and Uttam Kumar in *Agnipariksha*

Moon Moon, "it was Soumitra Chatterjee who worked first with my mother in *Saat Paake Bandha*, and later with me and Riya in *Gajamukta*"

Now, however, Moon Moon's two daughters are all set to conquer farther fields. Raima, who is named after a river in Tripura by her father, is already dreaming of making it in Bollywood. "I have received two offers so far," she says, "One was of a wheel chair-ridden girl, which was not quite what I would like my first role to be." But there is still talk of her portraying Sarada Ma's childhood, though the details of the project have still to be worked out

Says Raima, "I agree with my mother that studies should come first

Saat Paake Bandha : Suchitra Sen and Soumitra Chatterjee

Suchitra Sen at her daughter's wedding; Sanjeev Kumar was a special guest for the occasion

and that films will have to take a backseat at least for the time being. Mother wants to send me to an art school in Pondicherry and Daddy feels that I should learn the classical dances, but let's see."

Riya is the more fiery of the two sisters, chirpy and vivacious, and nurturing dreams of becoming a fashion designer. Modelling, of course, remains an option, though she may just end up flirting with it. Gifted with a rare sense of colour, she paints at leisure, and is a self-confessed Channel V freak.

Raima, who was always getting into trouble at school (she still relishes relating those pranks of her's), prefers to watch movies in her spare time. Jodie Foster and Madhuri Dixit are her current favourites. But there is a serious side to Raima as well: she has joined her school's social service wing, which takes them once a month to serve at old age homes and orphanages. A short stint at Shillong earlier had seen her teaching handicapped children to read and write.

But like most kids their age, Raima and Riya love having fun as well. Both of them volunteered for the Channel V Roadshow, putting up posters, having lunch with the veejays and a groovy time at discos. Not to be outdone, MTV roped in Moon Moon and Riya for a cruise down the Hooghly with Rahul Khanna who asked Riya such questions as: "Are you a flirt?"

"I told him I wasn't," remembers a triumphant Riya. In fact, both sisters deny having steady boyfriends, though they concede that they do go out to parties "with friends who are boys". In fact, Riya agreed to do a toothpaste ad only because all her friends were involved and it would be "fun".

Riya's first introduction to the world of fashion came at a J.J. Valaya fashion show in which she was dressed as a Red Indian chief's daughter. "I was 14 then, and quite tense and nervous," giggles Riya today. "The photographer, Rohit Chawla, who is also a friend of my mother's, had asked if I could be taken in for the show. And soon I found myself walking beside the fashion maestro with feathers stuck in my hair."

But while Moon Moon is quite pleased to have her darlings participate in fashion shows and model for the odd advertisement, movies are a big no-no for the time being — unless, of course, some big-time producer approaches them. For the moment, she wants Raima and Riya to concentrate on their studies and develop well-rounded personalities.

And nobody is better placed to achieve this than Raima and Riya. Their home is constantly overrun with all kinds of celebrity visitors, ranging from Princess Alexandra of Greece, polo players from Argentina, writers of repute and, of course, actors. And Moon Moon is quick to realise the advantages inherent in allowing her daughters to interact with them.

As she says, "It is not enough to be born beautiful. One has to be intelligent as well. And I would like my daughters to grow into fine human beings who are able to take care of themselves." This was a lesson that Suchitra had imparted to her daughter, Moon Moon. And she in turn is passing it on to the third generation. ■

Photographs of Moon Moon Sen and her daughters by Amit Datta

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says attachments and ties, or at least new contacts, figure prominently, adding spice and ice to life While the focus will be on job and occupation, you will have the time and energy to socialise, be a good sport, sell an idea or a product, burnish the image of your company and play with children

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Luck is on your side and that means chances can, and should be taken There are many good things happening but the main will be emotional happiness, joy in the heart and that's what life is all about Children, sports, recreational pursuits and hobbies once again give ample satisfaction

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

You are advised to turn the searchlight on yourself and give all the attention you can to the home as well Renovation, decoration instal lation of machinery and gad gets in the office are also foretold This is definitely a mights busy week, with many irons in the fire and it will require all your skills

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Catch time by the forelock by making phone calls, writing letters, meeting people, attending parties, proposing to your loved one, travel ling , communicating, signing contracts and keeping appointments Sleep less, eat less and give yourself to the social circuit The next week is for pursuing unfinished work

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Excellent week to introduce modern concepts and methodology to old tried, tested systems and situations You will feel affectionate, buoyant, perked up and thus radiate a lot of energy for others to feed upon and utilise Obviously, you will be popular Time to socialise and win friends

Virgo
August 22 - September 22

Strong and positive accent on any self improvement plan are on the anvil You do receive good news in the next 13 days or so This is a time to shed old skins and be a different you You will be making plans for the future and they will come to pass. That's good for you Travel and love foretold

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Confidential and private matters will be taken up and examined in the clear light of day so to say. Expenses will be heavy and so keep a hold on your spending or it could run away with you Do expect visitors or you could be journeying or even both are probable People will sympathise

Scorpio
October 23 - November 22

Ganesha says go all out for your heart s secret and open desires and the chances are you may get at least one Partnerships should be one of your primaries Any type of social outings should end happily and even profitably Shrewdness brings success in complicated negotiations

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

You will work hard, play hard and travel The last will be particularly relevant in your life You will sparkle with charm, radiate with joy and though hard pressed for time , you will give yourself freely and humanely You will be a gift for the world this week Take care of your health as work pressures mount

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The flush times, the good times beckon and you will respond like a race horse. Your sharp intelligence will help you to make the right decisions about finance, home, career children and the facets of life as it were. The next week is a continuation of these decisions and therefore give it the best you do have

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

You will be able to regroup and reorganise and that should be most encouraging Partnerships and ties at all levels, the pragmatic to the strictly platonic are indicated This week is for indepth thinking and planning Finances once again hold the key and you can anticipate loans and funds

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Wedding bells once again, links and ties too, business alliances and collaborations, take your time and energy It is a good time to meet people be friendly and accomodating as much as possible and enjoy life in the bargain A wish fulfillment should complete the circle for you

BIRTHDAYS

September 8: **Moon conjunction Mars-Venus indicates, according to Ganesha, glory and money, love and luxury. A birthyear of tremendous promise.**

September 9: **Mercury sextile Venus signifies by dexterity, charm and sheer luck, a very formidable trio, you get the goodies of life, be they love, fame, house and position.**

September 10: **Mars trine Pluto means, according to Ganesha, both these energy planets can help you to achieve even the impossible, provided there is effort.**

September11: **Venus trine Saturn means if you can just contain yourself a bit, there are no heights you cannot climb, be it business, profession, job or just pleasing a loved one. Fate wants you to be happy.**

September 12: **New moon helps you to be positive and enthusiastic. Children, contacts, communication, journey, new opportunities and challenges will claim you.**

September 13: **Moon conjunction Mercury is excellent for traders, statisticians, editors, programmers and tailors. Victory is assured.**

September 14: **Moon opposition Saturn does mean stress but it does not rule out joy and success. All it means is a little extra effort.**

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EXTRACT

SHORT CUTS

An extract from ***Satarupa Banerjee's*** *new cook book for working women who need to cook in a hurry*

Store your weekly requirement of meat, chicken and fish in individual portions in the freezer. Every night, place one portion on the last shelf of the refrigerator so that you don't have to thaw it the following morning. If you have to marinate anything, do so the previous night, so that all that you have to do in the morning is to cook it.

To make garlic easier to peel, separate a pod into its component segments. Rub a little oil on to each segment and leave it in the sun for a day. The thin skin will come off easily after that and the garlic can be ground and stored in a jar in the refrigerator. It can be used to flavour almost anything from a plain cauliflower dish to a fancy fried fish.

When a recipe calls for finely chopped ginger, grate it in the coarser part of grater. Grating garlic instead of cutting it is quicker too.

Pressure cook twice the amount of *dal* you need or a meal. Store half in the refrigerator and serve it the next day with a different seasoning.

Spinach boiled and pureed in a blender can be kept and used for several dishes, with *masalas*, potatoes or *paneer* as a dish, with soup cubes and milk as a soup, added to omelettes to make them interesting, in a cheese sauce with chopped up sausages for a baked dish and so on.

Grated coconut freezes well in the ice cube section of even a small refrigerator and is a wonderful way of brightening up an everyday vegetable or *dal*.

Cook everything in a *karhai*. The heat is distributed more evenly, you use less oil and everything cooks faster.

Practically any vegetable can be boiled, mixed with a couple of soup cubes and some cheese and made into a delicious soup, even *tinda*.

Use peanuts or any other nuts to make the plainest dishes more exotic—a salad, a sandwich, a fancy rice, an omelette and make them more nutritious in the bargain.

When a recipe calls for chopped nuts, spread them on the counter and crush them with a rolling pin until they are of the size you require.

Cake batters can be made quicker if you powder the sugar in the mixie and bring the butter to room temperature before creaming the two, a basic step in most cake recipes.

Shell peas and keep in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Take out the necessary amount. Will keep for at least a week.

Grind onion, ginger and garlic to a paste, fry it till brown. Cool and freeze it in an air tight container. Add fresh tomatoes or tomato puree or curd and your gravy is ready. The entire house will not reek of onion and garlic every time you make a curry. Make it a once-in-a-fortnight process and keep yourself cool and the home free of the ever pervading smell of *masala*.

Sandwich leftover vegetables, brush the outside with ghee and toast them in the sandwich toaster. Top it with tomato sauce. Delicious at breakfast or tea time.

Dip soiled plates and utensils in a basin of water to which a little soap powder has been added. This loosens grime and grease and makes washing water easier and quicker.

Keep pieces of newspaper to wipe food particles chopped on the table. This avoids soiling of dusters. Better still, place the chopping board on a newspaper and just dispose of the waste afterwards.

If your family thrives on potatoes, boil up enough in the cooker to last for 3-4 days and store in the refrigerator. Save time in the morning by previously boiling up several eggs and storing them in water in the refrigerator. The shells peel off

Extracted from
The Workaholics Cookbook
by
Satarupa Banerjee
Published by
Penguin Books India (P) Ltd
Price Rs 150

easily. If warm eggs are preferred, put the shelled eggs in hot water for a minute.

Keep sugar powdered in a jar Coffee beats up easily and becomes frothy in a fraction of a minute with powdered sugar.

Mix one part pepper and two parts salt and keep ready in one shaker. In the early morning, every minute counts.

A pair of kitchen scissors is most convenient for snipping herbs, green leafy vegetables, green chillies and other vegetables, so, do invest in one.

Grate the corns on the cob It is much easier and quicker than removing with a knife

To soften butter in a hurry, keep it on a warm *tava* or cover it with a heated bowl. When buttering sandwiches, dip the knife into hot water occasionally to facilitate spreading.

Make mayonnaise with less labour by adding vinegar to the egg yolks before adding the oil This helps in emulsification and the oil is absorbed much faster You can then add the oil by teaspoonfuls instead of drop by drop.

Here's an easy way to clean a greasy oven Just put a small bowl of household ammonia inside and leave overnight with the door closed. The ammonia fumes will work on the grease and it will come off very easily the next morning.

Instead of frying croutons, spread both the sides of a slice of bread with fat, cut it in small cubes and place on a baking tray Bake in a low temperature oven till crisp and brown.

When a recipe calls for frozen fat to be mixed with sugar or flour, simply grate the butter or fat and it will not only be quicker but easier to mix also

Make more stock than required and freeze the rest in ice cube trays. When frozen, divide the cubes in small portions in plastic bags and use as needed. They will keep for at least a month.

To quickly peel cucumber, gourds etc., use a potato peeler. Saves time and effort.

If you're in a hurry and want to bring the refrigerated eggs to room temperature, just cover them with warm water for a minute or two.

Garlic burns quickly In a recipe where garlic and onions are fried, first fry the onion until soft, then add the garlic and fry only a further few moments.

A container of ready mixed seasoned flour is handy for coating foods to be fried Make up in advance by sifting one cup flour with two teaspoons salt to taste and two teaspoons pepper powder Use as required Will keep well for at least 4-6 weeks in an airtight tin

Where seasoned flour is used for coating chicken, fish or anything else for frying, keep leftovers and use for thickening any sauce in the pan.

Crush cornflakes or biscuits in a roomy polythene bag This keeps them in one place with no mess to clear up afterwards Some cooks like to use the same idea for flouring chicken joints, fish fillets or anything else Put the flour and seasoning in a polythene bag. Add whatever you want floured and shake until evenly coated.

While using butter for frying, heat a little oil along with it It takes away nothing of the taste but does help prevent butter from scorching and browning too quickly at a high temperature

To make an egg go further for coating fish, chicken or anything else for frying—add one tablespoon oil and beat

Always pass a slice of white bread through the machine after mincing soft ingredients like meat or cheese. It pushes out the last few pieces of the ingredients that always remain inside

Ovenware is preferable to other kinds of tableware, whenever possible. Clean any cooking stains from the dishes before setting on the table, using the wet corner of a teacloth and salt as an abrasive.

It is worth buying a non-stick frying pan just for scrambled eggs — it saves a good deal of difficult cleaning afterwards.

Never plunge eggs cold from the refrigeratorinto boiling water; it is a sure way of cracking them. Cover them with cold water and bring up to a boil, then cook as required

Sprinkle paprika pepper (*degi mirch*) over cheese or snacks topped with cheese sauce before grilling It browns beautifully and instantly

When poaching eggs, add one teaspoon vinegar to the water before cooking. It helps the white of the egg coagulate quickly and keep a better shape and you get no aftertaste of vinegar

To retain the maximum volume in a hot souffle recipe, always fold a little of the beaten egg whites into the mixture first to lighten the texture before folding in the remainder

Egg whites do not whisk up foamy and stiff if they contain any trace of egg yolk. As an extra precaution some cooks always wipe the inside of a mixing bowl with the cut surface of a lemon to remove any traces of grease. A pinch of salt helps to give a better volume too. A pinch of cream of tartar helps stabilise the froth.

One table spoon of oil added to the salted water for cooking pasta will keep them from sticking together Oil also helps to prevent the water from frothing up and boiling over, so add it to the water for cooking spaghetti and macaroni too

Never toss a salad in oil and vinegar dressing until ready to serve, the acid in the vinegar makes the lettuce and other salad greens go limp.

Slice tomatoes with a serrated knife; it is often a good idea to use the bread knife —much quicker and easier for soft tomatoes.

If soured cream (mentioned in many of the recipes) is hard to buy, use cream sharpened with lime juice

After peeling or cutting onions, rinse your hands in cold water and rub with a little salt. If the smell still lingers, try rubbing with fresh parsley or coriander leaves, crushing out the juice between your fingers or with dry mustard, rinsing it off again under cold water.

Scalding tomatoes by covering them with boiling water and leaving them for about ten seconds is the best method of peeling them. The minute the skins begin to curl up, lift the tomatoes with a perforated spoon and transfer at once to a bowl of cold water to cool quickly and keep the flesh firm. Peel off the skins. Use skinned tomatoes in salads and as a garnish.

When making a traditional white sauce—warm the milk to be added to the roux of butter and flour, it blends in much more quickly and evenly.

To make a brown roux quickly, brown the flour on a baking tray in the oven before making the sauce.

Keep a jar of seasoned flour

handy for making sauces. For every one and a half tablespoons of flour, add half a teaspoon of salt and pepper each

You can keep a white sauce hot without any skin forming on the surface if you stir in all but about two to three tablespoons of the milk for mixing during preparation Bring the sauce to a boil, season and simmer for a few minutes to cook Then turn heat to very low and add the reserved milk slowly so that it lies on the surface Remove carefully from heat so that the milk lying uppermost is not disturbed Do not stir until just before serving.

To make any cream or concentrated soup go further, add a chicken stock or cube and a whole extra can of water

When heating canned soups, bring only just up to a boil Stir constantly too Overboiling or scorching will spoil the flavour

Whenever cream is added to a soup or sauce, recheck the seasoning because cream tends to mellow flavours The reverse can be useful too, for the addition of cream will reduce the too strong taste of an over-seasoned recipe

To make hard butter soft for spreading quickly --beat in a little boiling water Use one teaspoon for every quarter cup of butter and blend thoroughly in a mixing basin

If the *idli* batter has not fermented enough, boil some water in the pressure cooker and switch off the gas Place the vessel containing the *idli* batter in the cooker and close the lid Within a couple of hours, the batter will be ready for making *idlis*.

To draw out insects from cauliflower and green vegetables, soak them in a mixture of vinegar and water for ten minutes

Green tomatoes will not ripen fast but will also stay firm if stored in a brown paper bag and placed in a dark cupboard

Curry leaves, fried in oil and kept in an airtight bottle or jar remain fresh for days without losing their originl taste They can be used as and when necessary

To save time and tears on slicing onions finely for any gravy, cut onions into two pieces and boil them in a pressure cooker in a minimum amount of water Grind the boiled onions and fry the paste in oil.

Gravy that has turned watery can be thickened by adding roasted semolina. This tip will come handy when tomatoes are scarce or when you do not want to use onions

Apply a little glycerine to the rim of the utensil in which milk or any other liquid is boiling This will prevent the liquid from boiling over

To select brinjals with minimum seeds, buy the ones with a small scar at the tip If the scar is large, the brinjal will have a number of seeds The greater the number of seeds, the more bitter the brinjal will be

When making tomato soup, add a little sago to it while boiling The soup will be thick, creamy and more nourishing

Anything will fry better if a few drops of vinegar are added to the hot oil or ghee

In order to keep your mixer blades sharp, put some table salt in your mixie and run for a few seconds Do this once a month

To eliminate fat from soup and stew, drop ice cubes into the pot As you stir, the fat will cling to the cubes Discard the cubes before they melt Lettuce leave too absorb fat and can be used similarly

If your cutlets tend to fall apart, soak a handful of beaten rice in a little water Squeeze out the water and add to the cutlet mix. Shape and fry, the cutlets will retain their shape

For a fat-free butter substitute, hang skimmed milk curd in a muslin cloth to remove whey Add salt, pepper and mustard (optional) to it Blend well

To prevent biscuits from getting soggy, keep them in the refrigerator Secure the packets tightly once it has been opened The biscuits remain fresh and crisp for a long time

If almonds or any other nuts are used to garnish cakes, dip them in milk. They will not get dislodged while baking

To store unbeaten egg yolks, cover them with cold water or milk and refrigerate Drain the liquid before use Will keep for a week

Dry fruits are quite expensive Substitute them with honey dew melon, water melon, pumpkin and cucumber seeds --known as *chuar magaj* and sold by that name You can even wash the seeds at home and dry them in the sun Peel and store for later use

During barbecue, sprinkle some lemon juice over the hot coal in the last few minutes of grilling to add flavour to mutton or chicken or anything else that is being grilled.

If for any reason, you fear the milk is getting spoilt, add a pinch of soda to it and boil The milk will not curdle

Rancid and stale lime pickle can be given a fresh lease of life by adding a little sugar and vinegar to it Keep it in the sun for 3-4 days The pickle will taste better

The shell of a hard boiled egg will come off easily if you boil it along with a little salt

Store green tomatoes in a paper bag along with a ripe tomato or an apple The green ones will ripen faster.

Chopping dry fruit can be a difficult task Use scissors and dip it in hot water before use Nuts will chop faster and will not stick to the scissors ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 742	0840	1 3
			IC 742	1010	4 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 714	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible]			
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 1[illegible]/302	1900	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	PI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			PI [illegible]	1645	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 322	1440	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1530	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 189	1600	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC [illegible]	1140	daily
[illegible]	1440	daily	IW 5[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 101	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1025	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1120	[illegible]
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	MY 8[illegible]	0810	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IW 90[illegible]	0810	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	AI 662	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	0955	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	4 [illegible]	IC 401	0855	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 101	1900	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IW [illegible]	1910	daily
			IC [illegible]	2210	daily
DIBRUGARH					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	0630	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 18	[illegible]	[illegible]
DIMAPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1550	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 302	1550	[illegible]
GUWAHATI					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1320	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 730	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IW 612	1310	[illegible]
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HYDERABAD					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IW [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1540	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
JAMMU					
MY 301, [illegible]	0650	[illegible] 4	MY 1[illegible]/301	1900	1 2 3 4 5 6
JORHAT					
IC [illegible]	1145	4 7	IC [illegible]	1500	4 7
LILABARI					
[illegible] 301 [illegible]	0655	[illegible]	[illegible] 301/302	1635	[illegible] 6
LUCKNOW					
IC [illegible]	1650	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	2100	[illegible]
MADRAS					
IC 4[illegible]	0[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1930	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1935	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily			
MUMBAI					
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
IC [illegible]	1130	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	1445	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC [illegible]	1445	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
IC [illegible]	0700	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	0840	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SRINAGAR					
MY [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	1935	4
TEZPUR					
IC [illegible]	1140	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
VARANASI					
IC [illegible]	1130	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1630	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
[illegible]	0700	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1010	1 2 4 5 6
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 4 5 6	[illegible]	1200	[illegible]

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
[illegible]	1145	4	RJ-134	[illegible]	1
AMSTERDAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KL [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	SB 106	1615	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	SB 106	1[illegible]30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	5	TG [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			[illegible]	1505	[illegible]
IC 655	1105	4 [illegible]	IC 656	1730	4 7
IC 314	1455	[illegible]			
AI 806	1310	[illegible]	AI 809	[illegible]	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	1130	[illegible]	RO 075	1100	[illegible] 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0700	1	IC-226	0920	1

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	173[illegible]	2 5	BG-697	1652	[illegible]
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG-091	0810	4 [illegible]
BG-092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC 733	1300	1 2 3 5 6	IC 734	1520	1 2 3 5 6
BG-094	1405	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG-093	1625	1 2 3 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7 061	1003	3	Q7 060	1140	[illegible]
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0750	[illegible]
KATHMANDU					
IC 747	1035	[illegible]	IC 748	1150	[illegible] 6
RA 214	1[illegible]	[illegible]	RA 213	14[illegible]	[illegible] 6
LONDON					
BA 142	211[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 141	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU 538	[illegible]	1	SU 537	0930	4
PARIS					
KB-106	110[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 105	0810	2
KB 106	132	[illegible]	KB 105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 106	0940	2	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	234[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ 416	2230	[illegible] 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	[illegible]	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 30[illegible]	30[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 40[illegible]	16[illegible]	6
YANGON					
[illegible]	1[illegible]	1 2	[illegible]	195[illegible]	4 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express via [illegible] Except [illegible] Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express via [illegible] Mon Tue [illegible] Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible] Dep [illegible] Sun Arr [illegible] Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express via [illegible] Dep [illegible] Arr [illegible] Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible] & [illegible] except Tuesday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible] Dep [illegible] Sun Arr [illegible] Wed & [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express Dep Wednesday Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express Dep & Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	15 50	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr [illegible] Mon Wed & Fri	4 30	5048
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	3010
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express via [illegible]	18 15	3008
[illegible]	11 [illegible]	Amritsar Express	17 30	3050
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	11-55	4020
[illegible]	16 05	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	2022
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	6 30	5660
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	10 [illegible]	2032
[illegible]	18 20	Asansol Express	8 15	[illegible]
[illegible]	1 05	Danapur Express	6 30	4032
3073	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	307
3015	9 55	Santiniketan Express	15-40	3014
1159	15 25	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri		
1171	1[illegible]-25	Shipra (Indore) Express	7-50	11[illegible]
		Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat		
3127	14 40	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	4 30	3128
1181	15-25	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express	[illegible]-55	1184
		Dep Friday Arr Tuesday		

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	Darjeeling Mail	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20 35	5658
3153	22-00	Gour Express	[illegible]-15	3154
5663	20 00	Katihar Express	[illegible] 15	5664
3151	11 20	Jammu-Tawi Express	15 50	3152
3133	20 55	Mughal Sarai Express via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18 25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	10-25	3104
5185	12 40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	4-25	5086
		Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	6 55	6004
8001	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	8 [illegible]	8001
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	15 25	2859
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	21-00	2022
		Dep & Arr Except [illegible]		
8031	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	5 15	8033
8036	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	16 20	8029
[illegible]	11 05	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	12 05	2842
[illegible]	8 10	Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express	11 45	7001
		Dep Sun Tue & Fri		
		Arr Mon Thur & Sat		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	12 45	6312
		Dep [illegible]		
		Arr [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	10 20	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible] 25	8112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tiltagarh Express	5 00	8006
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible] 16	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	[illegible] 30	8008
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	8 25	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible] 05	2822
[illegible]	10 25	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	15 10	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	11 [illegible]	8018
		Dep Except [illegible]		
		Arr Except Sunday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express	[illegible] 15	10[illegible]
		Dep & Arr [illegible]		
2421	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via	16 10	-
		Howrah Sunday only		
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express via	10 45	2422
		Howrah Saturday only		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	
		Monday only		
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	[illegible] 15	6521
		Saturday only		
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via [illegible] & Guwahati	13 45	6312
		Monday only		
6316	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via Howrah & Visakhapatnam	[illegible]	
		Saturday only		
6319	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via Visakhapatnam & Howrah	[illegible] 45	[illegible]
		Dep Tue & [illegible] Arr [illegible] & Fri		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express via	[illegible]	
		Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only		
	14-05	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via	[illegible]	6519
		Howrah & Cuttack Monday only		

ENQUIRIES. For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays) In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah 3503535/37
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday, 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

LIFESTYLE

BUMPER TO BUMPER

Just get a load of those car stickers, will you, says ***Manisha Gulati***

Photographs by Desha Kalyan Chowdhury

Constipation: This car is constipated, it hasn't passed a thing all day Aspiration. When I grow up I want to be a Mercedes Consolation. I may be slow but at least I'm ahead of you

Welcome to the world of car stickers. There's one for each occasion and every temperament And if we can extend that to personality, well then these days cars seem to have more of it than is packed into the owner's whole frame

Cars were always considered a status symbol, a display of our wealth (or the lack of it) and in a man's case, his ego (Though why a woman should be exempt from this expression who knows) Today a car speaks volumes about our sense of humour and strangely enough our wealth too, displayed in obtuse ways on windows and other hi-fi gadgets

So, you find Rahul next door driving around in his souped-up Zen with a word of warning 'Perhaps you've confused me with someone who gives a $#%^'. Even a regular 44-year-old (the one who doesn't sport home made tatoos or own a collection of Whigfield CDs) can be seen with a Sex is like a car accident Never underestimate it' poster-size sticker on his Esteem model

"All for effect," remarked a female friend dismissing the fad disgustedly, on spotting a young Lothario in his Maruti 800 with the words 'Not so close, I'm not that kind of car'

"A smirking, conceited buffoon at whom no woman in her right mind would look at twice," commented another She's right A woman in her right mind would look at him (or his car) six to twelve times if possible

Appearance can be an unfair advantage. And let's face it. These stickers do attract attention of

whichever kind. It's like Govinda. Love him or hate him but you just can't ignore him. Add to this, mutated flight simulator technology that seems to have permeated the four-wheel market. You can create your own fantasy car combining disco lighting, instruction stickers, aerodynamic attachments, high velocity speakers and coloured screens X-ray vision may be required to look into one of these Frankenstein cars

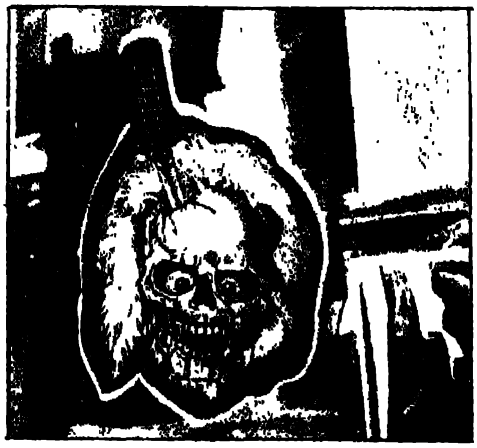
Just the other day a clutch of headbangers were cruising their way through AC\DC Five minutes later the same headbangers blasted out the BeeGees with *Staying Alive*, remixed with a more modern, more disco version of the same song by a newer unpronounceble group. The 'original' cowboys had set up their own rock 'n' roll saloon just down the road

And then the action began Boy and his mates see girl and her mates. Girl and her mates see car and inmates, in that order Bingo! Attention is grabbed and held The car works It really does.

On the more sedate (less popular) side you have the Polo puns Great advertising strategy those! A personal favourite is 'Driver airconditioned by Polo'. It speaks of a cool head and is definitely not for the maniacs — the 110 km per hour kind. Moreover they're the more intelligent of the lot. As one cynic put it, "They're one of the few pieces of physical evidences that people still think before they stick something onto their cars."

How does this evidence grab you? 'My wife ran away with my best friend I sure miss him.' 'If you don't like the way I walk stay off the sidewalk.' Subtlety is definitely being replaced by a movement toward new cartoon-like extremes

So what is it that finally forces any man to say 'that's enough', to metaphorically pull on his six guns? In most cases it's probably when something horribly embarassing happens to him — no one notices him, his wheels fall off A rattleship breaking down or a run-of-the-mill car stalling is a very run-of-the-mill fiasco No one thinks twice about it and noboby laughs But a snazzy car giving way is something not many self-respecting males will be able to live down.



You know how it is. The smarter you look, the more is expected from you in terms of performance A dilapidated three-wheeler stops for you. What's this, a message on the front? To quote, '*Sher sunne ka mazaa aata hai, sher sunane ka mazaa aata hai. Par asli mazaa tab aata hai jab sher saamne aa jata hai*'

As Raj Nath Batra, multi-faceted businessman who doesn't have any sticker on his car (not even a 'pollution under control' one) says, "I guess I'm not hip. I'm in the hip sidecar." ■

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Helen (Salim) Khan

Better half?: Well, to tell the truth, she's actually a better quarter She shares her husband, Salim Khan, with his first wife, Salma, and plays happy families with his children, Salman, Arbaaz, Sohail, Alvira and Arpita All of them live under one roof, and the two wives are the best of friends, going off shopping together and being joint hostesses at the children's birthday-- and wedding--celebrations

Was it always this civilised?: Not on your life When the Salim Khan-Helen love story first broke, Salma was reportedly heartbroken She issued ultimatums, made threats and tried her best to cut the affair short And for a moment it looked as if she might succeed But Salim stuck by Helen, wed her, and moved her into the family homestead

Salim Khan:Devoted husband

Did Salma walk out?: No she just decided to make the best of a bad situation, though she would have been perfectly justified in creating an almighty fuss. After all, she had broken with her (Hindu) family to marry Salim after converting to Islam, and had devoted the rest of her life to Salim and his children.

What happened next?: In time, the two women grew to like, respect and admire one another and became the best of friends Helen then told reporters that the two of them were a united force, and would get together and fight a good fight if Salim strayed again. Two wives were all that Khan was going to get, and he'd better be satisfied with this.

Why did Salma relent?: One version is that she decided that half a husband was better than none And that she should preserve her marriage at any cost—for the children's sake, if nothing else The more charitable say that Salma developed a genuine fondness for Helen, who had had a pretty rough deal in life until she found true love with Salim

Helen? A hard-luck story?: Yes, you'd better believe it She may have epitomised glamour, beauty and the high life in her film roles, but reality was anything but Helen was introduced to Bombay cinema by PN Arora, a complete sleazebag who played Svengali to her throughout her career Arora controlled both Helen's life and the purse-strings And despite being one of the best-paid actresses of her time, Helen ended up a pauper after the two split

How did she cope?: By the time Helen discovered that her fortune was practically non-existent, it was far too late Not only could she not recover her money, she couldn't rebuild her movie career either She was too old to play the cabaret-dancing vamp for much longer, and with the cellulite piling up, it had to be goodbye to celluloid sooner rather than later. So, Helen sought solace in the arms of a much-younger actor, whose film career was on the skids as well. But even that didn't work out, and she was soon on her ownsome lonesome all over again

Enter Salim: At what was quite the most vulnerable stage of Helen's life She was that most insecure of beings when the two met a beautiful woman who was losing her looks. And the fact that her career—and earning capacity—depended entirely on her physical charms only made matters worse

The two of them hit it off at once, and friendship soon blossomed into full-fledged romance But unlike all the other men in Helen's life, Salim was intent on doing the right thing for her He proposed marriage, she accepted, gave up on films and became the second Mrs Salim Khan

Helen:Quite happy in her new role of a housewife

A still from *Khamoshi* in which Helen plays grandma

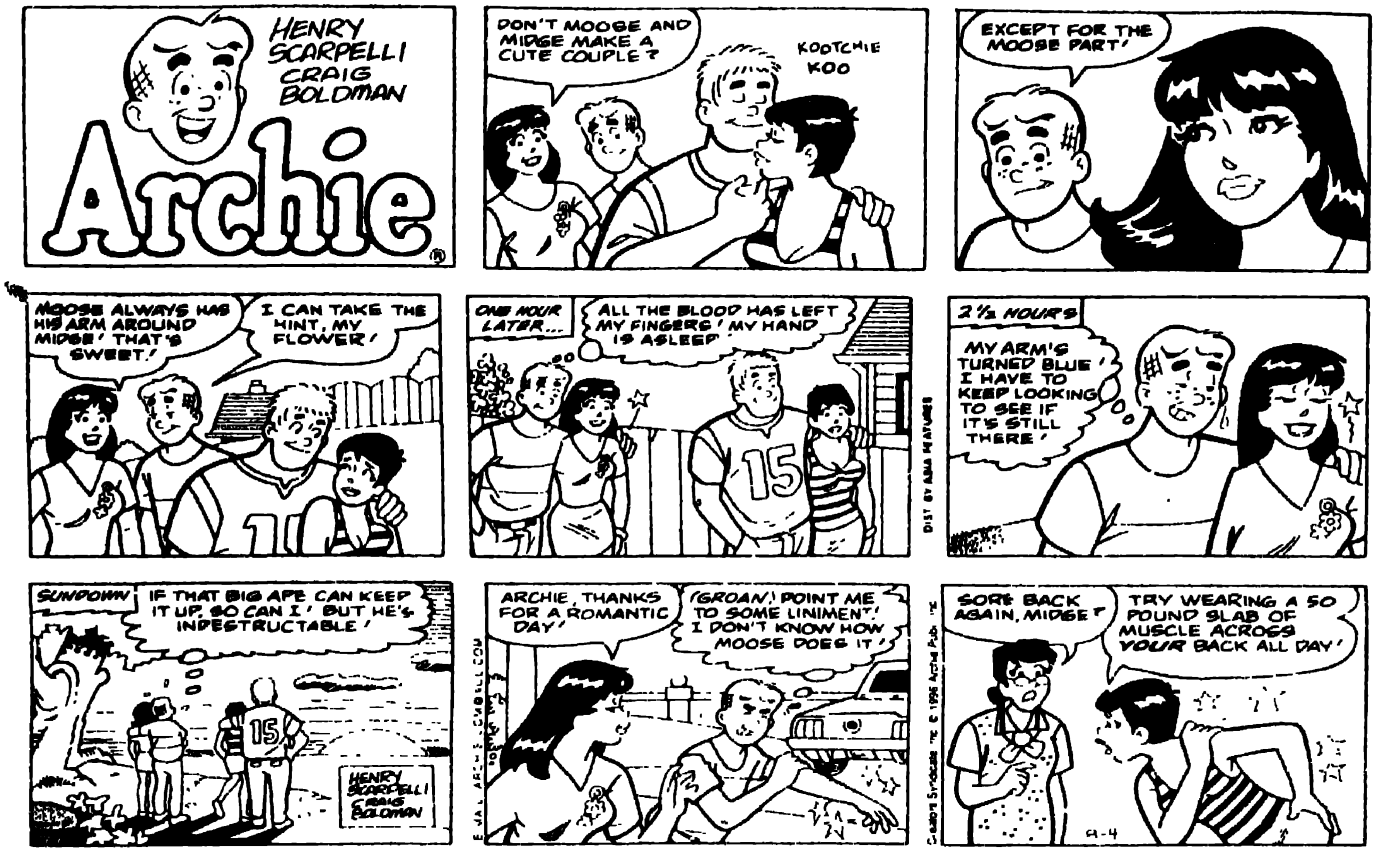
How did the family react?: There were the usual adjustment problems in the beginning, but the children soon got used to 'Helen aunty'and in time began to regard her as their mother along with Salma. Helen never had any children of her own, and no doubt, this made the adjustment process much easier

Helen as housewife: This persona endured for many years. But the lure of the lights proved too strong for Helen, and she finally succumbed when she was offered the role of Manisha's grandmother in *Khamoshi*. (No doubt, the fact that her 'son' Salman Khan was playing the hero in the movie, made that decision much easier.)

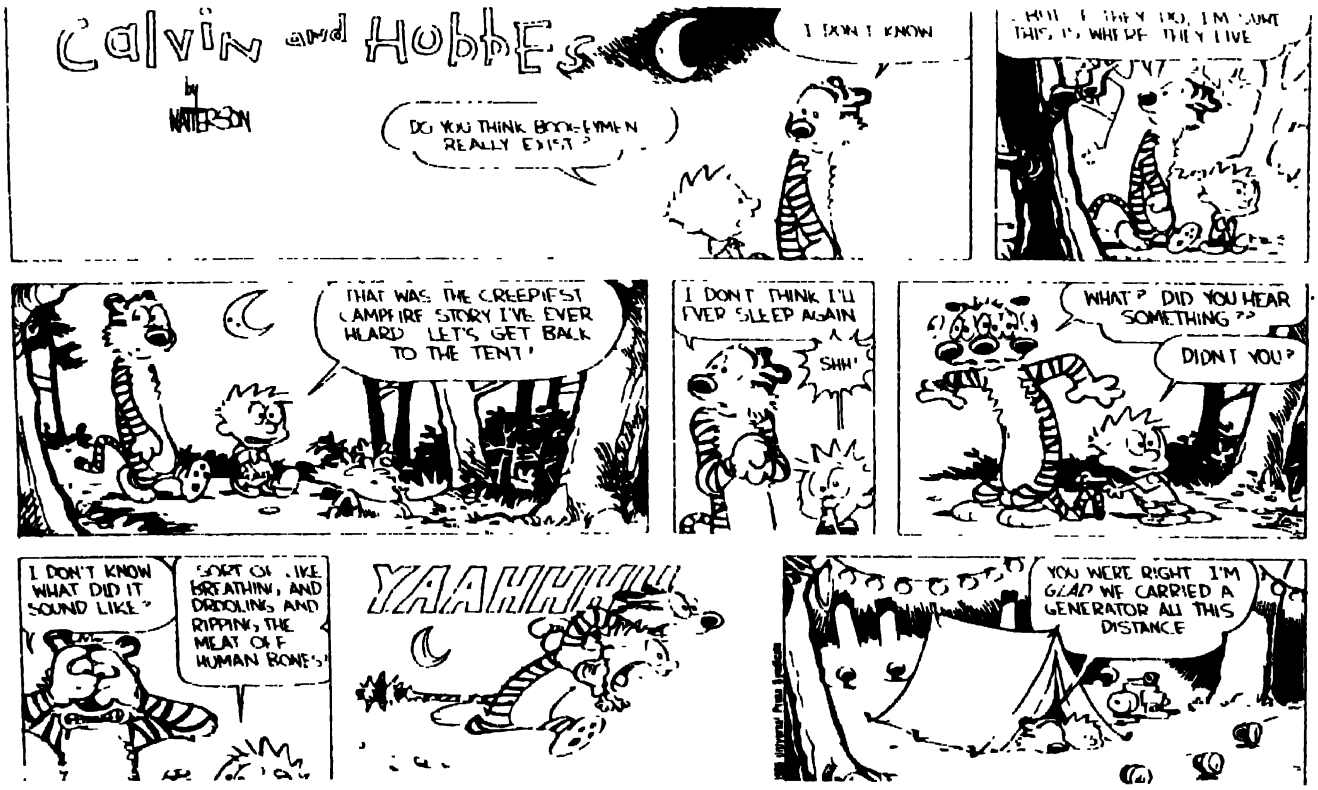
Helen as grandmother?: Yes, yes, we know the mind boggles at the thought. But give the lady credit she has aged gracefully And what's more, she is possessed of more grace these days than when she was gyrating away in her sequins and chiffon. There aren't very many Indian actresses you can say that of. ■

COMICS

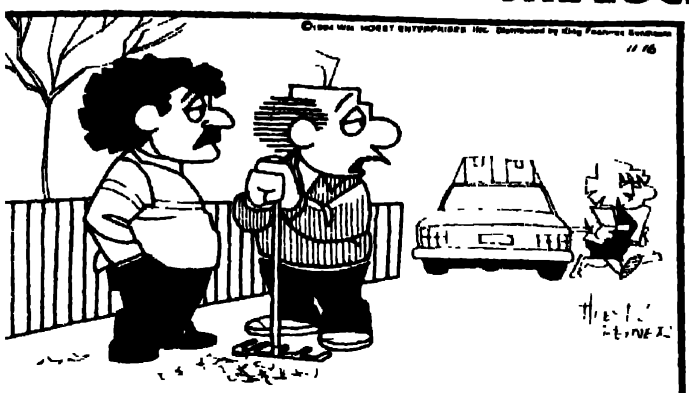
ARCHIE



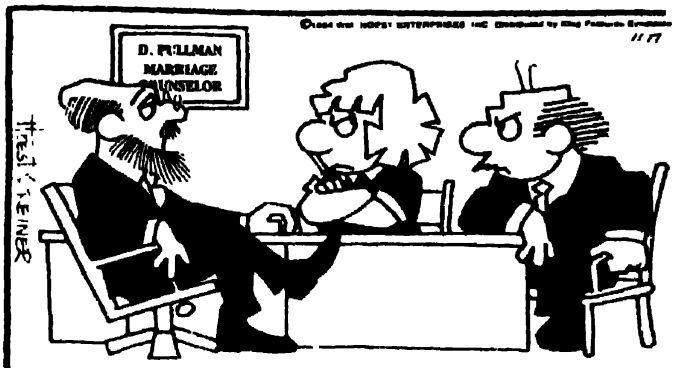
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS



"THE ECONOMY JUST TOOK AN UP TURN."

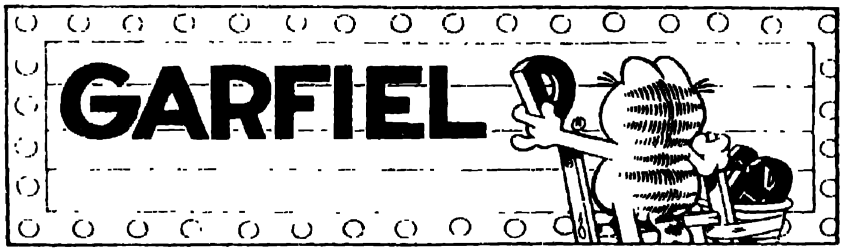


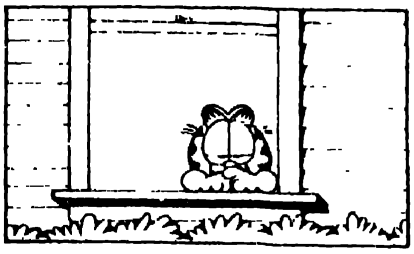
"YOU'RE NOT HELPING BY REFERRING TO YOUR HUSBAND AS THE PLAINTIFF."

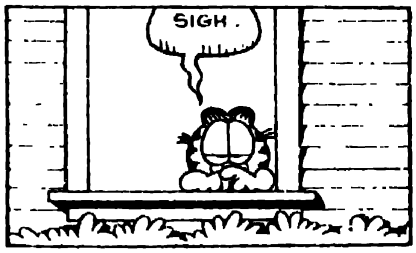
"THIS IS A SUAVE DOMESTIC BURGUNDY WITHOUT BREEDING THAT SELLS FOR $1.79."

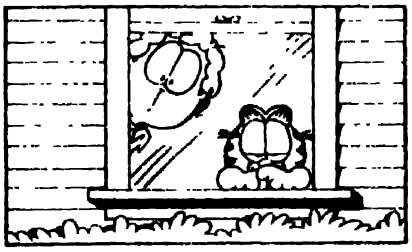
"THE WOK JUST BLEW UP."

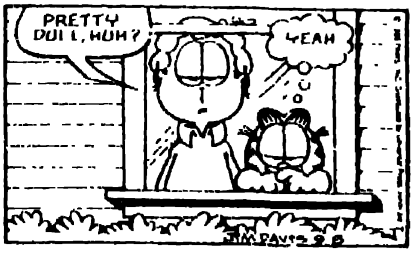
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



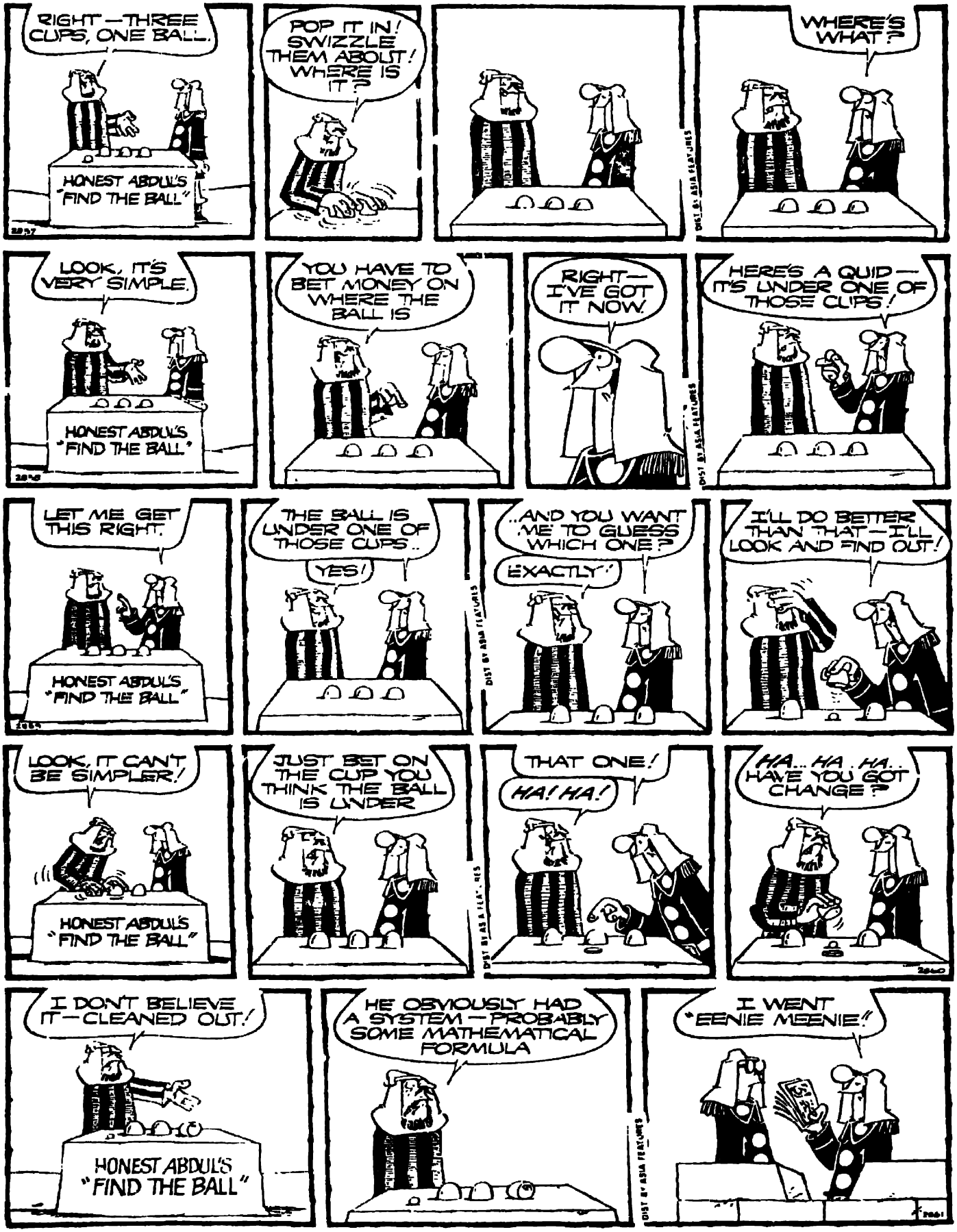


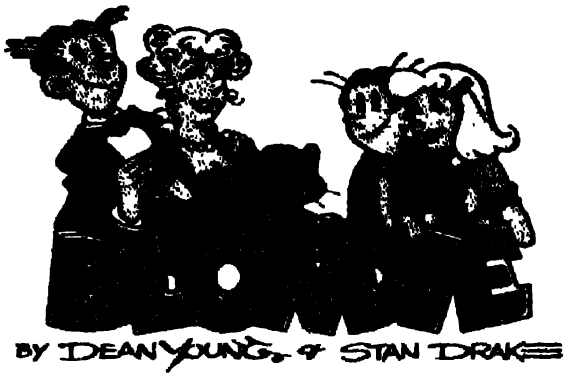


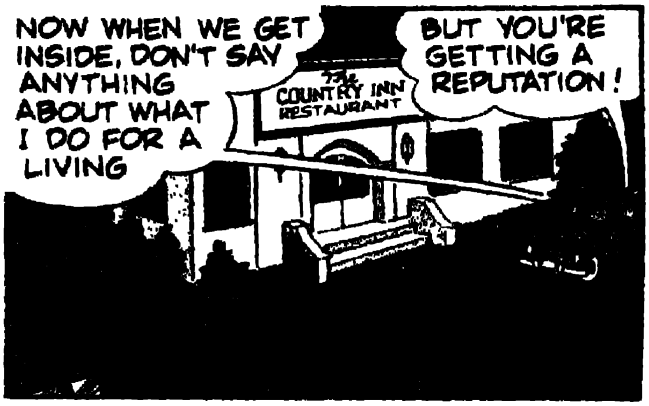


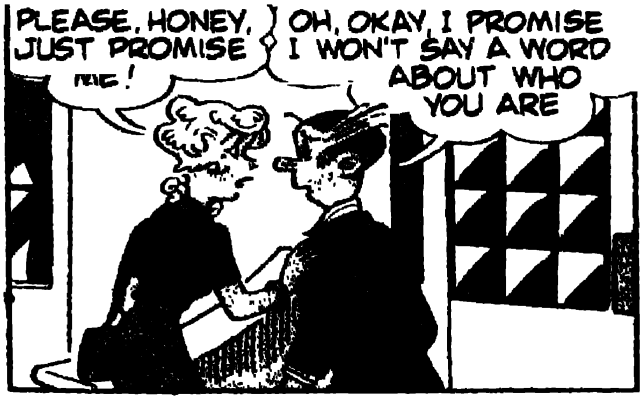


THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP









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ROMANCING THE STONE

Diamonds may be forever; but training young, unemployed men to cut them is just as important. ***Geeta Sharma*** *reports on a foundation that is doing just that*

It is cold, colourless and callous and yet, anybody who is somebody possesses it. Myth and legend have dogged its existence, be it the Koh-i-noor or the Mountain of Light diamond of which legend has it that its owner shall rule the world, but no male must ever wear it

It's true worth was recorded only around the sixth century in the Gupta Period, when a diamond was regarded as invaluable because of its clarity and transparency, which were complimented by six sharp sides, eight flat and similar sides, twelve straight and sharp edges ' And since the faceting and shaping of a diamond began to be taken seriously around the 15th century, the shaping and grading of diamonds acquired methodical proportions.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* required the state goldsmith to possess thorough knowledge of the species, characteristics, colour, weight and formation of a diamond. But in keeping with the times, the diamond's journey in the Eighties and the Nineties, moved to aesthetics and the emphasis shifted from purity, clarity and luminescence to daring and design

A synthesis of this clarity and design is being further perfected in today's day and age in the idyllic surroundings of the sleepy town of Nawalgarh, about 150 km from Jaipur.

Young heads are intently bent over their working tables, in a concrete shed in the town, giving fine edges, through the eye of the needle, to a near invisible teeny weeny stone piece stuck on the tip of a semi-automatic rod. On another table, another set of heads is busy polishing the cut and shaped stone. The din of the fast moving machines is the only sound that is audible in the shed which houses a diamond training centre where educated unemployed youth are trained in the specialised art of cutting, shaping and polishing diamonds. This in turn provides them with a comfortable livelihood.

Futuristic platinum earrings set with 142.45 carats of Baguette and trapeze cut diamonds

But what is a diamond cutting centre doing in the deserts of Rajasthan instead of in its usual habitat of Surat or Ahmedabad in Gujarat?

Diamond cutting centres are no longer new in Rajasthan, thanks to the enterprising Marwari spirit that has turned the state into an important gem and jewellery centre. But bringing such a centre to the semi-arid terrain of Nawalgarh, in Jhunjunu district of Rajasthan is the result of the efforts of the M.R. Morarka-GDC Rural Research Foundation, that has initiated a number of development activities in the area.

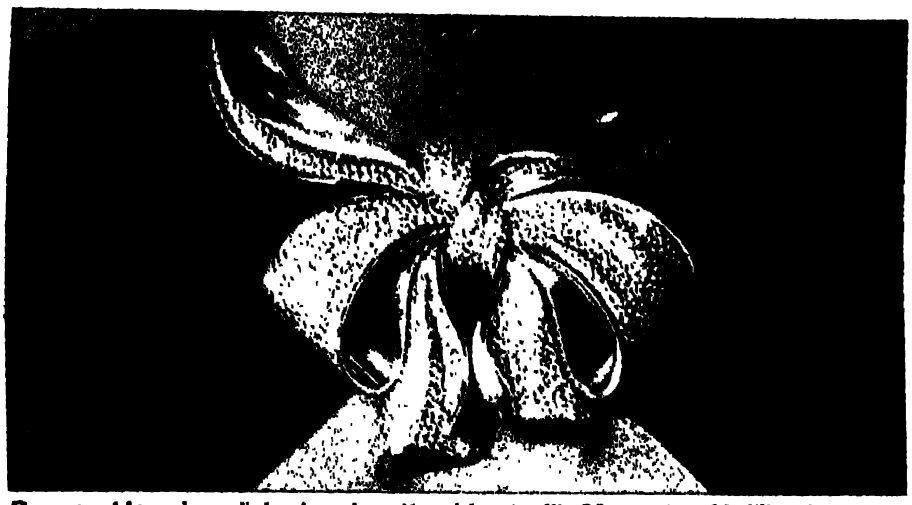
Set up barely three years ago, the diamond cutting centre has already carved out a niche for itself as a model training institute, where the almost two-years long training course in major centres in Gujarat and other states has been condensed into a six-month intensive programme. " By the time our boys leave the centre, they have enough skills and experience to have a work

output of Rs 100 a day, " says Mukesh Gupta, chief executive of the foundation. The foundation, with this centre, hopes to make the north a major hub for the training of people in the cutting and polishing of diamonds as against Gujarat and Bombay, which have traditionally been the focal point of all diamond activity in the country.

The fact that prestigious gemology institutes such as the Surat-based Indian Diamond Institute (IDI) and the diamond training centre in Jaipur are now asking the foundation training centre to help redesign their training courses speaks volumes about their time-saving innovations. It is also in the process of setting up a jewellery manufacturing training institute in Sitapur, in collaboration with the Rajasthan Industrial Corporation

Unlike the other training institutes such as the Surat-based Indian Diamond Institute (IDI), where the entrants are made to practice on small steel balls for about a year-and-a-half before getting to work on real diamonds, the training at the DTC begins straightaway on diamonds (not the expensive variety but an inferior quality imported from Australia and Africa). "There is a lot of difference in the hardness of steel and diamond, so it is not much point training on them for so long," points out M.P Goswami, who is in charge of the training at the centre. Even though practicing on diamonds raises the training cost much more, it gives on-the-job experience and a definite edge in speed and dexterity.

Also, unlike in other diamond cutting centres, where the traditional tools are used initially before putting the novices on to the semi-automatic gadgets for the three stages of bruiting (pre-shaping) cutting and polishing and sorting and grading, the apprentices begin work rightaway on the semi-automatic Israeli machines that have been installed at the centre.



Bow necklace in polished and matt gold set with 30 carats of brilliantly cut diamonds

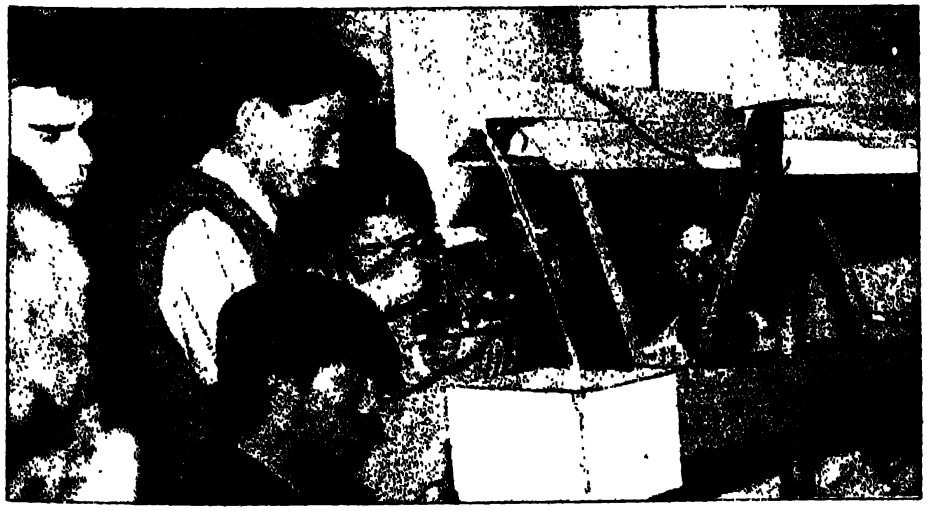
Goswami, himself a product of IDI, says the course has been devised to ensure that there is no compromising on quality and craftsman skills in the training, even though it is of a short duration. "We first gauge whether the apprentices have a geometry-sensitive eye If not, we give them work-book lessons and exercises on angles and degrees till they developed a trained eye." He says, normally at other centres, apprentices who have mastered the individual stages of pre-shaping, cutting and polishing, are taken off to start work on those particular areas. But the DTC ensures that its apprentices complete the full course, before starting any kind of work.

Earlier secondary level education was the minimum qualification for training at the cesntre, which has a fee structure ranging from Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000 for the six-month course (80 per cent of it subsidised by the foundation.) " But going by the success rate of the course and the self employment opportunities it opens up, graduates and even post-graduates have started coming for it," boasts Goswami. According to him, the institute has a tie-up with several gem-cutting centres in Surat, Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Chittor, Udaipur and Jaipur, where the students are directly absorbed after completing the course. "Our capacity as yet is to train only 150 to 200 apprentices in a year, while the demand is for 500 to 600 already," he adds.

Training from the institute has already helped more than 400 employees get gainful employment. Among them, is Ashok Chaudhary, a deaf and dumb youth who has not only successfully completed the course in the prescribed time but is also now employed as an instructor at the centre. As part of its commitment to the Integrated Rural Development programme, the DTC provides free training and a schoiarship of Rs 400 a month to youths living below the poverty line. " Our effort is to reach the most unprivileged of the underprivileged," says Gupta, the brain behind the centre's innovative approach.

Successes and gains notwithstanding, with no signs of man's vanity vanishing, diamonds are here to stay as the gems of the future, as stones that will forever be coveted and cherished. And till that remains true of the demonic, devilish, deathly stone, the same may be true for the fledgling centre in the green confines of Nawalgarh. ■

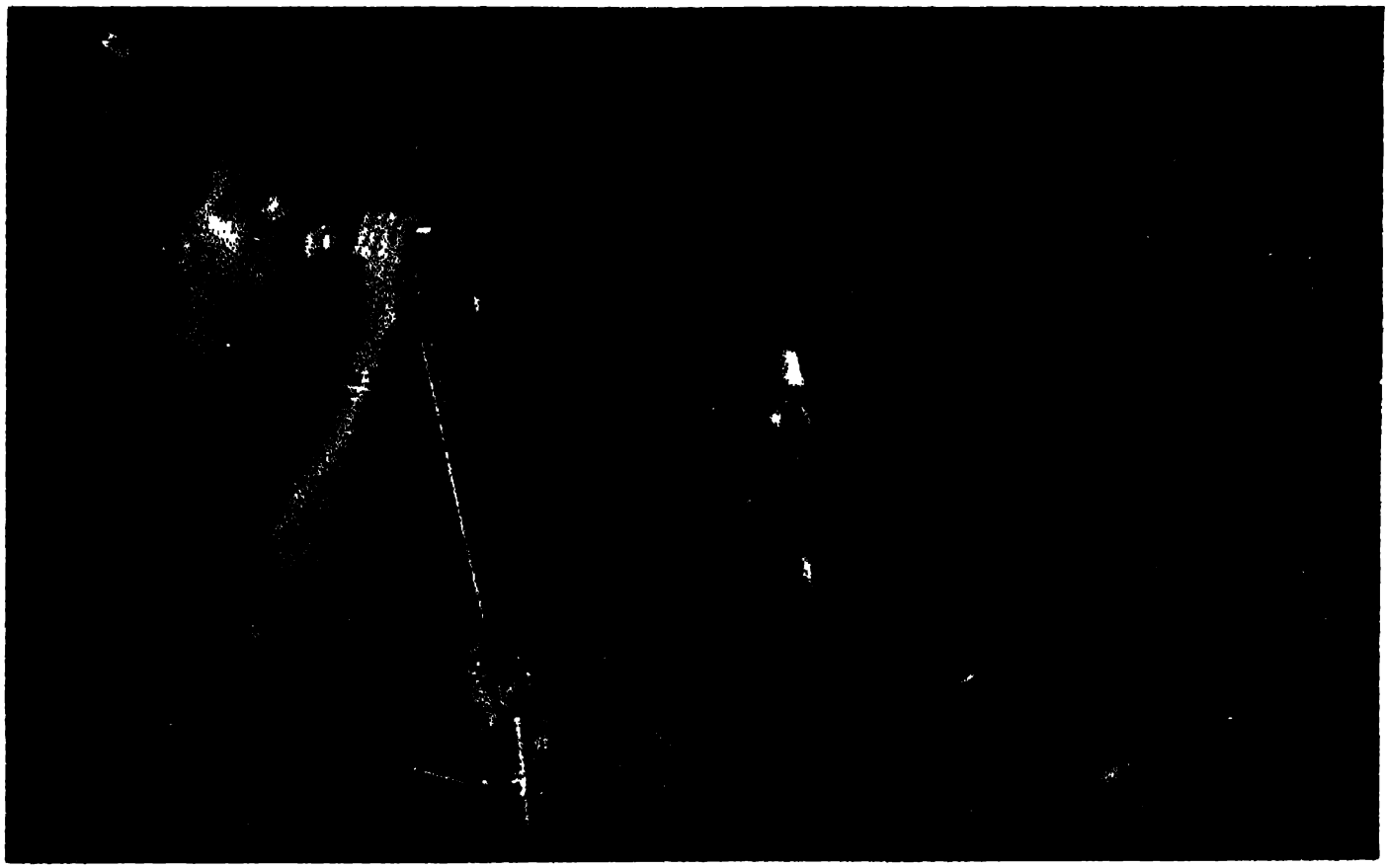
Diamond cutting centre of Morarka Foundations: A model training institute



TRAPPED IN THE NET

Indus Creed is the first Indian band to have their own site on the Internet. ***Anita George*** *reports*

Dasha Kalyan Chowdhury



Indus Creed : Now going great guns on the Net

Indus Creed, Mumbai's hard-rocking band, must be feeling flattered these days. And for reasons other than the attention they are getting from music channels.

Early this year, a fan attending a concert in Pune pinned them down backstage and asked them to go on Internet. The band wasn't too sold on the idea. But the true devotee that he is, Nilay Soneji, a management student from Mumbai, went ahead and created The Indus Creed Home Page on the Net, designed, monitored and updated faithfully by Soneji. And that makes it yet another first for the band!

"Zubin (Ballaporia) and I then wrote out the matter for the page,'" says Uday Benegal, lead vocalist for the band. Relaxing at home, dangling a long narrow plait and several earrings, he browses through the page on his computer. It opens with the declaration: "This page is dedicated to Indus Creed, the only international hard rocking band to emerge out of India."

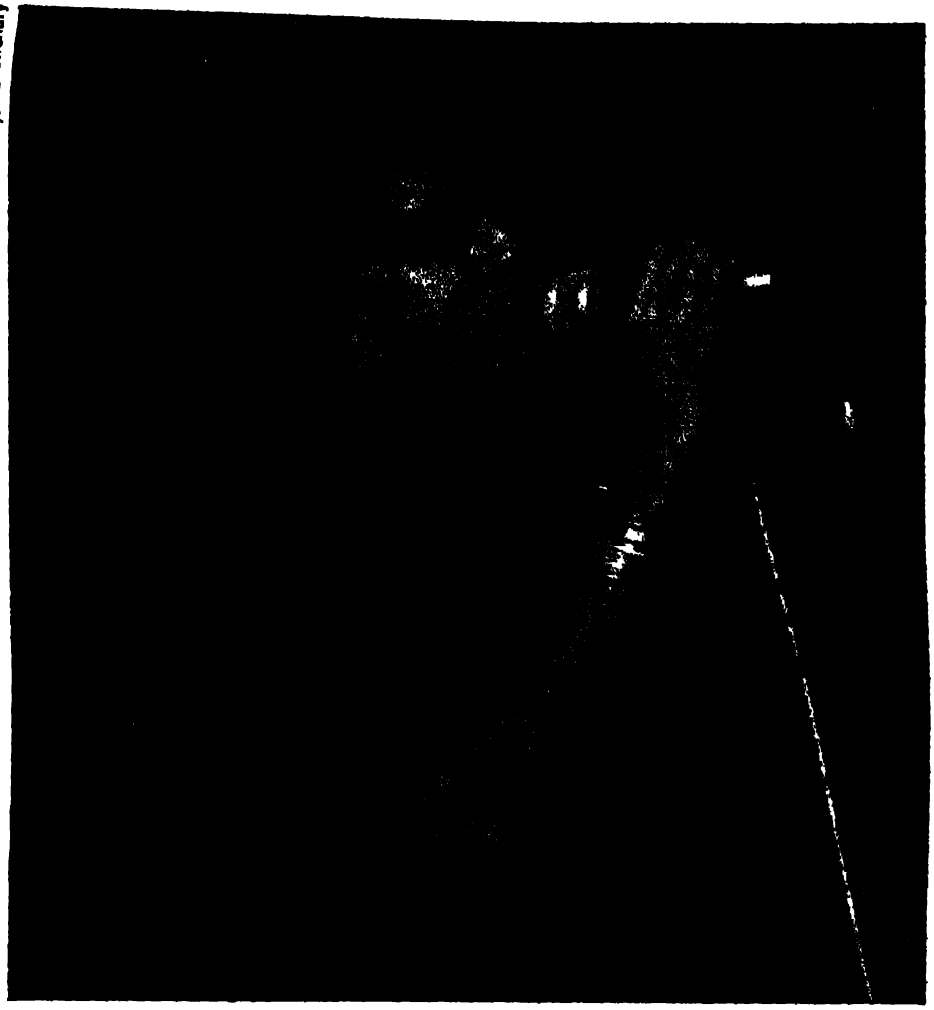
And there's a news flash too: '*Sleep* has been nominated the Indian Viewer's Choice for the MTV Video Music Award this year. So send in your votes, people!'

Then there's all you want to know about the group—biography, discography, videos, lyrics, chords and concert information. Uday opens the biography—it describes him, among other things, as an international cuisine buff. "Yes, I LOVE food. In fact, when I finished college I had no idea what to do, and studied catering for two years. And that's where I met my wife! Anyway, after two years I did a stint in a hotel, and decided it wasn't for me. So I went back to music,"says Benegal.

That should explain the band's ultimate plans, which pop up on screen: to develop the perfect lemon meringue pie, and tour the planet with their music. "Zubin maintains the band's newsletter, which is also here on the site. He replies to all letters himself. We try to keep our contact with fans personal, as long as it will be possible to do so,"says Benegal.

The site has been visited by 119 people since June, and there is a Guest Book where they can sign in, and leave a message. There's a message from musician Shiv Mathur ('Really, you guys...') and one rather mean one from an L. Saldanha. Benegal recalls a student in Texas who wanted some information on Indus Creed for his university newspaper and got it through the net.

"It's great fun, you can sit on it all day long! Which is why," he adds wryly, "I make it a point to sit at the computer not to surf but to look for a specific piece of information!"



Desha Kalyan Chowdhury

At the Net, Benegal meets all kinds of people, and they meet a band whom many have never heard of before. "One of the first questions people abroad ask is what kind of music we play," he says. "That's why our intro says we're a hard rocking band. There may be someone looking for Indus Valley, and under Indus he finds us! We found a band likewise called Nein Creed in Germany (*nein* is 'no' in German). I was looking up info on Led Zeppelin once, and I find this Indian guy, a Xerxes Bagalia in Buffalo, New York, maintaining a Led Zep home page! So we met and got chatting through E-mail."

For a rock band, the Net is a gold mine. Chords, sound clips, videos, everything is there for the taking. "Like I want the lyrics of Pearl Jam... you can't make out what those guys are singing. So I take a printout of their lyrics from their web site! Mahesh (Tinaikar, lead guitarist) is putting together the chords of our songs for our page," says Benegal.

Sound clips from their albums are also being prepared, but that project is on hold at the moment because of the costs involved, and the time it takes downloading.

Benegal makes a quick visit to the site of one of his favourite bands, Tears for Fears. "Hello" he says, "what do you have here, The Unofficial Curt Smith Shrine! Curt," he adds, "is the guy who left the group."

He pores through it briefly and moves on, past Job Opportunities on the Sony site and listings of strange names in the music scene; Mystidious Misfits, Korn, Groove Theory. "Another thing we are working on is an interactive CD ROM," he puts in, while taking a look at some band's concert dates. "We're looking for a sponsor for it right now. What we want to do is take it abroad when we go —we're trying to get a recording deal in the US." Meanwhile, their home page will continue to be looked after by Nilay, who checks in for mail, updates information, sees who has signed in the guest book. "The good thing," says Nilay, "is that abroad, the pages of many bands are looked after by fans, and there is no guarantee that the information is true. Here, I make it clear that all the material comes directly from Indus Creed. They give me access to whatever I need. It's going great guns, better than I expected!"

Meanwhile, he's keeping his eyes peeled for other Indian bands whom he can lure into the web. After all, if Indus Creed is around, can the others be far behind? ■

Desha Kalyan Chowdhury

FIRST PERSON

[illegible] ... appeared on Channel V's India ... [illegible] ... the pipeline.

[illegible]
of your life?
My wife Coleen.
What is your source of sustenance?
My will power and my ability to be self-centred.
On what occasions do you lie?
When it is necessary to do so. Though I try as much as possible not to.
What is your greatest regret?
Yet to be encountered.
What has been your happiest moment?
Yet to happen.

> **What do you envy most in others?**
>
> Their inhibitions

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
An easy and hassle-free state of mind.
What is your greatest fear?

> **What is your favourite journey?**
>
> To heaven and back

Of the unknown.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My mother.
What do you dislike most in others?
[illegible]
[illegible] you dislike most in yourself?
[illegible]
I trust people too easily.
What is your most precious possession?
My soul.
What objects do you always carry?
[illegible]
What makes you most depressed?
Poverty.
What do you dislike most in your appearance?
No comment.
What is your favourite smell?
[illegible]
What is your favourite journey?
To heaven and back.
What is your favourite [illegible]?
[illegible]
What is your [illegible]?
[illegible]

> **What is your greatest fear?**
>
> Of the unknown

[illegible]
What do you envy most in others?
Their inhibitions.
[illegible]

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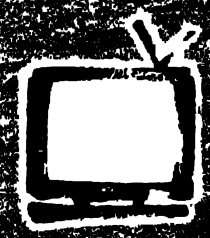
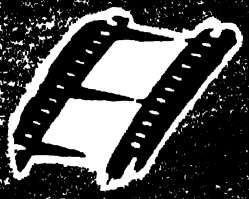
ASK FOR YOUR COPY





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The Telegraph

15 SEPTEMBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Madhuri Mania

■ Kudos to Jatin Kochhar for sizing up celebs and their sex appeal like the way he cuts his designer clothes ('Shooting His Mouth Off', July 21).

Giving Madhuri Dixit 1.5 on 10 is sacrilege. The queen of gyration is still at the top though Manisha Koirala may have come a close second and is about to topple her.

Madhuri's box-office success lies in her winsome smile and her supremely agile body. Thus despite a diminutive form she cuts a ravishing figure on screen. Combined with this her large brown eyes and the thick black mane that frames her face make her the most desired star on the Indian screen.

It does not really matter what she wears. Madhuri will remain the nation's heartthrob.
Dyutiman Bhattacharya,
Howrah

■ It was most disappointing to find Madhuri Dixit being so poorly rated by Kochhar. She is one of Bollywood's most successful stars and if clothes were really a deciding factor for stardom, she would not have been there at the top. She looks gorgeous in whatever she wears.
Saif Hussain,
Calcutta

V. Ramachandran

Madhuri Dixit: The smile that charms

■ Jatin Kochhar's comments on celebrity wardrobes enlivened my Sunday morning breakfast. I totally agree with his ratings but I was heartbroken that the designer should rate Madhuri so poorly.

The *dhak, dhak* girl of Bollywood, you had better watch out!
Prabal Guha,
Patna

■ Jatin Kochhar seemed more interested in people's figures than in their attires. His suggestion that Michael Jackson should get his body polka-dotted was in bad taste.
Pragya Burman,
Calcutta

■ If Jatin Kochhar's ideal dress code is nudity or near nudity, God help the fashion designer.
Kakali Datta,
Calcutta

■ It is obvious Jatin Kochhar isn't very sure of his own dress sense and so he prattles about his undergarments and in the end does not even rate himself. Of course the figure would have been zero!
Nilanjana Bhattacharya,
Calcutta

Businessmen As Ambassadors

■ Ambassadors of Goodwill' (August 11) made interesting reading. But you have omitted a couple of other names like that of Mahesh Trivedi, consul for Indonesia in Calcutta, who is the CEO of Denro Ispat.
D.N. Hakemi,
Rishra (W.B.)

Boarding School

■ The Magazine cover stories have become eminently more readable. I am looking forward to a story on the best boarding schools in the country.
C. Kent,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Jitender Gupta

Mayawati

PAGE 4

THE FIERY Mayawati could be the next chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. A profile

PAGE 26

WHAT IS it like in post-prohibition Haryanana?

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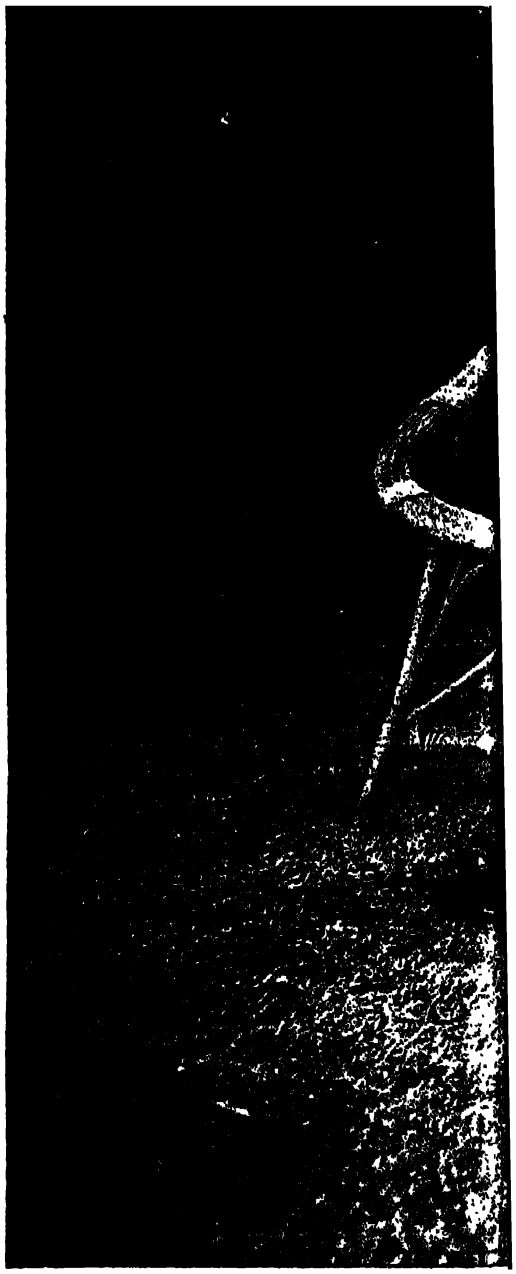
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover · Jitender Gupta

COVER STORY

MAHA MAYA

She's fiesty. She's fiery. And Mayawati says she will be back as chief minister of UP.
***Geeta Sharma** meets the firebrand politician*



Mayawati relaxing with her pet rabbit

FIERY, FIESTY, A FIREBRAND? FORGET IT. MAYAWATI LOOKS nothing like her usual ebullient self, as she sits in her pink-hued room, head bent intently over a sheaf of papers. Recovering from a thyroid surgery, she looks pale and drawn, as she greets you in a barely audible voice. One hand is permanently holding her throat, which seems to pain her every ti ne she swallows a spoonful of the corn-flakes that comprise her breakfast.

But as the conversation gets going, and inevitably turns to politics, animation sneaks back into her voice as she talks about her party's agenda. As in, fighting the *manuwadi* (status quo) forces and ensuring justice to the *shoshit* (exploited) backward castes.

And as she holds forth on the strengths and weaknesses of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), whose rise and fortunes matched hers in the political arena, her face suddenly comes alive. And you begin to understand why this woman appeared from nowhere to become the first Dalit woman chief minister of India's most populous state. And why she is today one of the most powerful symbols of the changing caste and gender equations in Indian politics.

By now, Mayawati is in full flow, as she demolishes all her political rivals: from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Mulayam Singh Yadav, to all the *manuwadi* forces in society. It is clear that with the U.P. Assembly elections around the corner, Mayawati sees herself as the Uttar Pradesh chief minister in waiting.

Before you can deflect her away from electoral politics, there is an interruption, in the shape of the lungi-clad (and bare-chested) Kanshi Ram, BSP supremo, and Mayawati's

Kanshi Ram:Mayawati's mentor and guide

guide and mentor.

Introductions follow, and Kanshi Ram is affability itself. "Do a good write-up," he advises you, before moving on to the next room—personal assistant in tow—for a shave.

This little interlude and the fact that both she and Kanshi Ram live under the same roof in a Humayun Road flat in Delhi, prompts one to repeat the much-asked-about question about their relationship. Mayawati takes this in her stride. Calmly, she replies: "Ours is a purely *Guru-Shishya* relationship. You can yourself gauge that from what he just told you," she says.

'Manyawar', as she and all others

address Kanshi Ram, is, Mayawati adds, "one of the two most powerful influences in my life, the other being Babasahib Bhimrao Ambedkar." She goes on, "It was *Manyawar* who brought me into politics and made me what I am today."

Second of her father's nine children, Mayawati was two years old when her father Prabhu Dayal, now 71, brought the family to Delhi from their village, Dalapur, in the Ghaziabad district of U.P. The turning point in the young girl's life was her first reading of Ambedkar's ideology. This, coupled with some instances of discrimination towards the Dalits that she witnessed as a child, prompted her to work for the *shoshit samaj* (exploited classes).

As a teenager, living in the JJ (*jugghi-jhonpri*, to give its full name) clusters of a down-market locality of Delhi, far removed from the Capital's posh areas, Mayawati also realised that it was necessary to become someone to be able to do something. That it was necessary to garner educational skills to transcend the social obstacles the Dalits faced.

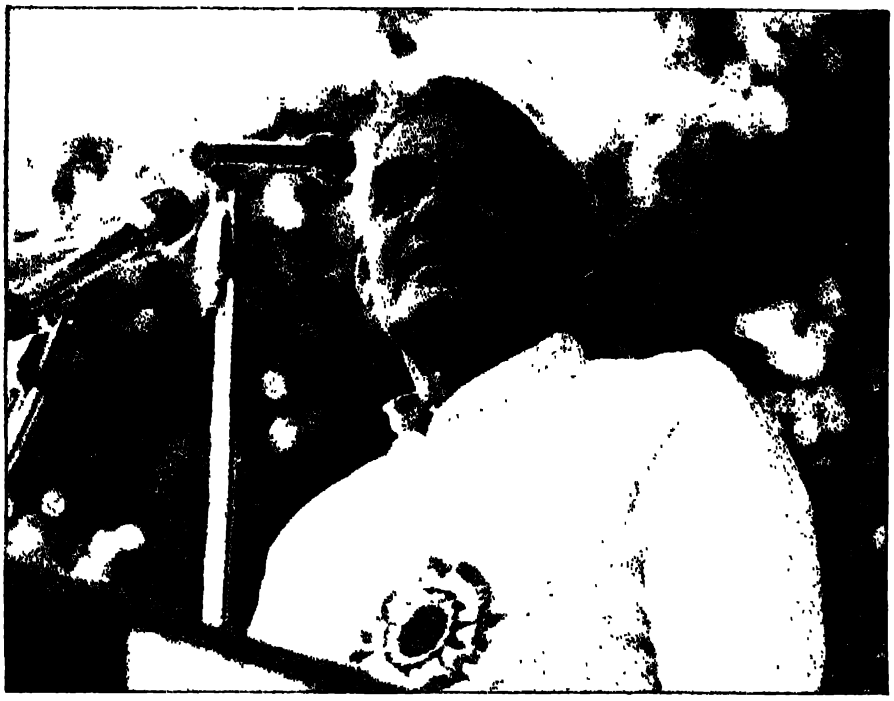
A keen student, she went on after her higher secondary exams to get a B.A, an M.A, a B.Ed and a Law degree from Delhi University, before taking up a teaching job as she prepared for the civil services examination.

Her interest in debating brought her on the same platform in social forums with such political heavyweights as Atal Behari Vajpayee. It was at one of these meetings—a *Jati Todo* meeting way back in Delhi, in 1977, that her mentor-to-be, Kanshi Ram, the then leader of the Dalit Socialist Sangharsh Samiti, a precursor to the present day BSP, heard her and immediately sensed her inherent leadership qualities.

He called on her at her home one day and asked her what she planned to do in life. When Mayawati said she was preparing for the IAS, he asked her, "Are you ready for a career in which these same IAS fellows will do as you bid?"

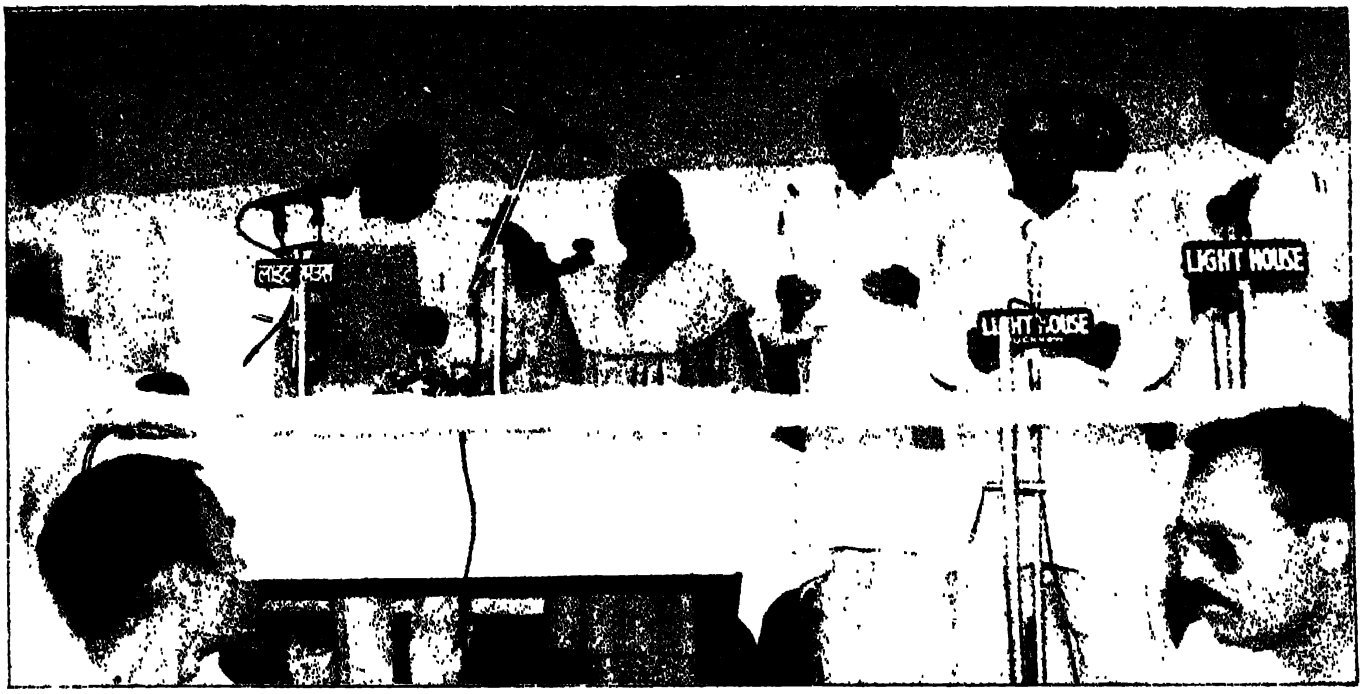
Yes, she replied, and the very next day joined Kanshi Ram and his outfit, which later came to be known as the BSP. But all this while, she did not give up her job as a school teacher. She did so only in July 1984 when she finally devoted herself fully to politics to take the BSP to dizzy heights, with the able help of *Manyawar*.

Carrying forward her resolve to

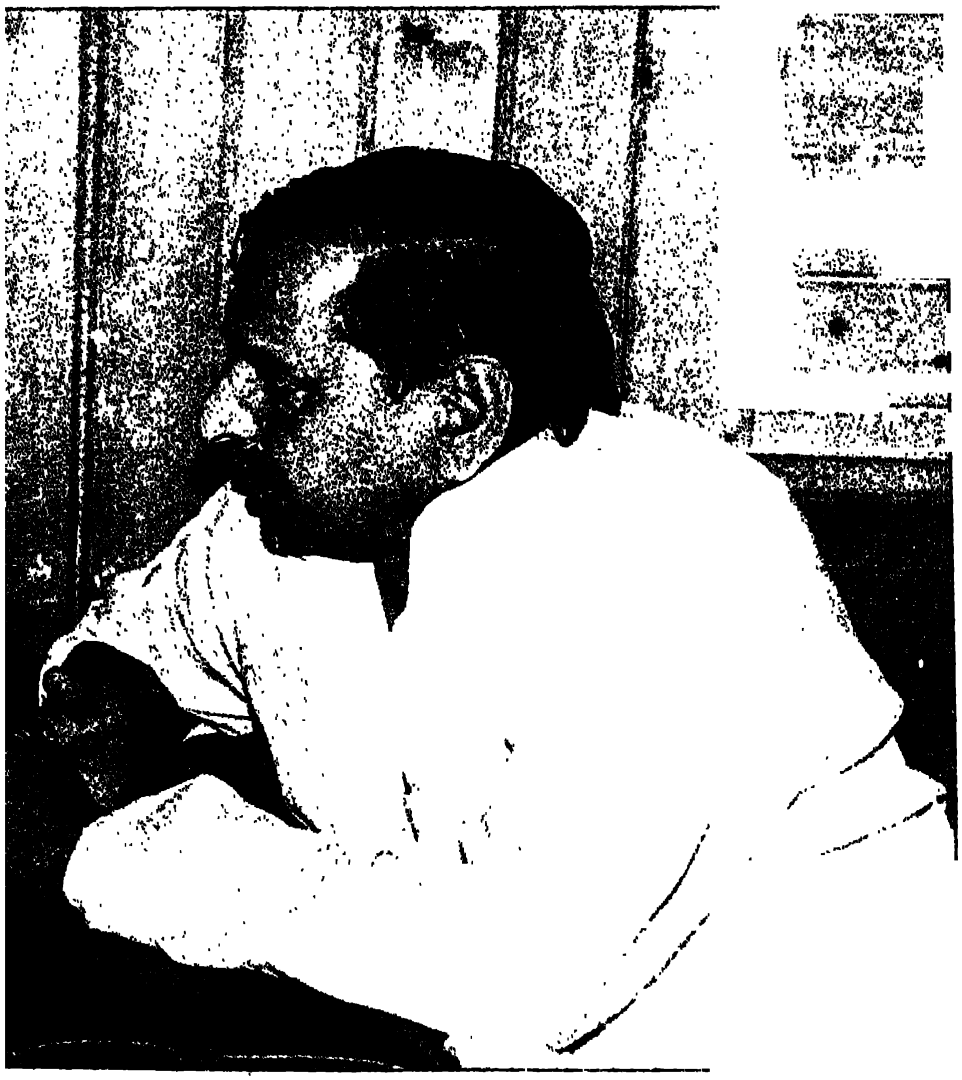


Vajpayee:Brilliant orator

Kanshi Ram with Mulayam Singh Yadav:Trying to work things out



Mayawati with members of her Cabinet



be something and thereby to serve the *shoshit samaj*. Mayawati contested the Lok Sabha elections several times, but was successful only in 1989 from the Bijnore seat.

However, it was her ascendancy to the chief ministership of Uttar Pradesh as Kanshi Ram's heir apparent after the party's marriage of convenience with the BJP in June last year, that crowned her political achievements. As the first ever woman Dalit chief minister of India, she became a text-book example of the changing face of the Indian politician.

Commentators immediately drew contrasts between Mayawati and other upper class and caste women who had attained high office in the past. Since none of the two prerequisites of national political office for South Asian women—violent death of a father/husband or a well-known family name—were valid in Mayawati's case, analysts conveniently attributed her rise to the chief ministership, in large measure, to her association with Kanshi Ram.

But Mayawati points out, her proximity to the BSP supremo need not have been viewed as an advantage exclusive to her, given the fact that having a mentor, male or female, was crucial to most aspiring politicians.

Taunts and jibes aside, once in the saddle (for a brief tenure of four-and-a-half months) she surprised her

Mayawati:Strong and forceful

Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Mahatma Gandhi

supporters and detractors alike by going all out to put her own stamp on the state administration. "Everyone, including the BJP, thought that since I had never been even a *'chota mota'* minister I would be a convenient puppet while they ran the show," says Mayawati, a mischievous smile playing on her face. "But soon, they found out I meant business and started calling me the *'tuez tarrak mukhya mantri'!*"

With her reformist broom in hand, she set out to wipe the state clean of *'arajakta, goondagardi* and mafia*gardi'* (lawlessness, and the rule of hoodlums),which according to her was a legacy of the Mulayam Singh Yadav regime. So within a short span of three months, as many as 1,45,000 anti-social elements were arrested and put behind bars while the rest fled across the Nepal border.

Errant officials in the 14 commissionaries of the state were punished with sackings and transfers if Mayawati thought that they had neglected development works. "I always made it a point to punish the topmost officials. Because even in a family, if the children go wayward, it is not they but the elders who are responsible for it," she explains.

Her *'karak'* avatar earned her the reputation of being an arrogant and hard taskmaster. But U.P.'s Mrs Thatcher was and is unfazed because she feels that the people of the state appreciated every action of hers and want 'Mayawati *behenji*'s' rule all over again. As she says,"I had to rule the way I did because I was a woman Dalit chief minister, and also because it was the only way to defeat the *manuwadi vyavastha*."

Nor is Mayawati in the least apologetic about her provocative rhetoric, which may make the middle classes flinch, but helps her reach her own constituency.

Consider her statements about Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, by which she still stands by. "I believe and have said that for us Gandhi's philosophy was not as relevant as Ambedkar's. So, what is wrong with that?" she asks, defiantly.

According to Mayawati, the *manuwadi* press distorted her comments to rake up a controversy. "I felt that Gandhi, instead of trying

to make the *samaj* had tried to break it by calling us Harijans, and had even gone against the Constitution," she explains. "Because if we are Harijans (children of God) are the rest *Shaitan ki aulad* (devil's children)? How am I bothered whose children Gandhi and Nehru are? We are not concerned with their backgrounds. Our fight is on the basis of ideology."

With the Assembly elections in U.P. on the anvil, Mayawati, like any other political leader, is convinced that all the people of the state and not just the Dalits are looking forward to her return to power. A rally called by the BSP at an eight-day notice was attended by, she claims, more than five lakh people on July 30 in Lucknow—yet another indicator of her popularity in the state.

With child-like relish she recites for you, the slogans that she says the people have already coined for her: "*Aap ki mukhya mantri kaisi ho? Mayawati jaisi ho* (Who should your chief minister be like? Like Mayawati); *Aap ki majboori hai, Mayawati zaroori hai* (You have no choice but Mayawati)," etc., etc.

With BJP leader L.K. Advani

In fact, Mayawati has the arithmetic of her supposed victory all worked out. The alliance worked out with the Congress—after disastrous liaisons with Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party—is meant to ensure that they cut into the high-caste vote banks of the BJP, designated as enemy number one. With lessons from the past fresh in her mind, she says that the party has allocated only 125 of the 425 seats to its alliance partner, "because we are confident of winning enough seats to make a government on our own."

So, what is the need for an alliance at all?

Mayawati has her explanation ready: "Because we do not want the Congress to become weak for that would mean a strong BJP."

The BSP national general secretary, even has the exact measures of her recipe for the power votes worked out well in advance of the coming Assembly polls. "Mulayam Singh, with all the support he got from his leftist and

Mayawati: Long journey ahead

rightist alliance partners, managed to poll 21 per cent of the votes in the Lok Sabha elections, while the BSP got the same percentage on its own But in the Vidhan Sabha elections, we are sure of increasing it to 41 per cent," she says

According to her, this will come about by cutting into Mulayam Singh's Muslim votes, the BJP's upper caste votes and improving the BSP's own backward caste margins.

But how is Mayawati so sure that she can pull this off? "Because these are the Assembly elections and the people of Uttar Pradesh want their girl to become the *mukhya mantri*," she says, without missing a beat "I have many unfinished tasks that I have to complete, mainly to wipe out the remnants of the Jungle Raj of the previous regime"

Appearances notwithstanding, there is a soft, feminine side to Mayawati that is hidden from the outside world. But not for her the cooking, housekeeping, '*grahini*'-variety passion Gardening is what is closest to her heart. "I have never had the time to cook Luckily the Samaj has given me enough to afford help who cooks for me," she says.

Pride writ large on her face, she takes you on a guided tour of her garden "I have designed and planned it with help from the gardener," she admits, but it is clear that this is a place that the owner takes special interest in

Young Ashoka trees stand in disciplined rows along the periphery of the lush green lawn, leavened with a whole range of seasonal flowers In one corner of the lawn, stands a swing for her nieces, and in the other, her prized possession, a bird house that has about half a dozen parrots. "Whenever I get too tired of being among people, I come to them for respite," she says

Why doesn't she seek refuge in the bosom of her family? "Simply because I am not the type to get bogged down by family ties," she explains. Ever since she plunged into politics, Mayawati has had little time for her family an aged father, six brothers, who are in government service, and two sisters, one of them living with her

But the fact that she could not even attend the marriages of her two brothers or seldom be with the family for festivals and get-togethers, has not alienated her from her flock '*Main rishte nate aur teej tyohar mein vishwas nahin karti. Kewal karma par karti hoon* (I don't believe in familial ties and festivals and fairs I believe only in *karma*)" is her philosophy And yet, she adds, "they all look to me for guidance, even my father listens to me"

For her part, she says, her father, Prabhu Dayal, has been a strong support and never nagged her about getting married and settling down. "He knows I have devoted my life to the *shoshit samaj* and have no plans to marry and he has left it at that," she explains, looking a little relieved.

But then, which father would dare risk the wrath of a daughter like Mayawati. When even such stalwarts as Mulayam Singh Yadav treat you with grudging respect, your family has per force to follow suit

After all, which able-bodied male would like to tangle with Mayawati in politics—both domestic and electoral. Or even, relish bumping into her in a dark alley ■

EXTRACT

The Birth of a DREAM

An extract from ***Satyajit Ray's*** *memoir of how he made the Apu trilogy*

Bibhuti Bhusan Bannerji who wrote about all kinds of moods, at least a few of which were outstanding, had led a life of hardship, ending up as a school teacher after doing odd jobs in various parts of the country. Brahmin by birth, his father had been a priest like Apu's in *Pather Panchali*. He had married early, but had lost his wife within a year. Heartbroken, he had remained a widower for twenty-two years before marrying a second time.

It was his widow, Mrs Rama Bannerji, whom I approached for the film rights to *Pather Panchali*. Mrs Bannerji turned out to be a great admirer not only of the illustrations I had done for the short version of *Pather Panchali*, but also of the writings of my father and grandfather. She received us most graciously and assured me there would be no problems about my getting the film rights, when we had money to launch our production. Mrs Bannerji's brother, Chandidas Chatterji, asked me to keep him informed of developments. This done, I at last started looking for a sponsor.

The first person I approached was Mr B. N. Sircar, a sort of Bengali Louis B. Mayer, a true producer in

The famous *kaash* field scene from *Pather Panchali*

Extracted from *My Years with Apu: Memoir* ***by Satyajit Ray Published by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd Price Rs 125***

Apu (Subir Bannerji) in a pensive mood

the Hollywood sense He owned a studio and a lab New Theatres, and had on his payroll most of the leading actors and directors of Bengali cinema Mr Sircar's halcyon days were past, but he was still a man to be reckoned with I went to see him in his office with my sketchbook A perfect gentlemen, Mr Sircar received me cordially, gave full attention to what I had to say, then he said he was extremely sorry, but he had just launched a big production and wasn't in a position to help me in any way Then he clapped my shoulders affectionately and asked me to come back after six months – the next time, of course, he would try to help me

Next I approached another solvent producer—one Mr Bhattacharya of Kalpana Movies He heard my recital, glanced at my sketches and said he was interested Would I give him 10 days to make up his mind? I thought I saw a silver lining and left with a promise to call back within 10 days Three days later Bibhuti Bhusan's brother in-law Chandidas Chatterji got in touch with me He said he was facing a dilemma. One Mr Bhattacharya of Kalapana Movies had been to see Mrs Bannerji to negotiate for the film rights of *Pather Panchali* to be directed by the veteran director Debaki Bose "What did Mrs Bannerji tell him?" I asked anxiously "She said she had made up her mind that Satyajit Ray would direct the film and she was not prepared to consider any alternatives" So Bhattacharya had to be discarded This second disappointment was followed by a third one when a diabetic producer came to my house to listen to my treatment and interrupted my recital three times to visit the toilet He liked the treatment but lacked the sense to sponsor something that was so drastically offbeat

I had begun to feel uncertain after these experiences, when one day, Ashish Burman, the writer-caterer friend of mine told me that someone called Anil Choudhury, who was helping him with the catering business, knew a young producer who had just launched a new film and who might be persuaded to back me

I met Anil Choudhury who turned out to be about the same age as me and who seemed to have his wits about him. Choudhury took me to see his friend, the producer, who was staying in a somewhat seedy hotel in the heart of central Calcutta

Choudhury was visibly excited by the script, although Das, the producer, proved noncommittal But as Das told Choudhury later, he was willing to put up the money if a film produced by him (which had just been released) proved lucrative. As it turned out, it didn't In fact it was a resounding flop and Das expressed his inability to put up the money for my film Choudhury, however, stayed on to strengthen the small band that still stood behind me patiently

The early setbacks, notwithstanding, my fund of optimism was inexhaustible While waiting for a backer, I gave my mind to the business of casting The roles need non-professional artistes, but I knew some roles demanded a certain professional ability roles such as the parents' and old auntie's *Bicycle Thief* had only one professional in it, the actress who played the soothsayer For the mother, Sarbajaya, I had in mind the wife of a friend of mine, who had done some work on the stage. She was not a rural type at all being a graduate with a sophisticated urban background However, I felt she was physically right for the

Durga (Uma Dasgupta): Spontaneous performance

part and given the right clothes to wear, the right sort of business to perform and the right lines to speak, she would be all right For the father, we had a professional stage and film actor, Kanu Bannerji, who, I thought, would be just right for the part I started next by looking around for the children—a boy of about six and a girl of twelve or so There are no coaching schools for movies in India, where you can find albums of photographs to make your choice from There are two obvious ways to look for children. One is to look in schools, and the other is to put an ad in the paper The first proved abortive in the case of Apu We put an advertisement asking the parents to bring their six to seven year old sons to a particular address at a particular time The boy had to be fair, good looking, with a natural flair for acting There was no suitable place for an interview in our somewhat small flat and a large room was acquired through the help of a student, a boy, who shared my love for films and western music

There was a huge response to our ad, but most of them, including a girl who had come straight from the barber with her hair cut short and powder at the base of her neck, had to be rejected at sight I felt a feeling of depression slowly creeping over me for the first time Then my wife found Apu in the playground of the flat adjacent to ours The boy was playing with his elder brother and friends when he was spied by my wife Yes, she was right, physically he certainly had all the attributes

Subir Bannerji was the name of the boy Didn't he go to school? Yes Had he done any acting or reciting on stage? No How did he react to the idea of appearing in a film in a principal role? He didn't seem to have any opinion of his own but said if his parents told him to he would agree to it "I'll do what my mother tells me"

The finding of Durga proved just as tough until one day Ashish Burman brought hope He had been to a girls' school where he knew one of the teachers and had spotted a girl, who, he thought, could be perfect for Durga.

Burman was right. We made enquiries and it turned out that the girl's father was an ex-footballer. He had heard of my reputation as a book designer and desired to see me at his house on a Sunday morning. I turned up, chatted with the parents, had a cup of tea and selected their youngest daughter Uma Dasgupta on the spot to play Durga, when and

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Wavelength 90

if the film was made. I had taken my Leica with me and took her up to the roof to take some pictures. Since she seemed to be a bit demure, and Durga was a tomboy, I asked her to make faces for the camera. She obliged me with a total lack of inhibition.

With Apu and Durga in the can, I felt I would take a little time over old Auntie. If I found a sponsor, I could well do some shooting with the children. There were lots of scenes with just the two of them.

We had budgeted the film at Rs 70,000, but even the low amount seemed ambitious to run-of-the-mill producers. "Since you are not using any stars, any songs, any fights, can't you get it slightly lower?"

After a point, I had what seemed a fantastic idea. We would shoot the film in 16 mm and then blow it up to 35 mm for theatrical release. The cost would definitely be reduced by half. Why not give it a trial?

With mounting excitement, we borrowed a Bolex from a friend, bought some negative stock and went to a village to take some test shots. I was accompanied by young Subrata Mitra who had studied Claude Renoir's methods, who I decided, would photograph my film. When I put the suggestion to him he hemmed and hawed. "Nonsense," I admonished. "If you know still photography, and you do, shooting a movie on location is only a step away. You measure your light with a meter, expose your film and your aperture and shoot. The mysteries of camera work the professional cameraman talks about are all balderdash!"

The village we chose was Gopalnagar, where Banerjee used to teach. It served as a setting for the mood, he had renamed the village Nischindipur in the book. It was mid-monsoon, we had to make our way through knee-deep mud, wash our legs in a pond and then proceed with the photography. I operated the camera myself, deliberately shooting in weak light in bamboo groves, in a courtyard when it was raining. We also shot details — lotus leaves stirring in a breeze, the surface of a pond where raindrops fell, swaying plantain leaves in the wood and so on.

The processed footage looked excellent in 16 mm. Everything had come out exactly as I had imagined. The next step was the blowup of the footage for which there was no facility in Calcutta. The footage had to be sent to a lab in Bombay. When it came back we found that the thing had'nt worked at all. What was shot at a speed of 24 frames per second, now seemed more like 30, with the result that the speed became distorted. We questioned the lab and they said that was the best they could do. We were now back to square one.

Meanwhile, Anil Choudhury had contacted a few new producers and drawn a blank. It became more clear to me that unless we could prove our bonafides by producing some actual footage, the credibility gap would widen. After all, none of us had any experience. Why did we expect that the producers would share our confidence without first convincing themselves that we had the knowhow? What was needed was actual film footage featuring the two children. I now realised that I had a personal source of funds, my insurance policy. I enquired and learnt that I could get Rs 7,000 against the policy. With that we could buy raw stock and hire a camera. I also approached some of my friends and relatives, those more affluent than us and asked each for a loan of a thousand rupees. They were, of course, told that they would be paid back as soon as we had a sponsor. Everyone we approached had faith in us and was convinced that this could be made to work. In all, we collected Rs 17,000. One roll of Kodak black-and-white negative then cost about Rs 1,200 so we could definitely shoot for a week before our funds ran out. I decided to start with the usual highlight of the film calling for no dialogues, as we couldn't afford a sound recordist. The scene we chose was of the two children's first sight of the railway train. I had conceived the scene taking place in a large field of white fluffy *kaash* flowers to contrast with the black smoke of the train. *Kaash* was a flower which bloomed in autumn and had a life of about a couple of months. We enquired and learnt that there was a train 65 miles from Calcutta whose railway line ran alongside a large expanse of *kaash*. It would be the perfect setting for us.

We had the money to pay the two children. Durga, I had little doubt, would perform well, but I was not so sure about the boy. However, I was prepared to make the effort to get the exact results from him.

For the camera we approached a private photographic studio that had a 36 mm imported Wall movie camera as against the more orthodox Mitchell which the film studios employed. We obtained the Wall at a minimum rate, the studio photographer being a friend called Asit Sen, who later became a film maker himself. He also happened to be a member of our film society.

I hadn't reached the point yet when I would discuss the matter with my manager at Keymer's (Broom had left and had been replaced by Kenneth Day). We decided we would work on a Sunday, or, if it came to that, on two or three successive Sundays.

On Sunday, October 27, 1952, which happened to be my wife's birthday, we set out for our location

Satyajit Ray along with photographs of *Pather Panchali*

Durga (Uma Dasgupta) discovers the body of Indir Thakrun (Chunibala Devi)

with the camera crew and the two children, Uma Dasgupta and Subir Bannerji. We arrived around midday and after a quick lunch got down to the job of shooting. As the sun climbs, Apu and Durga have a quarrel. Durga sticks out her tongue at her brother and runs away, Apu pursuing, anxious to make it up with Didi (elder sister). They arrive at the field of *kaash* flowers, and are stopped short by the inspiring sight of a telegraph pole. Durga applies her ears to it and hears a mysterious hum. Apu does likewise. Durga slips away and settles down to chew at a stub of sugarcane which she has wrenched off on the way. Apu reaches Didi, now prepared to make his peace. At this point she is the first to hear the rumbling sound of an approaching railway train. They are thrilled by their first encounter with the mighty metal monster whose sound they hear every evening from their cottage.

On this first day, what I had planned to shoot was the business at the telegraph pole—Apu losing sight of Durga amidst the dense tall flowers and then finding her again.

We didn't have a proper crew apart from Bansi who helped in every department. Anil Choudhury who was Production Controller (he remains so to this day) and Ashish Burman were my sole appointed crew along with Subrata Mitra, the cameraman—with the camera came Asit Sen, more to provide moral support than anything else.

The first set-up had Apu walking through the field of *kaash*, calling out to his sister whom he had lost sight of temporarily. Bansi had reminded me that I had to shout 'action' and 'cut' when they were called for.

Subrata Mitra applied his eye to the viewfinder of the Wall. Choudhury held up the clapstick — yes, we had prepared a temporary one — Apu took his position in front of the camera, the camera rolled and I shouted 'action'.

What this produced was a stiff zombie-like walk from Apu which had no relationship with the kind of walk called for. I had told him that he was to walk, stop, turn his head this way and that, start looking for his sister and then walk again. This had had no effect on the walk that now took place to greet my eyes and which the camera photographed using expensive raw stock. "Say 'cut' if you are not happy," urged Bansi. I did so with considerable force.

I had learnt a lesson. All my preparations over the years, the transcribing by hand of notes on cutting takes while watching a film, the arduous reading of Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Rotha, Spottiswood, my open disdain for the home-grown product, all these have finally produced was this one shot of which it was difficult to imagine anything more lifeless and futile. I must say, though, that it didn't take me long to decide that the thing could be rectified. I had simply had no idea that it was so difficult to make a single action like a boy's walk appear convincing to the eye. What I now did was to provide mechanical aids to the boy. I planted Anil, Bansi and Ashish behind clumps of *kaash* in various positions at varying distances from each other. They were asked to call out 'Subir' at certain intervals and Subir was to react to each call by turning his head in the direction it came from, though never stopping his walk. Then I put twigs on the path at irregular intervals for him to step across.

A second take was arranged. The three assistants called out as instructed, Subir reacted everytime by turning his head — this would appear on the screen as if he was looking for Durga — while he walked irresolutely forward stepping on the twigs. It was perfect and I could shout 'Eureka' for the discovery I had made about handling a child who was emphatically not a born actor. Throughout the shooting of *Pather Panchali* I had to use devices like this to get the right expression. Fortunately, Subir looked exactly right for the part, otherwise it would have been a disaster.

We shot about a third of what I had envisged and the scene came out first class. We had enough funds and film stock to shoot over the next two Sundays.

Meanwhile, the negative was developed and printed. We saw the rushes in a lab in the southern extremity of Calcutta. We found the footage quite satisfactory. Since we had no shooting till Sunday, I was anxious to cut it in the meantime. Bansi had introduced an editor to me called Dulal Dutt, whose experience consisted of editing one feature film, but who had worked an amateur on a number of films (Dutt is now one of the leading editors). We hired an editing machine, called movieola, as it is called, and sat alone joining the shots in sequence.

There, another lesson awaited me and shook me to the core. The shots wouldn't 'cut'. In other words, they were taken in the way I had directed but joining didn't make them flow. Actually our film showed that mere cutting is not applicable in all circumstances. I now realise that a grammarian could write a whole chapter on these problems of filming one character following another and their maintaining equal interest in both at all times and making the journey cinematically interesting.

I hoped to make up for the lack next Sunday when we would go back to our location and carry on with the scene. What happened on this day, I described in an article I wrote for *Sight & Sound*. Here is the relevant extract:

. on the following Sunday we were back at the same location. But was it the same location? It was hard to believe it. What was on the previous occasion a sea of fluffy whiteness was now a mere expanse of unlovely brownish grass. We knew *kaash* was a seasonal flower but surely they were not that short-lived. A local peasant provided the explanation. The flowers, he said, were food for the cattle. The cows and buffaloes had come to graze the day before and had literally chewed up the scenery.

This was a major setback and for the first time I found what I considered a compromise. I even had the suicidal notion of chopping the *kaash* flowers. The children would see the train by a field of paddy. It was near harvest time and I must have been out of my mind. I did take such a shot with Apu and Durga looking on as a train pased in the distance. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GUWAHATI					
HYDERABAD					
IMPHAL					
JAIPUR					
JAMMU					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
MUMBAI					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ-185	1145	1	RJ-184		
AMSTERDAM					
BANGKOK					
BUCHAREST					
CHITTAGONG					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	[illegible]	BG-697	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-092	1150	[illegible]	BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 723	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 044	1905	[illegible]	BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG-094	1010	4	BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
BG 096	2100	[illegible]	BG-[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1090	[illegible]	Q7-060	1250	[illegible]
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	[illegible]	BI-108	[illegible]	
[illegible]					
[illegible] 747	1025	[illegible]	[illegible] 746	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
BA 141	211[illegible]	[illegible]	BA 14[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
PARO					
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
KB [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB [illegible]	[illegible]	4
SINGAPORE					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	BI 302	2000	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 416	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4
TOKYO					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI 309	1[illegible]	[illegible]
YANGON					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 2[illegible]	1[illegible]	4

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Tootan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express Dep Mon Tue [illegible] Arr [illegible] Thur & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr [illegible] Wed & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express Dep Friday Arr Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time		Time	Dn
3141	13 40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	Darjeeling Mail	8 4[illegible]	144
3111	20 15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7 15	[illegible]
5657	6 25	Kanchanjunga (Lumding) Express	20 [illegible]	[illegible]
3153	22-00	Gour Express	5 1[illegible]	[illegible]
5663	20 00	Katihar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3151	11 20	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
3133	20-55	Mughal Sarai Express via JBG Loop	[illegible]	[illegible]
3103	18 25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
5163	12 40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	[illegible]	[illegible]

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	6004
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	8063
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	2851
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express [illegible] Monday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	8033
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express [illegible]	16 20	8029
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandal (Madras) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	2841
[illegible]	[illegible]	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express [illegible]	19 40	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express Dep [illegible] Arr [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	[illegible]	8112
[illegible]	[illegible]	Titlagarh Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	8410
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	2822
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express [illegible] Sunday Arr [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	8018
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express [illegible] Sunday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express [illegible] Howrah, Monday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible] Howrah, Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express Monday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express Tuesday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible] & Howrah Thursday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express [illegible] & [illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express [illegible] [illegible] & Howrah Dep [illegible] & Fri Arr [illegible] & Fri	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible] Howrah & Cuttack Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express [illegible] Howrah & Cuttack Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

THE TYRANNY OF FASHION

Must we give in to it? Asks ***Seema Goswami***

We've all had those mad moments in our life When we've run around town trying to find that particular pair of Levis jeans (501) that all the kids in college are wearing. And later, when we have ripped these apart at the knees so that we can look as 'cool' as the rest of the gang

If you're slightly older, your experiences will have been slightly different You will have splurged on a pair (at the very least) of white mulmul salwar kameezes the moment the mercury starts to climb higher, Abu Jani-Sandip Khosla, if you're loaded, Sewa if you're not If your tastes are more Westernised, you will have stocked up on all the loose linen trousers and shirts (Ritu Beri or Color Plus, depending on your budget) that were the rage last summer, so that you could go with the flow

Indian models in Rohit Bal designs

A creation from Vivienne Westwood

Or, like a good friend of mine, let's call her X, you are one of those people who get fixated on certain garments Madame X, for instance, spent two months scouring the shops until she found a particular round-necked denim shirt that she JUST HAD TO HAVE

Yet others are slavish followers of the fashion magazines — and we're talking about *Vogue* and *Harpers* and *Queen* here, not *Verve* They carefully follow the colour palette adopted by designers ranging from Calvin Klein to Donna Karan to Vivienne Westwood for that season, and then ask their *darzi* (please don't give anyone else his address!) to run up their wardrobe for that season

And, if they have the money, they make four trips abroad every year to ensure that they are never out of fashion, even though they may never ever be in style.

Yes, there is a new creature looming large on the Indian horizon: the fashion victim She may be wearing either Versace or Varma (as in Suneet), she may be in Manolo Blahnik pumps or Doc Martens, but there is no mistaking her when she walks into a party. Her clothes will be colour co-ordinated, and she will be perfectly accessorised right down to her matching toe-nails

One reason why you can't possibly miss Her, is because she will be surrounded by several of her sisters in fashion bondage If it's a Delhi society party, these victims will be wearing identical kalidar kurtas in different pastel chains, if it's a disco you're visiting, then the little black dress will rule, and if it's a wedding, then those brocade sari ensembles that every designer worth his zardozi work churns out, will be much in evidence

If a Martian — assuming for one moment that such a being exists — were to walk into one of these gatherings, he could be forgiven for thinking that Earth Women were only allowed to socialise in uniform. They could vary slightly in colour, but styles were very closely monitored to ensure uniformity. And that a different outfit was designated for different functions

But why do women go in for this kind of mass-scale fashion? Why don't they feel comfortable until they are wearing a variation of what every other woman in the room is?

The most simple — perhaps simplistic — explanation is that they suffer from some kind of deep-rooted

From Versace

A Rohit Khosla outfit with a Western touch

insecurity. And that they feel safe only when they are dressed 'right', i e in exactly the same way as their peers are.

Hence, that oft-noted female trait of calling up all her friends on the eve of the annual Divali bash, to ask them what they will be wearing

Only after such research does any self-respecting woman decide on her own outfit, taking care to ensure that it is close enough to those of her friends to look 'in', but different enough to look original And more often than not, she errs on the side of discretion rather than originality

But insecurity — though it plays a large part — is not all there is to it In some cases, it is sheer laziness that leads women to follow the herd, as it were After all, it is simpler to fashion yourself as a mirror image of all your peers, rather than try for a brand-new look In the end, when it comes to the sartorial stakes, it is better to be safe than to be sorry.

What most women lose sight of — in this mad scramble to look 'right' — is the truth that while fashion is ephemeral, style is eternal You don't have to be wearing capri pants, or hipsters when they are in fashion If you can carry them off with sufficient panache, even palazzo pants would look great with a cropped top. And you don't have to wear your skirts a particular length just because Armani dressed Linda Evangelista in them in the last issue of *Vogue*

If you prefer your skirts right down to your ankles, then go right ahead and wear them that length. And if you're feeling slightly adventurous then undo the bottom six buttons for the elegant but sexy look Who knows — given the way that most women are given to copying one another — you may well start a brand-new trend! ■

A ravishing Yves Saint Laurent outfit

SKETCHES

WAR GAMES

And the names who play them

This Week: Annu Kapoor Vs his Co-hosts

Began the programme with: Durga Jasraj, the daughter of Pandit Jasraj, and a singer of some talent herself. Annu and Durga flagged off the show little realising that *Close-up Antakshari* would soon assume cult status on Indian television

The problems: Began early, with Durga expressing her dissatisfaction with the way in which Kapoor insisted on hogging the frame, while she tried in vain to get the odd close-up in. The vibes between the two anchors--- which had been cool to begin with - turned positively icy, as their differences mounted

Durga Jasraj with Annu Kapoor: Vibes that turned icy; and (below) Kavita Paudwal: Clearly upstaged

End result: Durga Jasraj left the show in a huff. But poor Annu didn't have the satisfaction of hosting the programme all on his own, the producers insisting on hiring Kavita Paudwal, daughter of singer Anuradha Paudwal (of T-Series fame) as a replacement for Jasraj

Did Paudwal work better?: On the contrary, things began going downhill from the moment she climbed on to the podium in her designer salwar-kameezes, microphone in hand. Kapoor tried everything — from dancing like a maniac, making faces and turning cartwheels on camera---to upstage her.

And in the end, he succeeded in freezing her out of the frame, restricting her to one lonely corner on the set.

Paudwal's response: She tried her best to shove Kapoor out of the range of the camera for a second or two; but failed miserably at the attempt. In the end, she decided to go the Durga Jasraj way, and walked out of the show.

So, who came next?: The maniacally grinning Renuka Shahane, fresh from her triumph in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun!* But give the toothsome Shahane credit; she succeeded where both Durga and Kavita had failed. She actually managed to get a few close-ups as she sang along with the participants, even though Annu tried his best to steal the show from under her grinning visage by making Shammi Kapoor-like noises whenever he felt that nobody was paying him any attention

Renuka Shahane and Annu: Who outdid whom?

Did Kapoor give in with good grace?: On the face of it, yes. But insiders swear that there was much tension between Annu and Renuka off the sets. And even viewers concede that it sometimes spilt over into the programme

But all's well that ends well, right?: Not quite. The latest on the *Antakshari* front is that Renuka Shahane is leaving the show—just like her predecessors did. And no, she's not leaving under particularly pleasant circumstances

Who's next?: Yet another dedicated grinner, who goes by the name of Pallavi Joshi. She's scheduled to join the show soon, and no doubt, Annu is looking forward to trying his one-upmanship tactics on her as well.

So far the score has been Annu. 3; his Co-hosts: 0. Let's see if Joshi can change the odds. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says much can and therefore, must be achieved. It is time to open up all throttles on the work front. Also, the right time to work on creative projects. Around the 18th, a touch of romance brightens up a busy week. Children and hobbies do entice you. Keep your mind open about people.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

The new moon helps you to decide wisely and well. Your creative juices will once again flow freely and consequently, painters, teachers, writers, musicians and computer programmers do an excellent job. But take care of dietary indiscretions. You should be in a happy frame of mind.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Once again, a strong focus on house, property, renovation, decoration, buying, selling, shopping draperies, fineries and fripperies. You'll get quite a few domestic chores out of the way. Also, it is time to get your travel kit ready. But do try and keep your personal life separate from business and profession.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Perhaps, one of the most newsy weeks of the entire year. You will be happy about developments in communication, contacts, publicity, human relationships, travel and contracts. You may do some shopping, buying and selling impulsively. Find time to enjoy leisure activities. That is necessary.

Leo
July 21 - August 21

Time to make money, ponder, philosophise, buy, sell, shop, pay taxes, angle for loans, funds, investments and capital formation. Obviously, you could be panting for breath from all this. Charm will open powerful doors for you. It is on the cards that you will be in a romantic situation.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Your imaginative powers and your intuitive grasp of men and matters are truly heightened because of the sun-Mercury conjunction this week. You will have the skills and the confidence to overcome all obstacles and get at the goodies. Around the 16th, you have a field day. An excellent week.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

While it would be best to work in secrecy and cultivate a subtle approach, it is certain that boisterous and extroverted people will surround you. That's real life for you. It could well be journey time. Unexpected expenses are likely to tear holes in your pocket. Fortunately there will be scope to make money, too.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

The right time to decide about the big or small issues of the future. September 17-18 appear ideal for it. You will be moving into top gear in your work area. In your play field and romance, there are many sweet surprises. This is a good time to socialise and turn on your undeniable charm.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

You will really have to juggle your schedules to accommodate leisure activities and solid work, and both will demand top priority. A very lucky accent is placed on business and professional matters. Your ambitions are aflame and you will do the needful to realise them. Midweek will be greatly satisfying.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Your heart will be a nest for singing birds, says Ganesha. Your insights and foresights will please you. Good news is your birthright and you shall have it. Romance is definitely on the cards and it should be a welcome change in your life. Your mental capacity will reach unexplored depths.

Aquarius
January 20 - February 18

Finances will flow now, giving you relief. It is a good time to move, if you feel up to it. In any case, the latest by next year, a lot of movement is foretold. Be diplomatic and do not try to ruffle feathers. Spend time cultivating your hobbies as it is important that you relax. Time for travel, too.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and your loved one will admire you. It would be wise to return the compliment. If planning a marriage, an official engagement, now is the time to start it or even have it performed. Journey and collaborations are also on the anvil. A good time to reach out to people.

BIRTHDAYS

September 15: **Moon square Neptune says Ganesha signifies you will face reality, be practical and learn more about relationships.**

September 16: **Moon square Mars, sextile Jupiter means expenses should eat into your income. A separation from a loved one is possible.**

September 17: **Sun-Mercury trine Neptune signifies that a great and favourable year is in store. Travel, money, home and property bring happiness.**

September 18: **Moon sextile Mercury is excellent for those in business and the arts. You will be fulfilled in various ways and that should prove important. A lucky year for those dealing in property.**

September 19: **Moon trine Venus brings in a multiplicity of interests. Romance and finance make a happy combination for you.**

September 20: **Moon square Saturn does mean a few problems with people and finances. You will have to hone your skills.**

September 21: **Moon conjunction Jupiter favours money, progress, good impulses, thoughts and good deeds. You will be successful and happy.**

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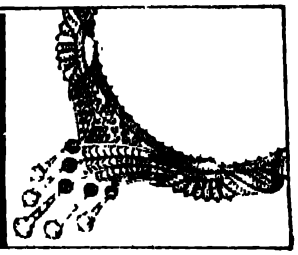

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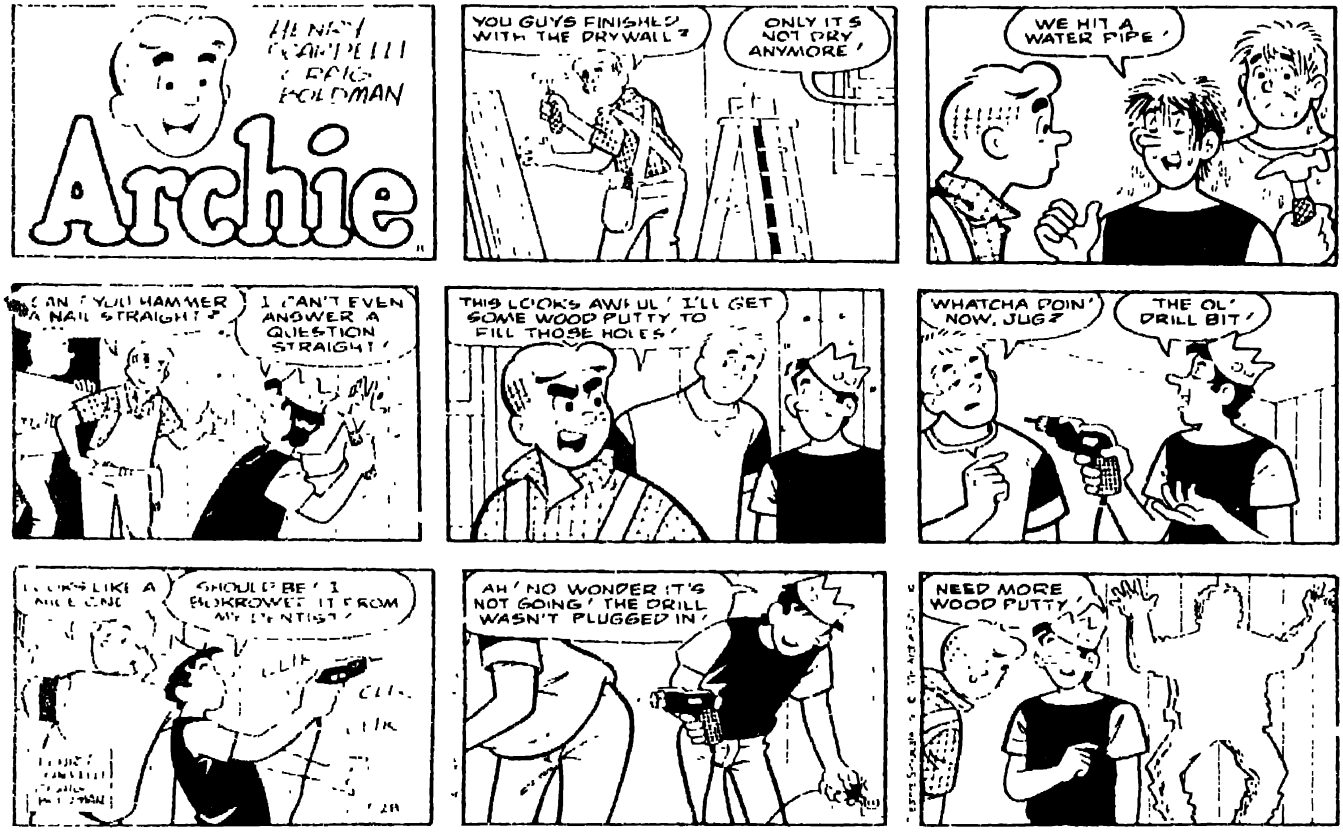
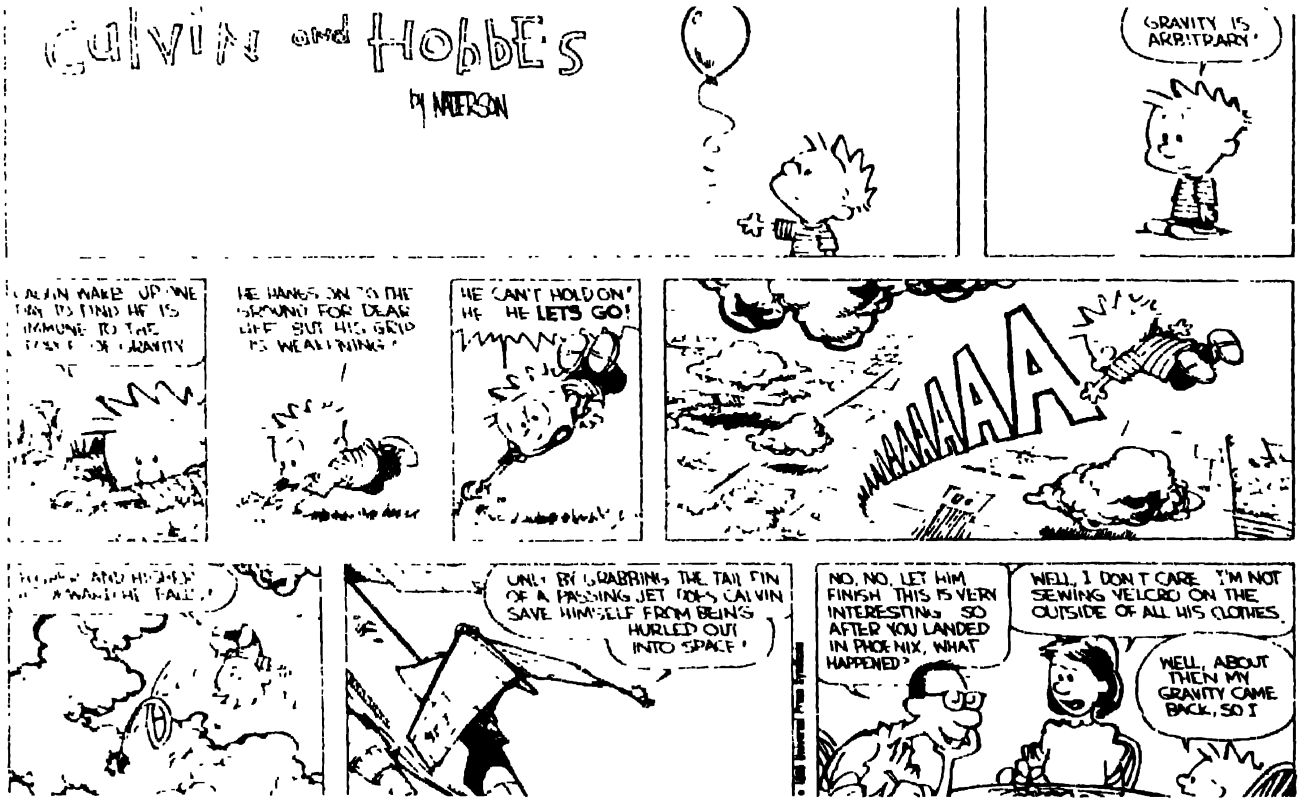


CALVIN AND HOBBES WATTERSON



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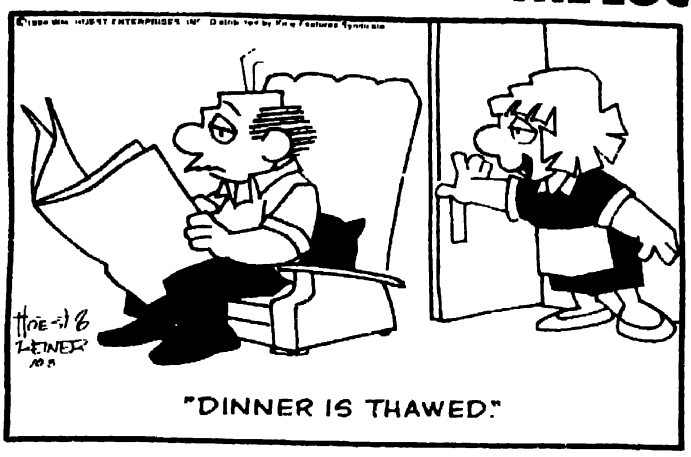
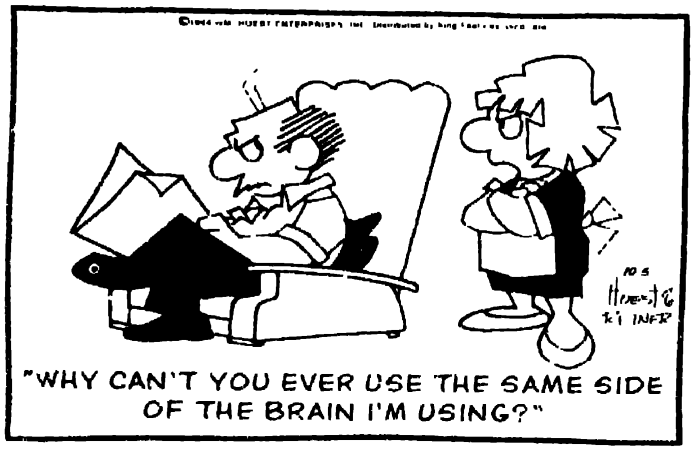
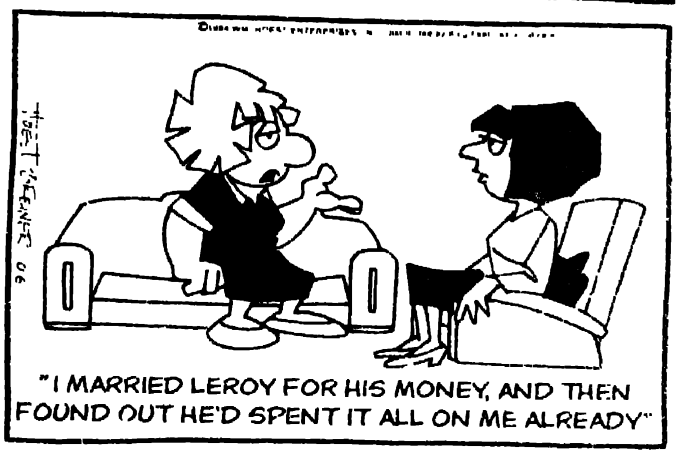
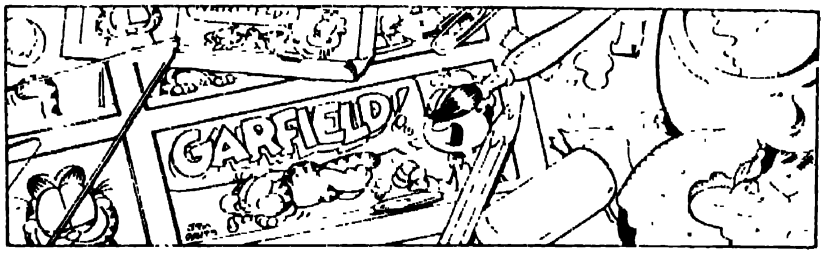
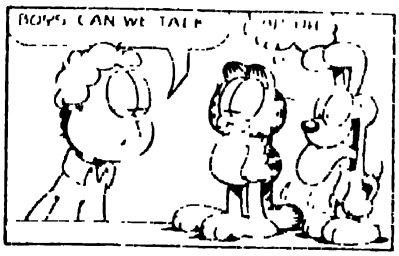


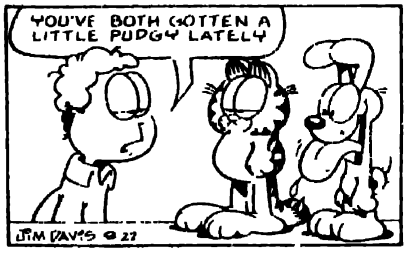


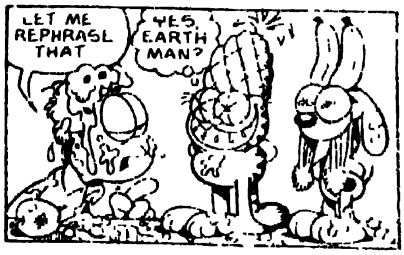


GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

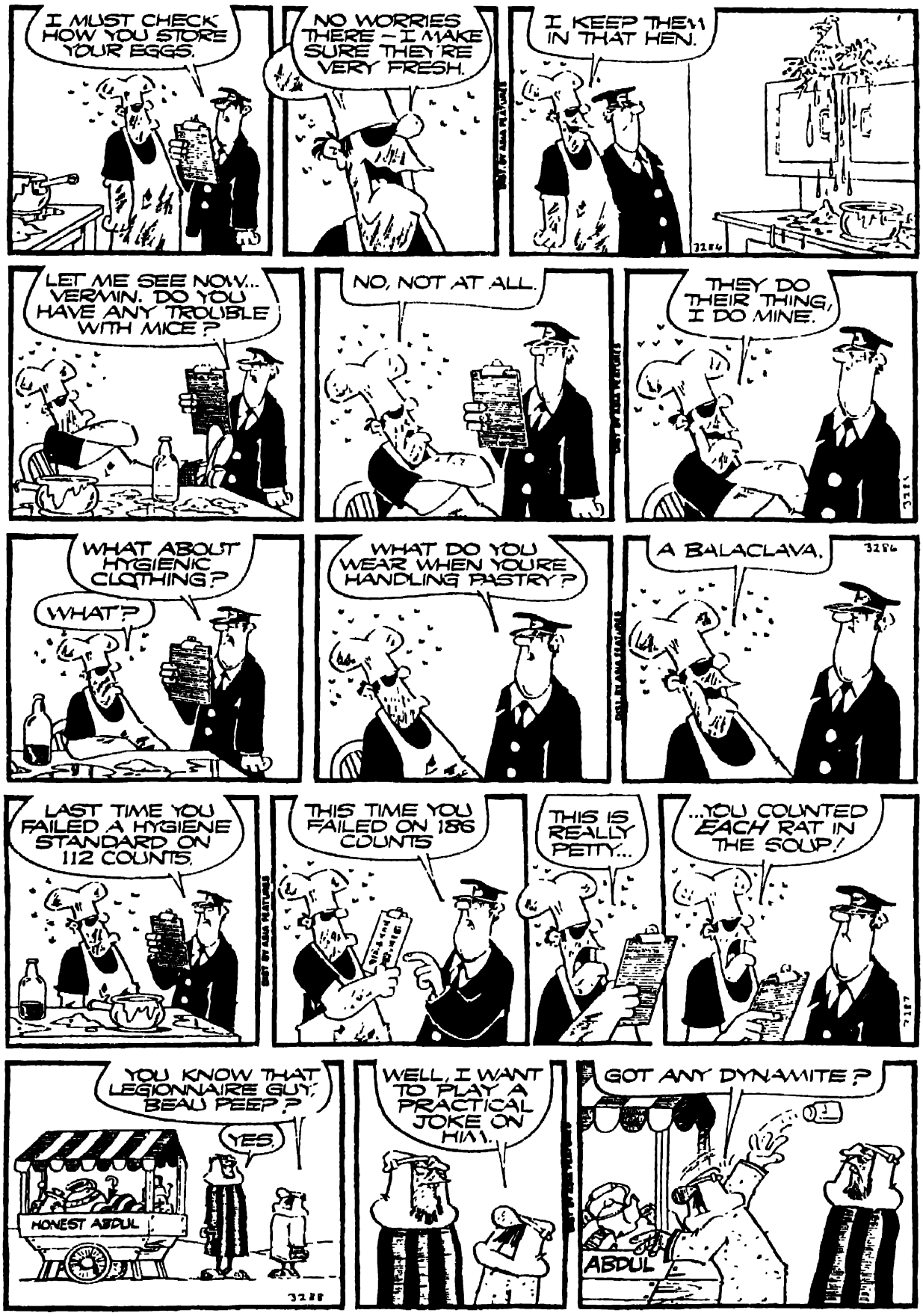


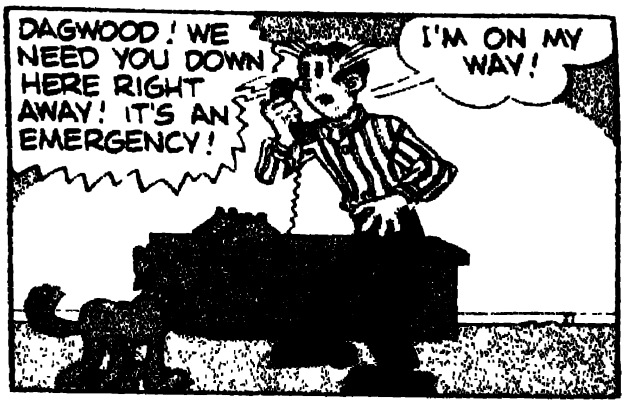


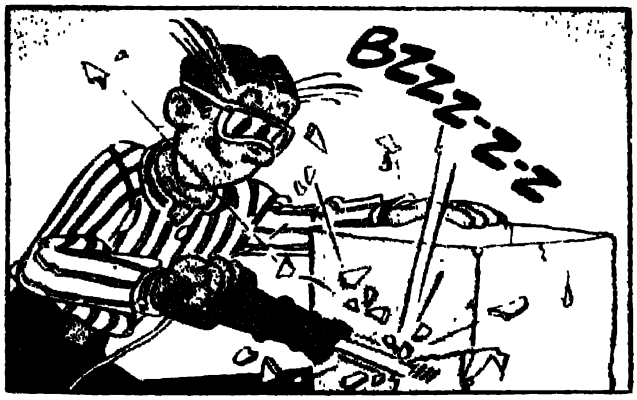




THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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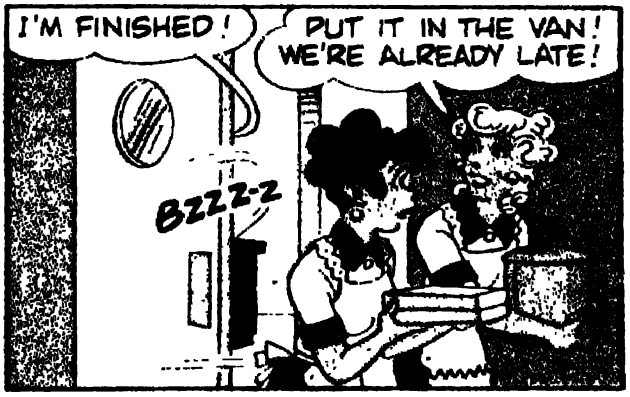


BEER, ANYONE?

If you live in Haryana, you'll have to travel across the border for a pint. ***Samita Bhatia*** *examines post prohibition lifestyles*

Location: The Delhi-Haryana border. Time: post-prohibition Haryana. Characters: Two 'walkie-talkied' Haryana police cops and a scooterist in possession of a few bottles of beer, wanting to cross the border to Haryana.

He stared militantly at the cops standing just a few feet away — that crucial iron barricade his only shield against the Haryana Police. "I refuse to relinquish the bottles," he said cockily. "I'll wait till you guys fall asleep to cross over." A classic case of so near and yet so far!

While all the cops needed to do was to reach out and grab the offender, the fact that he stood in Delhi — no more than a step away from the barrier — made all the difference. "I am not a bootlegger so why should the law prevent me from keeping a bar at home?" he asked, as he stood his ground.

The man waited for a while — and some more. The cops didn't fall asleep, just changed duties. Their quarry was at hand and the lure of lucre, as in a reported cash award of Rs 500 per bottle confiscated, was enough to keep slumber at bay. Muttering disgustedly the "*sharabi*" (anyone who drinks has been dubbed thus by the Haryana Police) turned his scooter around and disappeared in the direction from which he had come.

His is a query that is being asked by many in the state. Take the case of Prateek Chawla, resident of Sushant Lok, Gurgaon. In his newly constructed home, Chawla had spent hours with the architect designing a bar that would do justice to what he proudly calls a "connoisseur's collection."

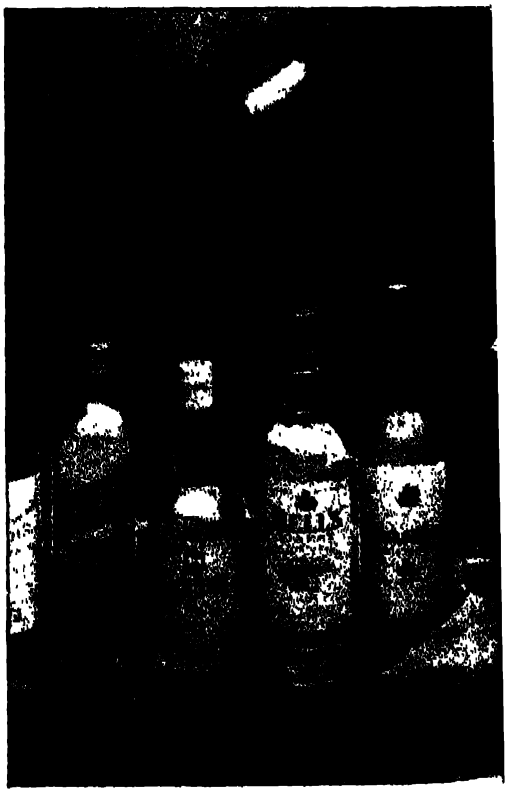
July 2, prohibition confirmed, Chawla stole out into the night, car loaded with some coveted vintages, malt whiskies and a full range of Marie Bizzard liqueurs to slink past the cops on the border to his mother-in-law's home in Delhi where his collection is now harboured. While the mother-in-law is not complaining, Chawla hates to see his range of cocktail shakers progressively turn rusty.

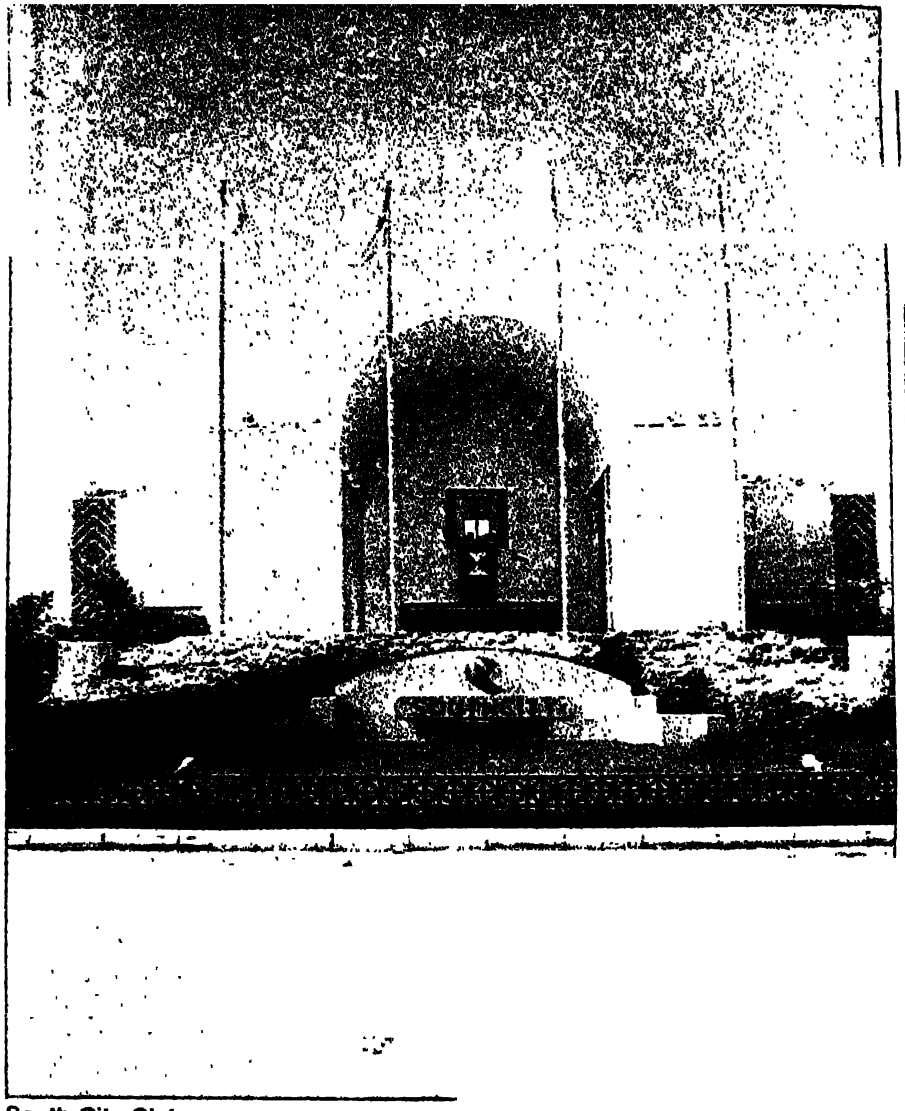
Fireball, the disco at 32nd Milestone, before prohibition

Then there's a Palam Vihar resident who's often been accosted at the border every evening as he returns from Delhi after a day's work. Exasperated he says, "These human breath-analyzers (cops) simply duck their heads into the cars and want to smell the beer on you. It's awfully demeaning."

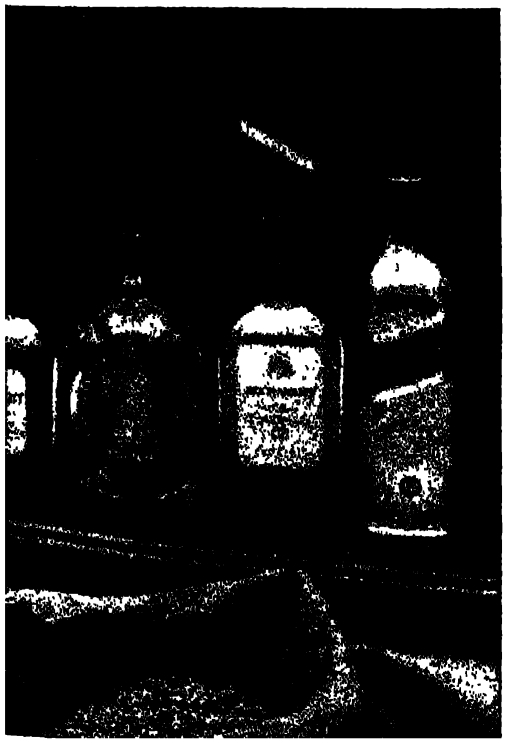
While not one to keep a bar at home, whenever he feels like a drink, he parties in Delhi before returning home — to battle with the border police and have his car minutely scrutinised. "I keep a stock of Polo mints in the car now," he says, rather amused at the situation.

Atul Sharma, resident of the same colony, is perhaps amongst the few conscientious residents of Haryana





South City Club



On the eve of prohibition, Sharma poured all the alcohol into the kitchen drain and hasn't indulged himself since.

While innumerable ice makers, like one Ram Charan have shut shop, residents of Gurgaon and Faridabad have noticed the sudden disappearance of *bhuja-wallas* and *dal-motiwallas* from their localities since prohibition was imposed

Poultry shops too are faced with drop in sales. Singh, owner of The Chick Shop, complains that since there's no beer flowing, his chicken sales have dropped by 40 per cent *Kabariwallas* are refusing to pick up any empty bottles too So, if you have them, you're stuck with them

While those belonging to the elitist cocktail circuits in the state are convinced that prohibition never works, even the economically backward sections haven't really reaped any of its advantages so far

Mani Devi is a construction worker employed at a site in Faridabad some 35 kilometers from the capital *Nashabandhi* may have come to the state but she is yet to reap any benefit, she says, for there's little that will stop her husband from drinking "After a hard day's work at the site my husband, along with several other men, sets off for Delhi, which is hardly a few kilometers away And then none of them return home at night, which is far worse!"

A resident of Sushant Lok Gurgaon, claims that her house maid has been abandoned by the husband since she has stopped plying him with money for liquor

The general mood in Haryana is one of acute exasperation There is much concern that prohibition may bring in its wake a lot more illicit liquor and a resultant increase in hooch tragedies Their fears are very real A month after the state went dry, the first hooch tragedy took its toll of 12 lives while 35 persons were taken grievously ill after consuming spurious country-made liquor.

Says a resident of DLF Qutab Enclave, "Even though Gujarat is a dry state, it's no secret that the bootlegging mafia is very strong there. Haryana may just follow suit"

The implications of prohibition obviously go beyond a painful shift of a connoisseur's collection, harassment at the border, or turning teetotaler. Property development in Haryana, fast paced till now has run into unforeseen obstacles

The state government has decided to increase the sales tax on building material of all types probably with the purpose of making up the revenue loss incurred because of prohibition. This has lead to a steep escalation in construction costs So the price of bricks has gone up from Rs 1,050 per thousand pieces to about Rs 1,300 stone dust from Rs 900 per cubic feet to Rs 1,025 per cubic feet Naturally the builders are groaning

The hospitality industry -- primarily the 13 three-star hotels in the state and 10 other smaller properties — is crumbling under the burden of revenue loss

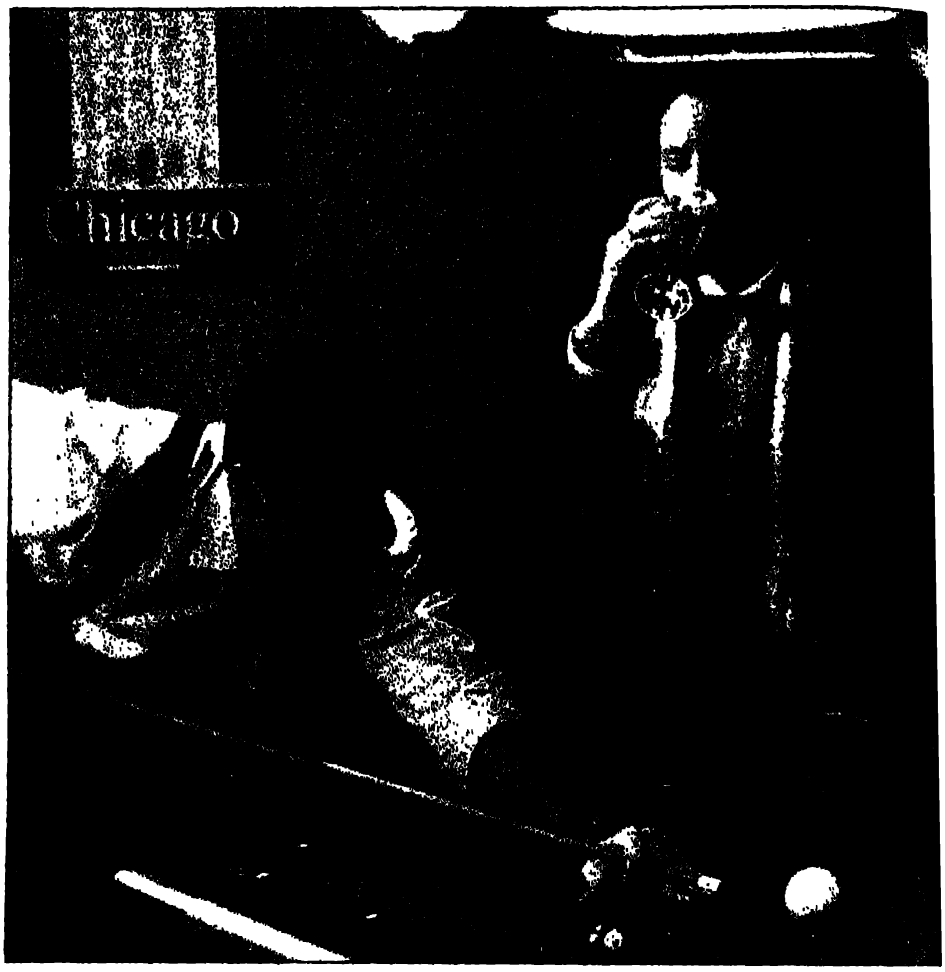
32nd Milestone, a resort complex 32 kilometers away from Delhi, is doing some hard thinking The closure of the bar Club 32, and the desertion of Fireball by diehard disco-goers has resulted in huge losses Though the bar is to be converted to a Cyber Cafe, the management is faced with the eventuality that the idea may or may

not click.

Get a load of this. the first week of prohibition, 32nd Milestone saw a 45 per cent dip in revenues, these escalated to 50 per cent in the third week and now the resort complex is staring at a 70 per cent dent in profitability

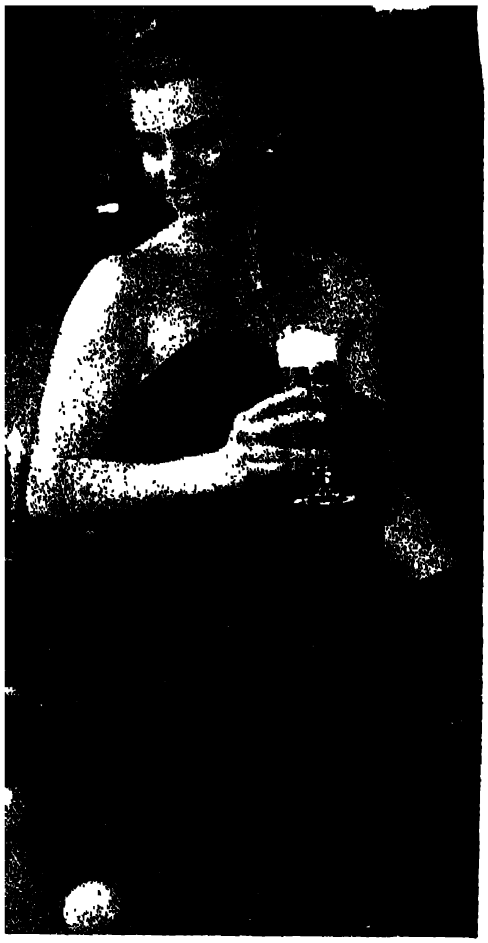
Laments an agitated (albeit resigned) Debashish Bhattacharya, food and beverage manager, "The gross operating profits are declining at an alarming rate, while our expenses remain the same," adding as an afterthought, "On the contrary, costs have gone up since prohibition was imposed " Though the resort complex is breaking even for the moment, Bhattacharya wonders how long that will last

Unitech's South City Club too is facing similar losses in revenues. The exclusive strictly-for-members club now does sales worth Rs 6,000 a day compared to Rs 35,000 of the pre-prohibition days According to Priti Singh, manager, "During weekends over 500 people visited the club, numbers which have dropped to 80 or 100 now We've also been compelled to convert our bar to a coffee shop and revenues generated here can never be comparable." Sita Heritage Resort and Palam Vihar's Chancellor Club, too, find themselves in a similar boat



A beer advertisement

Pre-prohibition Fireball: The bar would witness a capacity crowd of 800 over weekends; now the turnout is barely 45



Fireball, the disco at 32nd Milestone has ceased to be a crowd-puller. Set up just over a year ago at a cost of some Rs 2 crore it has ceased to be 'the' night spot for revellers. Wednesday nights are no longer packed to capacity, with crowds jostling to be served at the bar by the celebrity bartender of the week — Chunky Pandey, Manpreet Brar, Dilip Tahil, etc. Head counts over the last couple of Wednesdays have revealed pathetic numbers — 4 and 59 respectively. 'Chuck de Phatte' and Bally Sagoo nights are events strictly of the past.

Says Bhattacharya, "The disco has to operate as usual with the music, lights, the works. While earlier over 200 people would come to the disco on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, today there are days when not a soul checks-in. Fridays normally pulled a crowd of about 300, today we are lucky if we get a few couples." Saturday night capacity crowds of 800 have dwindled to less than 100.

The management fears that very few, if at all, will renew membership. While the F&B business at the 32nd Milestone is down by 70 per cent during dinner, 90 per cent of the foreign clientele that puts up at the 20-room hotel in the complex has now checked-out — for good.

The hospitality industry knows that cost cutting will have to be the next step. But at what cost? "Unfortunately the services will inadvertently be affected while some hotels will be forced to shut down, others will have to retrench staff," says a hotelier. He cites the example of Apna Ghar that has recently gone out of business while Resort Country Club is actively looking for a buyer. Reportedly another hotel to be hit is Sita Heritage Resort.

While small-time businesses and the hospitality industry face losses on all fronts, there's one segment that's reportedly raking it in. No prizes for the right answer — the Haryana police force. Armed with blank search warrants, the cops raid any house that appears to have a bash in full swing. The cars parked outside the homes are indication enough.

Rumours are rife that a certain resident of DLF was found serving liquor. A head count was taken and a simple calculation yielded a figure of Rs 70,000 in damages. The host and guests argued, pleaded, grovelled. With the possibility of an arrest staring them in the face the host eventually coughed up a cool Rs 10,000 — and a few beers — to settle matters amicably.

Another random house search rewarded the policemen with four beer bottles. The '*sharabi*' was given the choice of paying Rs 2,000 per bottle or immediate arrest. Then again, a certain couple was returning home after a late night party from Delhi. The human breath-analyzers decided that the couple had had one drink too many. A body search (whatever for? they demanded) was ordered and the cops were delighted to discover a loot of Rs 24,000.

"We were told that if we didn't relinquish the money a liquor bottle would be planted in the car, for which we knew the consequences," says the woman in question. "We paid the money we had — which incidentally was meant for a fridge we were to buy for our house the next day."

A resident wraps up succinctly. Banning liquor by the law will never work. Prohibition works only if there is a social movement against alcohol abuse. Today, those who have to drink will drink anyway. By the way, you can fill your whisky whenever you want in Haryana — only at double the cost, and more.

That will be Rs 175 for the bottle of beer, please! ■

The bar at South City Club has now been coverted into a coffee shop

SAGARIKA MUKHERJEE, *one half of the brother-sister duo of Shaan and Sagarika, looks as good as she sounds. Hyped as the Nineties' version of the Nazia and Zoheb Hasan team, these siblings have a number of re-mix hits to their credit. And have cut their own album* Nanjawan *under the able tutelage of music director Biddu.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Having loving arms around me.
What is your greatest fear?
Not being accepted.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My father and good books
What do you dislike most in others?
Narcissism and bad mouthing.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My pessimism..
What is your most precious possession?
My voice and my inner voice.

What objects do you always carry?
Money, driving license, lipstick, cards, digital diary and loads of things—my bag is a bundle of objects.
What makes you most depressed?
When I don't sing well.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My nose.
What is your favourite word?
Right.
What is your favourite journey?
Northeast.
What is your favourite dream?
Nature.

What is your nightmare?
Falling.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Life.
What is your source of sustenance?
Introspection and trying to perceive things from the other side.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I come home late.

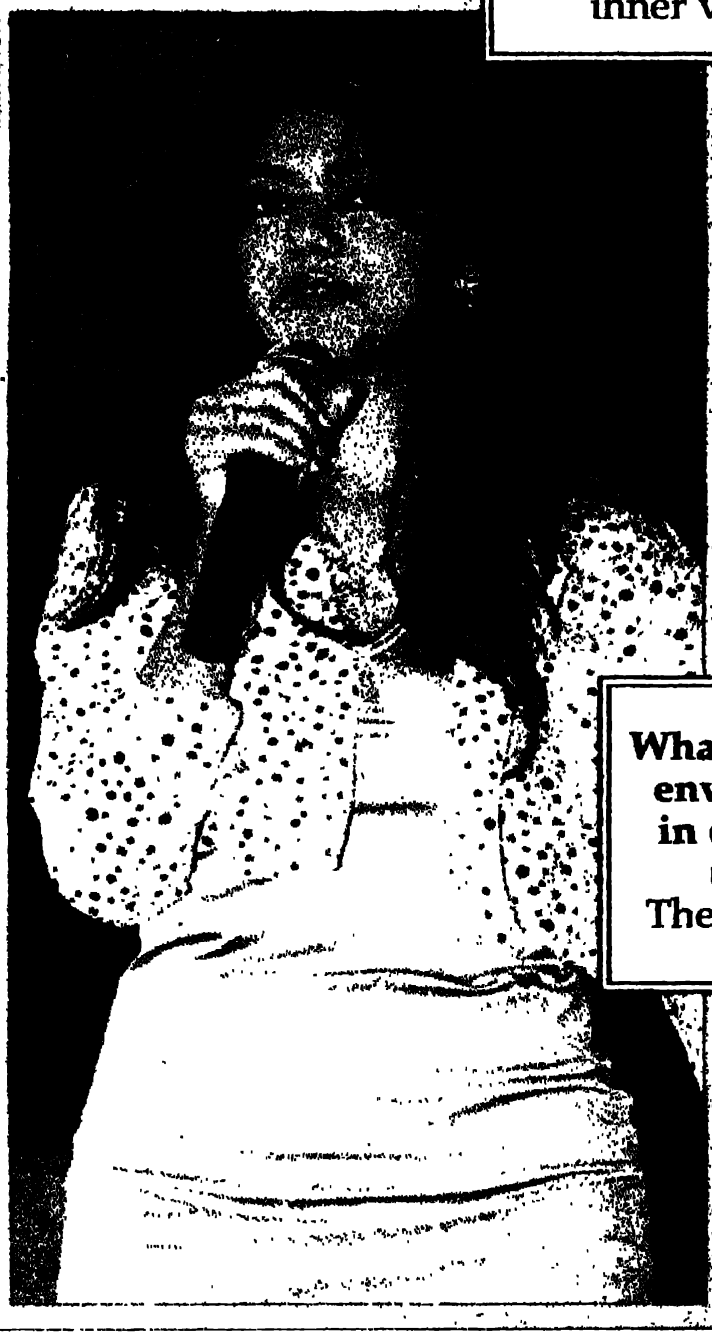
What is your greatest regret?
Not being able to prove myself to my father before he passed away.

What is your greatest regret?

Not being able to prove myself to my father before he passed away

What is your most precious possession?

My voice and my inner voice



Rashbehari Das

What has been your happiest moment?
Too many to put down.

What brings tears to your eyes?
When I see a person lowering his dignity.
How do you relax?
By sinking myself in a warm bath.

What do you envy most in others?

What do you envy most in others?

Their noses

Their noses.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a beautiful person.
How would you like to die?
Alone, in a beautiful place.

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CAN BE DENIED
MRF
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Discover a whole new world of science

The Telegraph

KnowHow

Free

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The Telegraph

6 OCTOBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Black and Beautiful

■ The concept of beauty has really changed; the fair-skinned, doe-eyed full-mouthed girl is not the rigid and conventional formula for beauty any more ('Tall Dark and Beautiful', August 11). Or models like Noyonika Chatterjee would not have been a rave in the fashion world.

By international standards, Noyonika has a commanding height and a very graceful gait, of course cultivated over time, and a face which has a pronounced Afro touch which sets her apart from the other models on the ramp.

Noyonika arouses a lot of curiosity.
Nandini Chatterjee,
Calcutta

■ Noyonika is really an exception. While other models turn to the silver screen for greater exposure and lucre, Noyonika has taken up something more celebral like celebrity management.
Partha Pratim Modak,
Howrah

■ Going unconventional is the latest trend. On the international front supermodel Naomi Campbell is creating ripples with her dark looks. She has even made it to Madame Tussaud's museum.

Looking at Noyonika no one would think she is an Indian — with her frizzy hair, thick lips and flat nose. Yet, she is one of the most successful models on the ramp.

In a way she is like actress Kajol who has very ordinary looks — she is short, dark, has loads of puppy fat and the famous butterfly eyebrows like a teenager.

Yet, she is one of the most popular actresses in Bollywood now.
Vinay Asawa,
Calcutta

■ It is a great pleasure for Bengalis to see a girl from their state doing so well in Mumbai's modelling world. In the final analysis, Noyonika has a personality and poise which put her ahead in the race for supremacy. Her new job in the Media Entertainment will give her career a good boost.
Reba Bose,
Jamshedpur

■ Noyonika has risen to the top through sheer grit and confidence. Also, she has a very pleasant dress sense; picking her wardrobe judiciously so that the colours add to her charm.
Rajashree Roy,
Patna

■ Thank you for taking tall, dark and beautiful Noyonika Chatterjee to the heights of Naomi Campbell!
Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

Noyonika Chatterjee: Success has many colours

We are receiving many telephone calls and letters asking us for the address of Yeshi Dhonden ('Doctor Knows Best', August 25). Readers may write to him at this address: Dr Yeshi Dhonden, Macleodgunj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

INSIDE

Jagdish Yadav

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ROMI, KAPIL Dev's wife, revels in her new role as mother — the happiness which came her way 15 years after marriage.

PAGE 26

MAKE IDYLLIC Maldives your next beach destination.

Romi Dev

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
26 TRAVEL
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Jagdish Yadav

KAPIL'S MAIDENS

Romi Dev, supportive wife and business partner to her husband, Kapil, now has a new role to play: proud mom.
***Samita Bhatia** reports*

SHE MAY HAVE MARRIED INDIA'S BEST-KNOWN all-rounder when she was just 21 years old. But Romi Dev *nee* Bhatia has never had stars in her eyes. Today after more than 15 years of marriage she may enjoy the advantages that come with being Mrs Kapil Dev, but she's not overpowered by her husband's celebrity status. And there are occasions when she's irritated at being identified only as Kapil Dev's wife.

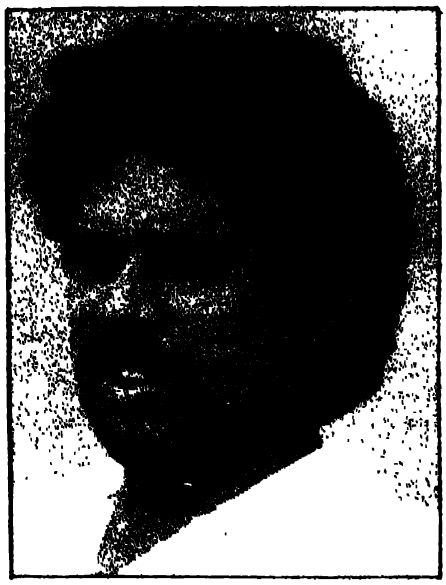
Her luxurious Sunder Nagar home is a glowing testatment to her personal style. A couple of M.F. Husian masterpieces domin-

ate the decor, which is characterised by antique archways, exquisite love seats, parquet flooring, brocade upholstery, crystal, some silk rugs...and two panting Dobermann Pinschers. You can believe her all too easily when she tells you that she's a collector of all things beautiful.

"I love my home, art and paintings and nice jewellery," she says with a wave of her bejewelled fingers. If she loves keeping a good home she loves her kitchen equally well. She entertains a lot and thus ends up doing what she simply loves — cooking a special meal for her guests. With Continental dishes being her forte, she never ever has outside caterers in for her bashes.

Says Romi, "I just love cooking and it's never been a chore." She muses, "In fact, I wanted to go into it professionally some 11 years ago, but it just didn't work out. I always manage to do things a little too late. I may think of something early enough, but by the time I finish mulling over it, innumerable other people get into the fray."

Though never a career person Romi Dev ably handled Dev Features before it shut shop a few years ago and more recently she was on Zee anchoring *High Life*, a programme in the



Kapil Dev: Proud father

Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous mould. Today she helps out at the office giving her husband all the back-up he needs. For one who is apparently the moving force behind every move Kapil Dev makes, she doesn't seem to take her role too seriously.

As she explains, "Kapil is into imports of various things and I look after the administration and accounts of the office. Kapil is awful with paperwork and accounts, so I just back him up in this area I do here in the office what I do at home — essentially see that everything goes smoothly."

While today she's a pucca Delhiite, the better part of her life was spent in Bombay. After a brief stint at Loreto Convent, Shimla, she returned to Bombay and Elphinstone College. She brushes aside as unimportant "the routine course on travel and tourism from Sophia College, a degree which came in handy when I was helping out my mother at her travel agency"

After her much publicised marriage to Kapil Dev she moved with the cricketing sensation to Chandigarh where they lived with his family for three years. But living there was proving to be tedious as "each trip out meant that we had to pass through Delhi first and then undertake another five hour journey back to Chandigarh." The move for good to Delhi came when Romi inherited the bungalow in Delhi's up-market Sunder Nagar area, where the Devs now live.

Romi Dev will talk to you provided you refrain from asking her the obvious question: about her courtship days with the former captain of the

Mother and daughter

Kapil Dev: Long awaited happiness

Indian cricket team Bored with answering queries as to how she met Kapil, she may just rattle off in one long breath — "It's history and I'll just repeat it to you mechanically as I'm not interested in talking about it." Push her a little and she says, "I've known Kapil since the time he was nothing."

This may come as a surprise to most people, but the first time Romi met Kapil, he hadn't even starting playing cricket! When she met Kapil, she was all of 17 and didn't know what cricket or mass hysteria was all about He was simply a "friend s friend" and it wasn't till she was drawn to him that she started following what he did.

Far from being star-struck, she never ever felt that she was marrying a sought-after, eligible superstar. "For me it wasn't any big deal or a fairy-tale-come-true. We both grew with his celebrity status and it wasn't like either one of us was catapulted into the situation. When you are younger you can take things in your stride Initially stardom felt nice," she says candidly, adding in the next breath "and it still does"

She may be the wife of a one-time hot favourite cricketer, but Romi Dev hasn't the slightest interest in the game Not one who believes that people must share exactly the same interests to get along famously, she made no concerted effort to get hooked onto the sport.

Of her own admission, "Our one major interest does not lie in the same direction. While Kapil is very sporty, sports bore me I didn't try and cultivate an interest for cricket, but surrounded by the game as I was, I began to understand it and unwittingly follow it. While I wouldn't break my back to go and watch a cricket match, if the television was on I wouldn't switch it off either."

One of the reasons that Romi preferred not to go for a match was that she found it very difficult to cope with defeat. "Even though everyone says that you should learn to take the bou-

Sharmila Tagore
The first really high profile cricketing wife, Tagore was an A-grade celebrity in her own right. But despite her busy shooting schedules and film commitments,

Naureen Azharuddin

she found the time to visit the stadium when her husband, Nawab Mansur Ali Khan of Pataudi — popularly known as Tiger — was at the crease, and cheer every time he struck a six, or made a particularly good stop at the boundary line.

Marshneil Gavaskar
Wife of Sunil, she accompanied him on most tours — both in India and abroad — and was a constant fixture around the dressing room. And unlike most other cricket wives, she had never had any reason to hover with intent around her husband; Sunil was quite the model of husbandly propriety.

Kavita Vishwanath
She had the rare privilege of being related to two of most famous cricketers in India, Kavita was sister to one — Sunil Gavaskar — and wife to the other — Gundappa Vishwanath. She kept a low profile though, refusing to talk to

quets and brickbats in your stride, quite honestly, I didn't find it easy to take the criticism that one had to face sometimes," she says now. "I simply can't say that it didn't affect me. If someone is — in my terms — not so nice to my husband, it is going to affect me. So I would just try and keep away as much as possible and not get involved."

And brickbats there were aplenty. Kapil, despite his popularity, was not credited as a very imaginative captain, thinker or motivator. Indians remember well that one rash stroke at the Delhi Test in 1984 which cost India the match against England led by David Gower. He was dropped for the next Test.

Then there was the semi-final of the Reliance World Cup in 1987 when Kapil fell into a trap, lofted the ball and was caught, at the crucial point of the match. He was stripped of his captaincy soon after.

So, unlike other cricketer wives — and girlfriends — you'd never find Romi Dev in the VIP gallery at a cricket stadium. "I went to a stadium only occasionally and that, too, when we were playing abroad. That was so because there was little pressure when playing overseas."

However, when on foreign soil, if she ever sensed hostility from the Indians in the crowd, Romi would prefer

BETTER HALVES

Listing some of the better known cricket wives

Kavita Vishwanath

Marshneil Gavaskar

Sharmila Tagore

Gautam Patole

Anjali Tendulkar

Noella Kambli

scribes even though they pestered her for interviews all the time.

Naureen Azharuddin

Nobody knew much about the retiring wife of India's former Test captain, Mohammad Azharuddin, while the two were happily married. Azhar insisted that Naureen stay at home with his parents and sons as he travelled the world, and she, like an obedient wife, obeyed.

But the arrival of Sangeeta Bijlani in their life changed all that. And the rest is the stuff of tabloid

Noella Kambli

Rumours have been rife for some time now that Vinod Kambli's marriage is on the rocks. So, who can blame Noella if she gives interviews to society magazines to tell them that all is well in the marital home? And to tell Dinesh Manvadkar that she should be all [illegible] — [illegible]

Rangeela star had said some uncomplimentary things about Kambli in print.

If Noella is to be believed, the only reason she and Vinod live in different cities — Bombay and Pune — for part of the time is that their families are based there. So, those who say that the couple are separated should go wash their mouths out.

Anjali Tendulkar

The doctor wife of India's cricket captain, Sachin Tendulkar, is a few years older than him. But you'd never guess that if you saw them together; she looks as fresh-faced as her boyish husband.

But as child-like as the couple look, they are very mature for their years. They have made a pact not to interfere in each other's careers — Anjali is a doctor — but to give each other whatever support they can. And judging by Sachin's recent [illegible] this formula

not to go to watch the day's play as she thought there was little point in getting into an unpleasant situation She explains, "I preferred to be at the stadium during five-day Test matches and that, too, only when I knew that the day would be relaxed and when I was sure that we wouldn't be packed in like sardines."

If Kapil Dev kept Indian cricket lovers on tenterhooks for every second he was at the crease, his reckless style gave his wife palpitations as well She says self-mockingly, "I stopped watching his batting a long time ago, as my heart couldn't take it. As a matter of fact, if India was batting and he was coming in four or five down, I would try as far as possible to leave the house "

Unfortunately for her, just about everyone would be tuned in to the game and getting away completely seemed impossible "Even the driver would think it fit to keep me updated, adding to my tension," she says.

Tension mounted after the Australian tour of 1991-92, when Kapil harvested his 400th wicket. Unfortunately, thereafter it took him two years to get the crucial 32 wickets to beat Richard Hadlee's record "The 432 figure was getting to us and while I tried to get away from the game as far as possible, when Kapil was playing I would definitely ask the score in the evening If he was bowling, at the end of the day *dar-dar ke* I'd ask, '*kya hua*?'."

So does that mean that Romi has missed out on the best of Kapil? No, she says, despite her misgivings about the game she has managed to see Kapil score most of his centuries. She says, "Actually, it's just happened that I've been around when he's played well." She remembers only too well his four sixes at Lords and all the matches he was instrumental in winning for the country.

Little Miss Dev

Kapil and Romi

The one regret she has today is that Kapil Dev couldn't announce his retirement before his last game. She says with a touch of sadness, "The stadium should have known that that was to be his last game. But that was not to be."

His retirement announcement came in Delhi at a five-star hotel instead of a stadium. "But we got a lot out of it all, so if one thing wasn't fulfilled I guess it's no big deal."

Then, comes the most touchy question of these times. Should cricketers' wives be allowed to tour with their husbands? Romi's response: "Why shouldn't they? I think there

is going to be a greater distraction if the wife doesn't go."

According to Romi, other countries encourage wives to accompany their husbands on their tours abroad while sports psychologists, too, are of the same opinion. "As a matter of fact, today many are of the view that even the children should be allowed to go along," she says. "I think that having your family along — specially the children — is an advantage rather than a disadvantage and it definitely helps in taking the pressure and tension off. Besides, it keeps temptations at bay, for there are few players who would by choice stay in the hotel room watching television. But when they have a family or their wives to return to it's easier on them."

During Kapil's cricketing days travel was hectic, but Romi has now given up on living out of suitcases or shifting from one hotel to another. The baby — her daughter, Ameya, born to her after 15 years of marriage — has changed all that.

Not that Romi minds. She smiles fondly and says, "But I haven't done too badly for myself since she came. I've travelled out six times in these seven months." It's been Bombay, Calcutta and Kapil Dev's home town Chandigarh.

Time to celebrate: Kapil smashes Hadlee's record

Nothing could have prepared her for the excitement generated by her daughter's birth. When Romi returned home she was amazed at the over 125 bouquets, the gifts and telegrams that were strewn around. After a harrowing pregnancy, seven months of which were spent in bed, "not even being able to walk to the loo or have a bath" the homecoming was an event that was celebrated by more people than she could imagine.

Like any other mother, Romi too wants to instill in her daughter some good values and manners. But beyond that there's little she wants to plan for her.

She says firmly, "She has to decide what she wants to do and I wouldn't like to pressurise her one way or the other. Ultimately she has to be her own person and her celebrity father or a well-known mother cannot help her. We'd like to give her the best, which is what all parents want for their children whether or not they are celebrities. In fact she's come late so she really hasn't seen Kapil in his heyday, which could well go to a child's head."

As of now, of course, Ameya is only dimly aware who her mother and father are. At eight months, she has begun to recognise her parents, and smiles beatifically at them. But she hasn't learnt to speak, so it's hard to say what lies behind that cheerful visage and big, gleaming eyes.

Ameya wakes up in time for the photo-session. Mother and daughter gaze at each other in wonder — both obviously smitten — and a secret smile is exchanged. They amicably pose for the cameras, looking directly into the lens and then beyond — to what promises to be a very bright future. ■

A historic moment: Kapil holds aloft the Prudential World Cup

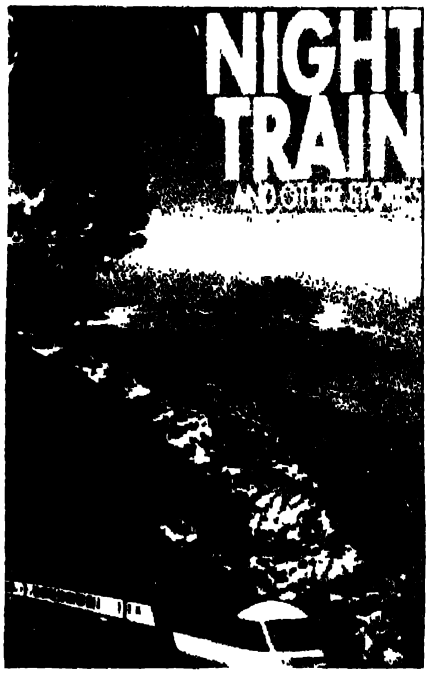
INTERVIEW

'I Relate Very Strongly to the Surreal'

***Anita George** talks to Sathya Saran, the editor of* Femina *, about her first book,* Night Train and Other Stories. *The book, a compilation of short stories, deals with the daily lives of ordinary people as they, in their own ways, manifest the surreal world. The stories were written 'in short bursts, each to its completion without a pause'. As the preface says, 'each wrote itself'. For the author, who grew up in the hills of Guwahati, the spirit of nature is very much alive and a part of us; and it is this commune with the forces beyond that underline the stories*

How did the book come about?

I had the idea for a book five or six years ago, and wrote some of the stories with it in mind. But the book didn't happen then, so I got the stories published individually. Then, a friend of mine was getting her book published through Har-Anand, so I approached them. In ten days flat I got a response from them. In fact, the letter of acceptance was issued to me on my birthday!



I had initially wanted to do a television serial but in those days, there was only Doordarshan, and they had taken a decision not to run serials based on supernatural themes, so as not to encourage superstition!

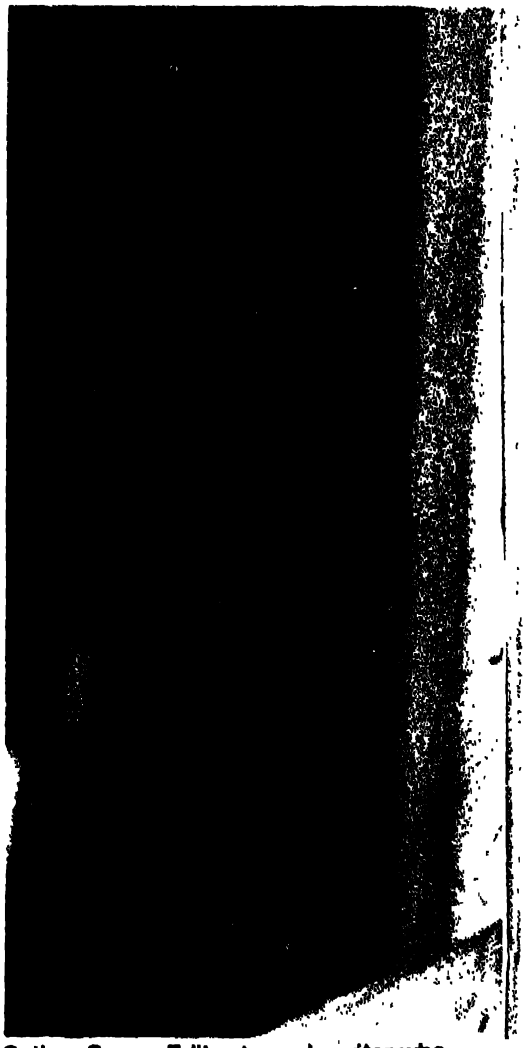
The stories are about surreal, even supernatural experiences. Is it an important aspect to you? Does it affect your outlook on life?

I relate very strongly to the surreal. I feel nature has a presence, that the trees live, mountains talk ... I believe in the spirit of things ... and then, there are the stories one grows up with as a child.

A lot of the book is based on people I know...there is me in various forms. The character in *I Spy*, for instance, is me in many ways

Moreover, I grew up in a rather unusual ambience, (in Guwahati, Assam) where there was a lot of quiet. I was very scared of the dark, of being alone. I am even today.

I remember, after my marriage, once when I was alone in the house, my husband had gone out. The radio



Sathya Saran: Editor-turned-writer who

was playing...and, sitting there alone, the music took on a very strange quality to me...to the extent that I was too scared even to go and switch it off! I just sat there and cried, in fear!

When I worked on the play *Savitri*, we did a lot of work on its metaphysical content, its philosophy. We were influenced by the idea that if you do no wrong, no wrong will come to you.

I may be quite mistaken in this notion but I have felt quite happy since.

I grew up in a rather unusual ambience, (in Guwahati, Assam) where there was a lot of quiet. I was very scared of the dark, of being alone. I am even today. I remember, after my marriage, once when I was alone in the house, my husband had gone out. The radio was playing...and, sitting there alone, the music took on a very strange quality to me...to the extent that I was too scared even to go and switch it off! I just sat there and cried, in fear!

Are your own experiences recounted in the book? Incidents, people?

A lot of the book is based on people I know there is me in various forms. The character in *I Spy*, for instance, is me in many ways. There is a house that recurs in many of the stories, it is the home of my grandaunt in Madras. A great old house in the heart of the city. It's been pulled down now and a supermarket is coming up in its place. I spent every vacation there, with my cousins, and it was a magic time.

Now that the house is gone, most of the things in it have been given to a museum, and then each of us have the things we loved — I have a Ravi Varma painting and a Persian carpet.

I remember that someone bought the grandfather clock for just Rs 500! It was really sad. I used to be in charge of the clocks, cleaning them, talking to them! If I ever find that clock again, I shall buy it back!

believes in the spirit of things'

The protagonist in many of the stories is often the younger person, or the one that gets bullied, the milder or more sensitive person.

That's not intentional, it's perhaps because as a child I was the one who got sat upon! I was at an age between the older and the younger lot, and tended to move with the older crowd. So I would be at the receiving end! Maybe I look at things from that perspective.

Are you particularly fond of any of the incidents or characters in the book?

Yes, I like *Night Train*... very much, it came from my train journeys in Bombay, when I used to travel alone after play rehearsals, and there was the physical fear of being alone at that hour. And then there is *Argonaut*, where the old Medea story has been written in a modern context. *Practical Joke* is almost true. I was there, when we cousins tried to pull off the ghost trick!

Were any of the stories rewritten, recreated?

No, each was written in one single sitting. I can't be interrupted when I'm writing, unlike when I'm working on an article. When I was proofing the book I did feel the book was working because I didn't get bored with it as I often do with my own writing!

Are there more books in the offing?

Yes, another book of short stories. This book has been received well. That's encouraging, because today the audience for books has gone, in terms of numbers. Those who are left, though, are dedicated readers.

EXTRACT

The Moonlight PICNIC

An extract from ***Sathya Saran's*** *collection of short stories*

She woke up in the night to hear the wind howling. How it roared and shrieked...as if it were going to rush the little house into the valley below. She gritted her teeth and tried to go back to sleep, willed herself to go back to her dream .but the wind intruded.

When Sheila first came to Mussoorie, the wind had been there, of course It had thrilled her then. After her long years in the plains, there was something romantic in the fact that the curtains were always billowing, the trees constantly whispering. Only in the harshness of the winters she had wished the wind would blow softer. The shrieking torrents that rushed through the cracks of their wooden house scared her on long cold nights

But these days, the wind shrieked all the time. There was some theory of deforestation being the cause of the increased fury but all she knew was that it made a mess of her nerves.

she remembered now her evening battle with Mala, who had been quite unreasonable, really. but perhaps, she had overreacted too. She always did these days. But surely it was silly of Mohan to agree to Mala's going for that picnic. After all, she should have been consulted. A moonlight picnic indeed, and Mala saying she had been to one before without her knowledge, and would go again. And her friends—Sheila distrusted those friends Mala was so secretive about.

She got up from her bed and walked the cold floor to Mala's room. The door was closed She pushed gently and peered in. Mala sat on her bed, reading. The girl looked up, startled. The book fell from her hands. "Gosh, Mummy, you scared me!"

"What are you doing? It's almost two-thirty!"

"I woke up some time ago and couldn't go back to sleep. So I thought I'd do dome reading," Mala said There was a sulky note in her voice, but she was obviously minding her manners.

Mala looked at her where she stood There was no welcome in her gaze, and Sheila felt an intruder there, in her dauhter's room. The girl had circles under her eyes, she certainly needed her sleep Perhaps she had been unduly rough on her After all, the picnic was to take place within sight of the compound gates. "Mala," she said suddenly, "I think you can go for that picnic"

"Mum.. my!" With a leap Mala was across the bed, hugging her.

Tears filled Sheila's eyes, stupid-

Extracted from *Night Train and Other Stories* ***by Sathya Saran Published by Har-Anand Publications Price Rs 195***

ly Softy, she mocked herself as she hugged her daughter back. "You must not stay too long, and promise you will wear a coat."

The sun was streaming in through her window and the wind had died down when she woke again. She lay in bed trying to remember if she had indeed spoken to Mala the night before.

"Wake up sleepy head," Mohan called from the next room.

"Mala has prepared a lovely breakfast for you and you don't want it to get cold do you?" So, she had spoken to Mala the night before.

As she hurried out of the bed, Sheila felt apprehensive again. Mohan was going to Delhi tonight On one of his official trips and she wished she had not given her consent for the picnic She hated to be alone. And yet she could not be sure what she dreaded more, being alone in the house, or being alone with Mala. The last time Mohn had gone out of station, she had had a terrible row with the girl, over something she did not even remember now she checked her thoughts. This was no way to feel about your daughter. But where is the girl I loved? She thought miserably

Despite her forebodings, the day went pleasantly enough, as it always did when Mala was in good spirits. Only, that was not quite so often now. Sheila thought dryly to herself. Mala was cheerful only when having her own way; one little 'no' and the world collapsed around their heads. "Adolescence, " Mohan said, everytie she tried to put her foot down and contain Mala's tantrums. "Growing pains," he called them at other times, but Sheila knew he was being indulgent. She had also passed through adolescence and surely her mother had never had to face tantrums like the ones she weathered

Mala was being quite mysterious that morning. She had gone to the Mall, shopping basket slung on one arm. "Getting some groceries for the picnic, Mom. Do you want some too?" she had yelled from downstairs while Sheila was packing Mohan's suitcase. Usually she made such a fuss to go shopping with her. "I hate those messy stores, they are so crowded," she'd protest and Sheila would have to drag her along.

"Just get me a loaf of bread for Daddy's sandwiches," she had called back, thinking—when it's her picnic—then stopped herself short again. This would not do, she was turning into a nag.

By evening, the cold had set in again. She shut the windows and felt herself getting tense as she battled with the latches against the rising force of the wind. The happy mood of the day was gone with the sunshine. The long night would tick slowly by, she thought, watching with an increasing dread the sunset beyond the mountains. The clouds formed mock peaks against the sky, closing in on all available space. The place was getting on her nerves, she ought to take a holiday. The moon rose slowly that night, flooding the slopes with a silver light and even her nameless tension could not dispel the haunting beauty.

"A perfect night for a picnic," she said across the dining table to Mala. Mala nodded, eyes bright with excitement. The circles under her eyes are darker tonight, she thought, and tomorrow they will be darker. Dinnerwasa fiasco, with Mala too excited to eat and Sheila thinking of the loneliness ahead.

They came when Mala was in her room, putting her coat on. At first Sheila thought it was a branch

ocking against the roof, but when he sound persisted, she opened the door.

The cold rushed in, filling the house with its presence. A group of girls stood outside, huddled together. "Is Mala ready?" one of them asked.

"Come in," she said, opening the door wider. But the girls only shuffled their feet and continued to huddle across the doorway. "No thank you. Aunty, we are loaded."

Her eyes focussed on a shape on the floor and she discerned a large dummy bag at their feet. "What a lot of stuff for a small picnic," she said laughing "What's in it?"

The girls looked at each other—then at the bag. As if she had asked them to reveal state secrets, she thought.

"Eats," said one. "A *aari* to sit on, and extra blankets," another added. At least they won't be cold, Sheila thought.

"Ready," Mala announced, coming down from her room, her black plastic bag heavy on one arm. Her right hand was bandaged at the wrist. "Oh, the can opener slipped when I was trying it out," she volunteered, seeing Sheila's eyes on her wrist.

"Did it bleed much?" Sheila asked, then seeing her daughter's eyes cloud over with irritation, she changed the topic. "More eats?" she asked lightly, looking at the black bag, and one of the girls tittered in the dark

"Bye, Mummy, I'm off .," and they were gone into the night before she could say all she had wanted to say about their being back soon, about taking care to keep warm....

She could see them from her bedroom window, she realised with a start. She had been making a fuss, really. Just a girlish get-together, Enid Blyton style. After all, other mothers had said yes to the picnic. Only...had the boys been waiting elsewhere, while the girls collected Mala?

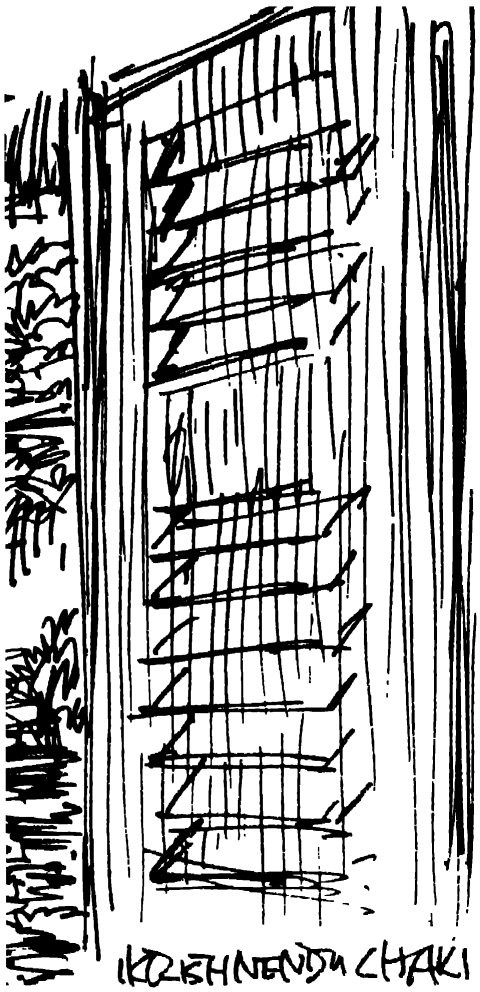
She went to bed, refusing to worry, refusing to hear the whispers that screamed fear inside her head everytime she was alone in the house...

And awoke with a start. The house was quiet. What had woken her up? Mala, she should be back. The clock showed 10:30 in the luminous dial. She moved to the window.

The shapes were there. Sitting in a ring they had managed to get a small fire going—she could see them in the firelight, sitting shoulder to shoulder, huddled in woollens. They seemed to be clapping and swaying. The familiar rhythm eluded her for a moment, then she got it—it was one of those names-of-things games—where you changed names to the beat of handclaps. Girlish games never changed, she thought with a smile as she went back to bed again.

As she lay in bed, holding her mind steady for sleep, she could hear the chanting almost. Be quick, pause, be quick, pause, be quick, foul and fair, fair and foul, be quick—then high-pitched laughter as a voice faltered....then a murmured consultation. Then the voices started again. Foul and fair, be quick, rotten air, be quick, fair and foul...rising in speed and pitch...till the shrillness woke her. And only the wind howled outside.

Eleven o'clock, the time piece said—she had dropped off for 20 minutes and dreamt all the voices! She leapt out of the window. The fire burned brighter now and the girls were still sitting around it. They were eating, she saw them reaching out and picking things from the baskets in the centre. They should be home soon enough, she thought. Once the food is over, the fun is



done. "Finish the food, and the mood," she remembered. She tried to spot Mala in the circle, to see if she was eating, but the shapes were too indistinct, wrapped in their shawls and blankets, to be recognisable.

What a night, she thought --till this child returns I can't get any sleep. She caught sight of her face in the dressing table mirror. How pale she looked and how lined her skin had become...those lines on either side of her mouth made it look so drawn She smiled—lifting the mouth in a curve and a face transformed itself into youth, "Why" Mala looks like me," she thought--noticing the resemblance for the first time. The idea gave her pleasure and still smiling, she lay in bed again.

And slept. To dream of cries in the night, strange knockings and maniacal winds that toppled trees, picked them up again to lightly carry them across the meadow and hurl them into the valley below...while shapes rose and fell, rose and fell and changed around the fire...

Mala—she came awake once more. Surely, it was Mala knocking. She rushed to the window, but the shapes were still there around a fire that had almost burnt out. And they were dancing. Not Western style, but with strange, jerky movements, round and round the fire. Something nagged her memory—she had seen such a dance somewhere... But she couldn't remember. At a school function? A Shakespeare play? A film? She let it be, watching the dancers. The clock struck 12:30. She ought to go down and fetch Mala, she thought. Mohan would be angry that she had allowed her out so late after midnight.

But the thought of the cold outside kept Sheila standing where she was. And she could not be a spoilsport. She watched the dancers again. Round and round, up and down, round again...she realised with a start that they were moving further away. The fire was outside the circle now—between the dancers and the house.

The girls were moving towards the edge of the meadow, not knowing they did so in their preoccupation with the rhythm Again the dance movements nagged her memory, then panic took hold. The girls would fall off...the wind would blow them over...

She could almost see one of them toppling over and disappearing into the void, and she could see the shocked reaction on the other dancers' faces...

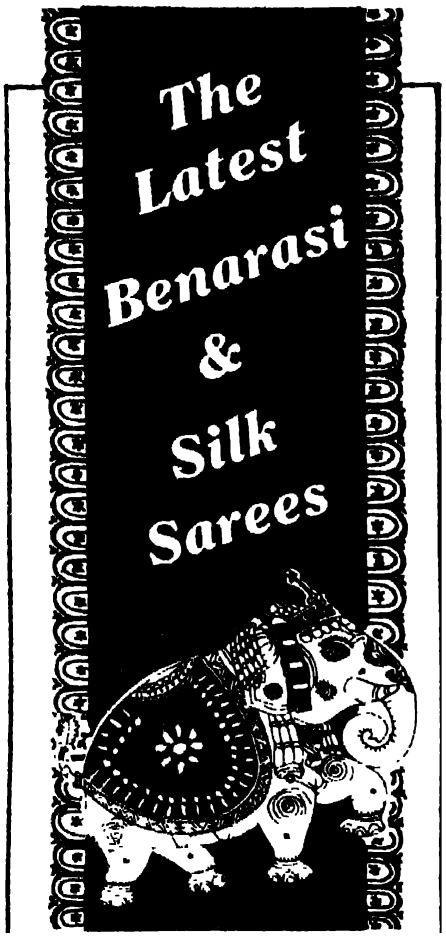
She throttled a scream at the image, grabbed a blanket from her bed and rushed out of the house the wind roaring behind her.

The long run into the night sobered her a little—and she arrived panting but sane, to the edge of the area lighted by the fire. The girls were still dancing, holding sticks in one hand, jerking their bodies up and down. No wonder they felt no cold, she thought.

The circle broke, the dancers quietened, and formed a line. They stood with their backs to her, now clutching their sticks in front of them. She could hear a slow chant begin—try, try, try ..the words said. Some girl guide song, she thought, the tune so eerie. It rose and fell like the wind, the voices rushing over the words.

The girls started moving forward, one step at a time, still chanting their song.. Try...try...try...and as they rushed forward in one gasp, the wind howled and pushed and she heard the words clearly this time..fly...fly...and the brooms on the sticks.

Sheila screamed in the dark—hurrying the bodies to the edge of darkness; hell—bent on madness, over the brink..■



Indian Silk House

COLLEGE STREET MARKET CALCUTTA

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
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BANGALORE					
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Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
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FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

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CHITTAGONG					
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Departures			Arrivals		
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DHAKA					
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BG 040	1910	1	BG [illegible]		
BG 090	2100	1 [illegible]	BG [illegible]		
DOHA					
QT 061	1000	3	QT 060		
DUBAI					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108		
KATHMANDU					
[illegible]	1035	1 [illegible]	[illegible]		
LONDON					
BA 142	2115	[illegible]	BA 141		

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU [illegible]	2100	4	SU-537	0930	4
PARIS					
RB-106	1105	7	RB 105	0810	2
RB 106	1425	5	RB 105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 108	0650	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ 115	2145	2 5	SQ 116	2240	2 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	1	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI-430	1915	5	AI-309	[illegible]	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1530	4 7	IC 226	1955	4 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
		Delhi-Kalka Mail		
		Amritsar Mail		
		Bombay Mail [illegible]		
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]		
		Dep [illegible]		
		Arr [illegible]		
		Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]		
		Dep [illegible]		
		Arr [illegible]		
		Rajdhani Express [illegible]		
		Dep [illegible]		
		Arr [illegible]		
		Rajdhani Express [illegible]		
		Dep [illegible]		
		Jodhpur Express		
		Shalabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express		
		Dep [illegible]		
		Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Saraighat Express		
		Dep [illegible]		
[illegible]	13-50	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	13 00	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express		
		Dep [illegible]		
[illegible]	20 30	Doon Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]		
[illegible]	21 00	Delhi Janata Express		
[illegible]	13 20	Amritsar Express		
[illegible]	21 00	Kathgodam Express		
3021	16-05	Mithila (Raxaul) Express		
[illegible]	17 35	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express		
[illegible]	17 11	Coalfield Express		
[illegible]	16 20	Asansol Express		
[illegible]	21-05	Danapur Express		
3071	22 35	Jamalpur Express	3072	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express		
[illegible]	5 45	Rampurhat Express		
[illegible]	15 25	Chambal (Gwalior) Express		
		Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr [illegible]		
3171	15-25	Shipra (Indore) Express		
		Dep Wed, Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & [illegible]		
[illegible]	14 30	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express		
3181	15 25	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express [illegible]		

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	Teesta-Torsa Express	6 35	3142
3143	19 15	Darjeeling Mail	8 45	3144
3111	20 15	Delhi Express via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6-25	Kanchenjunga (Lumding) Express	0 25	5658
3153	22-00	Gour Express	5 15	3154
5663	20 00	Katihar Express	4 15	5664
3151	11-20	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	3152
3113	20 55	Mughal Sarai Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	3114
3103	18-25	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	0 25	3104
5185	12 40	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	1 25	5686
		Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 30	Madras Mail	6 55	6004
		[illegible] Mail via Nagpur	8 20	8001
		[illegible]ali (Bombay) Express	15 25	2859
		[illegible] (Rourkela) Express	21 00	2022
		Dep & Arr Except Saturday		
8003	20 40	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible] 15	8004
[illegible]	11-20	Kurla Express via Nagpur	16 20	8021
2841	14 55	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	22 05	2842
[illegible]	8-10	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express	19 40	7004
		Dep Sun Tues & Fri		
		Arr Mon Thurs & Sat		
[illegible]	22-30	Bangalore Express	13 15	6312
		Dep Sunday		
		Arr Sunday		
8013	[illegible] 20	Tata Steel Express	10 20	8014
[illegible]	[illegible] 00	Ispat (Jharsuguda) Express	21 25	8112
[illegible]	[illegible] 55	Titagarh Express	5-20	8006
8015	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	6 10	8016
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8409	[illegible] 30	Jagannath (Puri) Express	9-25	8410
2821	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	22 05	2822
8045	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	15 16	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible] 35	8018
		Dep Except Saturday		
		Arr Except Sunday		
[illegible]	[illegible] 30	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express	5 15	1029
		Dep & Arr on Sunday		
2801	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express (via Howrah) Sunday only	16 10	
	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express (via Howrah) Saturday only	15 45	2122
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	
		Monday only		
	[illegible] 05	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	13 45	6321
		Saturday only		
	14 05	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah)	13 45	6313
		Thursday only		
6314	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam)	22 15	-
		Saturday only		
6311	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah)	13 45	6312
		Dep Tues & Fri Arr Tues & Fri		
6520	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express (via Howrah & Cuttack) Wednesday only	[illegible]	
-	14 05	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	13-45	6519

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Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

To begin developmental work in any area, says ***Geeta Sharma****, after travelling through the Nawalgarh area of Rajasthan*

One day as Kiran walked past the freshly-sown fields of her village on her rounds, she was beckoned by the village heads for a word. The Sarpanch asked her to take a seat and told her that they were drawing out plans for the panchayat building that was to come up shortly and wanted to know if she would like a room in it for her *'karyalaya'* (office).

At first Kiran thought that these men were having some fun at her expense. But when the elders went on to tell her how proud they were of the work she was doing and the awareness she was spreading in the village, she could feel joy and pride welling up inside her.

Kiran, who lives in the sleepy village of Kheru in the Nawalgarh area of Rajasthan, had never imagined that she would ever step out of the narrow confines of her marital home. But over the past two years, her work as a *swasthya karmi* (health worker) has not only given her a new identity — apart from that of a good wife, daughter-in-law and mother — but also added a new confidence to her stride.

In her new role as a *swasthya karmi*, Kiran goes around the village and talks to both men and women about the hitherto taboo subjects of family planning, health and hygiene. Kiran is among the 25 *swasthya karmis* who have been selected to work in as many of the 136 villages of the picturesque Nawalgarh area of the state's Jhunjunu district by the M.R Morarka GDC Rural Research Foundation, chaired by Kamal Morarka, former Union minister, is a voluntary organisation that has been involved in a host of development activities in the area for the past three years.

Mothers-in-law accompany their daughters-in-law in the first session of the Morarka Foundation programme

Participants of the Swasthya Karmi Programme

According to Mukesh Gupta, chief executive of the foundation, they took care in selecting the *karmis* so that they would find the maximum acceptance among the villagers. "We opted for the 'bahu' (daughter-in-law) and not the daughters who would have got married off. Also, we selected women with some basic education so that they would understand and communicate the message better because creating the right awareness in one woman of the family is equivalent to creating it in the entire family" he says. The Foundation also took care to do some image building for its volunteers by inviting senior doctors and officials to call on them in their village homes and talk to them about health and hygiene.

As it works, every five *swasthya karmis* (who cover one village each) are headed by one trained

urse, who dispenses the necessary edical advise and aid to the vil-gers. But the *karmis* themselves are ble to cater to such basic medical eeds as giving medicines for ordi-ary ailments, distributing condoms nd contraceptives and referring atients to the town doctor for fur-ier medical help.

But their main work, that earns iem a salary of Rs 400, is to awaken omen to their nutritional and ealth needs. "I have faced opposi-on and resistance at some stage om mothers-in-law and the *bahus* iemselves when I have spoken to iem about containing the size of ieir family or improving their nutri-onal intake," says Kiran.

"In fact, awareness levels have sen so much that younger women, ome quietly to me asking for family anning aids, and take them on the ledge that I would not tell anyone out it," she says with a smile light-g up her face. On a triumphant ote, she adds that ever since the *asthya karmi* programme began, gistration of births and deaths has sproved and the rate of miscar-ages and infant mortality have ipped significantly in the villages vered by it

Kiran says that initially she was a le apprehensive about the sponse of her family to her remain-g out of the house for long hours. ut fortunately, her sincerity earned r the affection of the villagers,

le her husband and in-laws take at pride in her. But the best indi-tor of appreciation and acceptance he. work and message, she says nulingly , was the fact that even n in the village who needed con-ceptives, would come to her use and convey what they wanted her husband or when he was not home, conveyed it to her little son, writing it on his slate!

Gupta adds that when the foun-tion held the initial training pro-amme for the volunteers, on the st day, more than three-fourths of e *karmis* were accompanied by eir mothers-in-law who wanted to ow what their daughters-in-law ere getting into. And the most mmon remark overheard from the others-in-law to their *bahus* was, *u dhyan se sunti kyon nahin hain?'* Why don't you listen attentively)

The *swasthya karmi* programme is one of the many projects unched by the Morarka undation which has been partly nded by the Rajasthan govern-ent. Among its aims is to raise the productivity of the rain-starved rural areas of Nawalgarh and create an awareness about the methodologies required to bring about this com-plete transformation.

Elimination of child labour, creat-ing additional employment oppor-tunities through vocational training upgrading the occupation of tradi-tional artisans by implementing a complete package covering 200 arti-sans for revival of terra-cotta and village pottery spread over five vil-lages comprise a major part of this project. Its education programme was crowned with success recently when Nawalgarh achieved the high-est percentage of universal primary education in the district.

Besides, converting the golden triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur into a golden square by making the Shekhawati region under which Nawalgarh falls, as the fourth desti-nation point is also on the top of the foundation's agenda . It has already begun organising annual Shekhawati Festivals and reviving the dying art of frescoes etched on the regions 20,000-odd havelies to attract tourists to their grandeur.

"The foundation works in close collaboration with the state govern-ment and agencies to identify the constraints and work out suitable policy initiatives and implementa-tion methodologies to bring about rural development,"says Gupta.

He says the foundation has intro-duced novel technologies to raise productivity of the region that gets rainfall for only 23 days in a year and has only 19 per cent of its land under irrigation. One such success-ful experiment that turned out to be a boon for the farmers is the Vermi Compost technology, with the help of which about 99 per cent of the land in Nawalgarh has been brought under cultivation.

The foundation has also launched a low-cost animal husbandry devel-opment programme at the village level in the district. It holds camps from time to time so that the vil-lagers may bring in their cattle and livestock for treatment and health care at nominal rates. At these camps they are also given tips about animal care so that they would be able to handle the minor ailments them-selves.

Its tall objectives notwithstand-ing, the fact that the foundation has been able to involve the people themselves, and specially bring the women out of the confines of their familial homes, to attend to their own development needs is an achievement in itself.■

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Sterre (Satish) Sharma

What's a nice girl like her doing married to Satish?: It's quite a romantic story really. She was a teenage Dutch student, brought up in the United States, on her way to Taiwan to study art. She had to change planes in New Delhi and during the flight she sat next to a man in aviator sunglasses. The man turned out to be none other than our hero, who declared within seconds of meeting her that she would become his wife. She was appalled but strangely thrilled. Something told her that Satish was the man for her. She didn't board her connection toTaiwan, and within a week of meeting the aviator became her groom, much to the horror of shocked parents back in Washington.

Why were they shocked?: Well, wouldn't you be shocked if your artistic daughter set out for Taiwan and ended up married in Delhi? They had nothing against Satish really — they had never even set eyes on him — but it was the concept of the sudden wedding that worried them. Finally, they met the good Captain and were bowled over by his Punjabi charm.

Oh yeah?: Honestly, you mustn't believe what the press says about Satish. He's actually quite a smart, confident, laid-back sort of fellow. And against all odds, the Sharmas have survived as a very together and very happy couple. Her family spends a lot of time with them in Delhi, and Satish was a great favourite of his father-in-law's.

Sterre: The painter wife of Satish Sharma

What does she do now?: Lots and lots of things. She runs a clothes shop for children called Balloons and has a garment export business. But her real interests lie elsewhere. Along with her sister, she is involved in a project to create a township for street performers. And, of course, she is a painter of considerable talent, who has exhibited all over the world.

What is she like?: Bubbly, extroverted, unaffected and very charming. She serves as a foil to the more introverted Satish and over the years the two have learnt to complement each other. She fits in perfectly with the conservative Brahmin Sharma family, speaks fluent Punjabi; and surprises people who meet her for the first time with her expertise in Hindi. She even speaks English with an Indian accent.

Is she really Sonia Gandhi's best friend?: No, that's just a media invention. The Sharmas and the Gandhis were friends. They even spent the odd New Year's Eve together. But contrary to media speculation, it was Satish and Rajiv who were pals, not the wives. Of course, Sonia and Sterre got along, but no, there was no special relationship and she is not part of the inner circle at 10, Janpath

What should you call her if you meet her?: Mrs Sharma would probably be best. Just as you're safer sticking to Captain when you meet Satish, but for the record, her friends call her Kapi, and his friends call him 'Stish'.

Whose idea were the marble tiles?: Nobody's. There were no marble tiles. In 1988, when he was building his house, Satish imported some ceramic tiles. These provoked the controversy, and it suited the mood of the time to say that they were made of Italian marble. After the uproar threatened to get out of hand, Satish claimed that they had been sent as a gift by Sterre's father. And who knows, perhaps they were. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 April 20

Ganesha says like a triple action formula pill, you will reach out to people and places, busy yourself with finances and take chances. You will still have a ball. Plans could also be made on the spur of the moment and that would be great. News and messages will have an extra edge.

Taurus
April 21 - May 20

Mercury Uranus fine placing helps you to win favours and get work done. You will be working at full speed and it is here that health precautions are necessary. Expect visitors by neighbours, relatives and dear ones. Fun times, romantic interests are also very surprisingly fated the next 57 days. Work hard, play soft.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

You will love the feel and power of money and time you did too. While the home influences, say renovation and decoration do continue from the last month, you will have the time to take stock of the entire situation, cites Ganesha. Love will speak to you in a smooth tongue and you will respond instantly.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Your good work will pay. At the same time, you will have to tread carefully the domestic scene. There is a chance to make a fast buck. If you are so interested, you will be participating in group activity, the social whirligig. It will help to loosen you up. It is time to finish unfinished projects.

Leo
July 21 - August 21

Mars helps you to be energetic, individualistic and assume leadership but see to it that you do not step on too many toes, otherwise fun and joy will be lost. Like the Cancerians, group activity and socialising should make you happy, rather fulfill a part of your personality. Expenses will mount.

Virgo
August 22 -- September 22

A fine Venus influence makes you dangerously attractive. Buying, selling, shopping, purchasing will entice you. Financial deals will offer splendid opportunities for the future, say November through the whole of 1997. Talking with agents and advisors will really be helpful. October 9-15 will be exciting.

Libra
September 23 -- October 22

Mercury, the messenger helps you to spread your tentacles far and wide, be it business or pleasure or both. Be bold and shoot straight. Togetherness is the key to harmony and happiness, says Ganesha. This is the right time to be adventurous, spearhead a movement or a campaign success in love predicted.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Action time, so rush in fire engine style. While expenses will be heavy, there will be plenty of movement to keep you on your toes. Many of you will be in for an interview, a meet, a conference, a get-together and that will be helpful. You will have the energy and the enthusiasm to make plans.

Sagittarius
November 23 -- December 20

From mid week, a sharp turn for the better. And the dice of fate rolls nice and easy for you, be it contacts, communication, finance, romance, business deals and hefty payoffs or whatever. Pilgrimages, prayers, legacy, public trust, joint finance and insurance are the other features of the week for you.

Capricorn
December 21 - - January 19

Passion and profession now blend as well as separate in a most unusual manner for Capricornians. The highs and the lows will be yours but overall, you do gain and have something to show for it. In this connection, October 9-10, 14-15 will be markers. Partnerships at all levels are foretold.

Aquarius
January 20 -- February 18

Ganesha says journeys, ceremonies and collaborations are down your lane. Legal issues could crop up but these can be and must be handled delicately and tactfully. October 8-10 offer promise of success. It would be infinitely to your advantage. Try out the offbeat and the new. Follow a hunch as that is best now.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

Public funds, insurance, joint finance, loans, travel and shuttling are the main ingredients from which fate will prepare a dish for you. Marriage, official engagement, meetings and conferences are the other elements and factors which will influence you this week and the next 6 months.

BIRTHDAYS

October 6: **Moon trine Pluto, says Ganesha, is an exceptionally powerful placing for you to get what you want. Effort and planning will be required.**

October 7: **Moon conjunction Mars, assures finance and romance. People and your boss too will be ready to help you. A new high in status and position is almost certain.**

October 8: **Moon square Jupiter show a certain strain in relationship or finance. Best to learn to control your impulses and expenses.**

October 9: **Mercury is finely placed with Uranus, planet of unexpected events as well as with Pluto, planet of power and riches. Therefore, you have a right to expect the very best in these directions.**

October 10: **Moon-Neptune excellent positioning will lead to inspirational and intuitive moves and these will turn out right.**

October 11: **Moon conjuction Mercury means it all depends upon new ideas, news, opinions and your ability to convey your message. Health needs a little extra care.**

October 12: **A well placed new moon helps you to run ahead of the pack, be noticed and loved and that's what life is all about. The services you have rendered will stand you well.**

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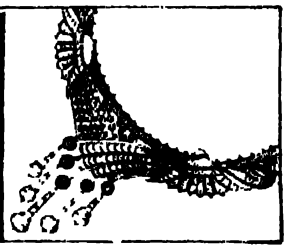

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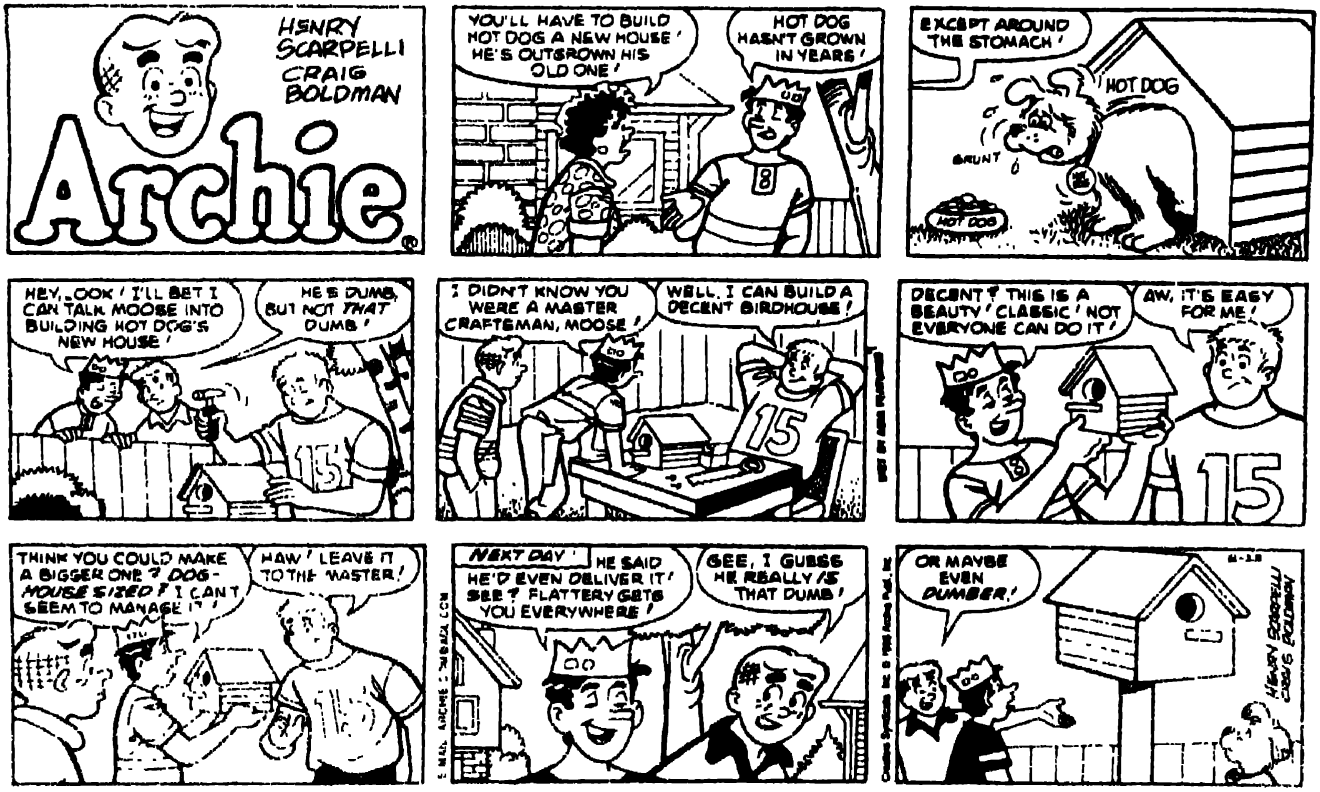
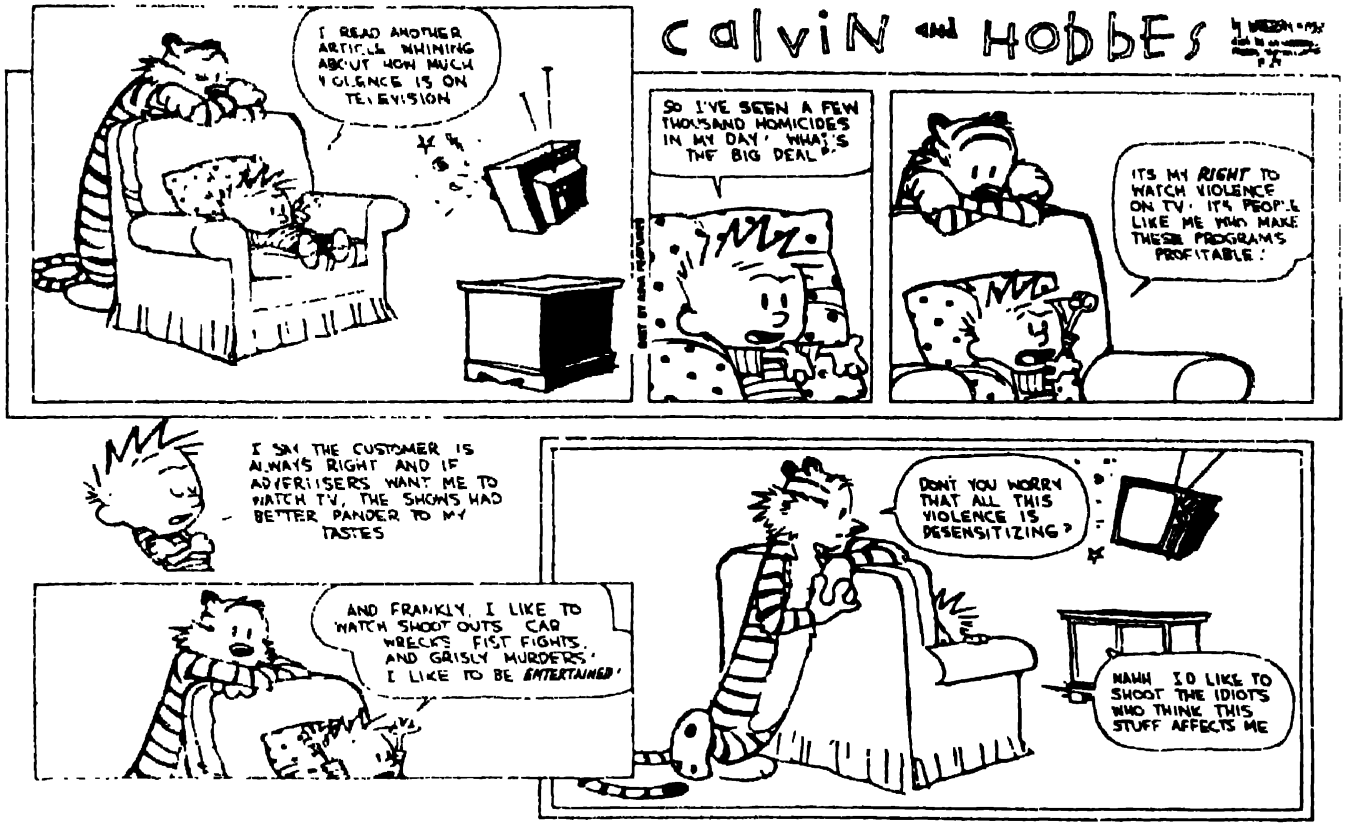
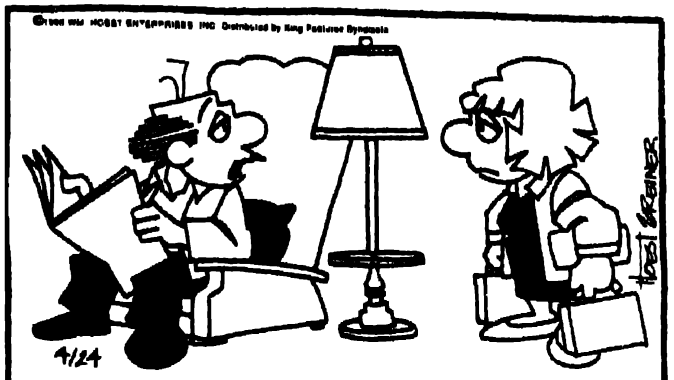


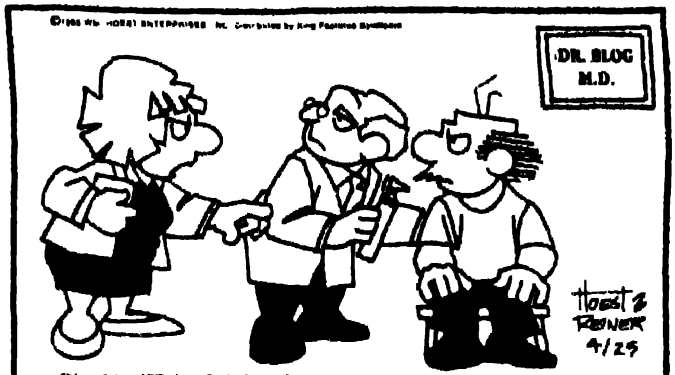
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



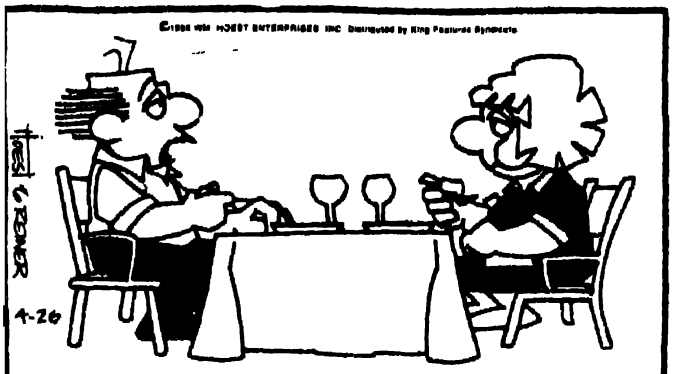
THE LOCKHORNS



"SURE I'M SURPRISED YOU'VE COME BACK TO ME, LORETTA . . . I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD LEFT."



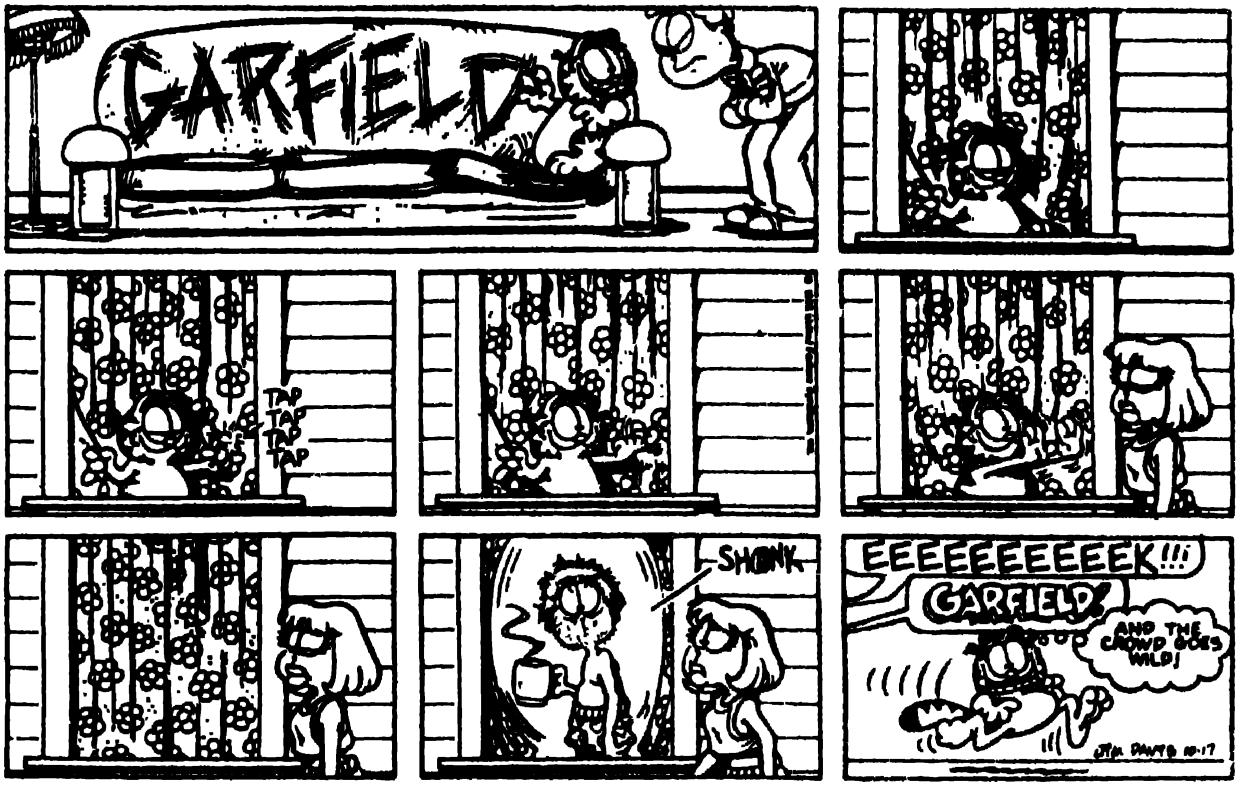
"I WANT HIS HEARING CHECKED, DR. BLOG! HE CAN'T HEAR A THING I TELL HIM!"



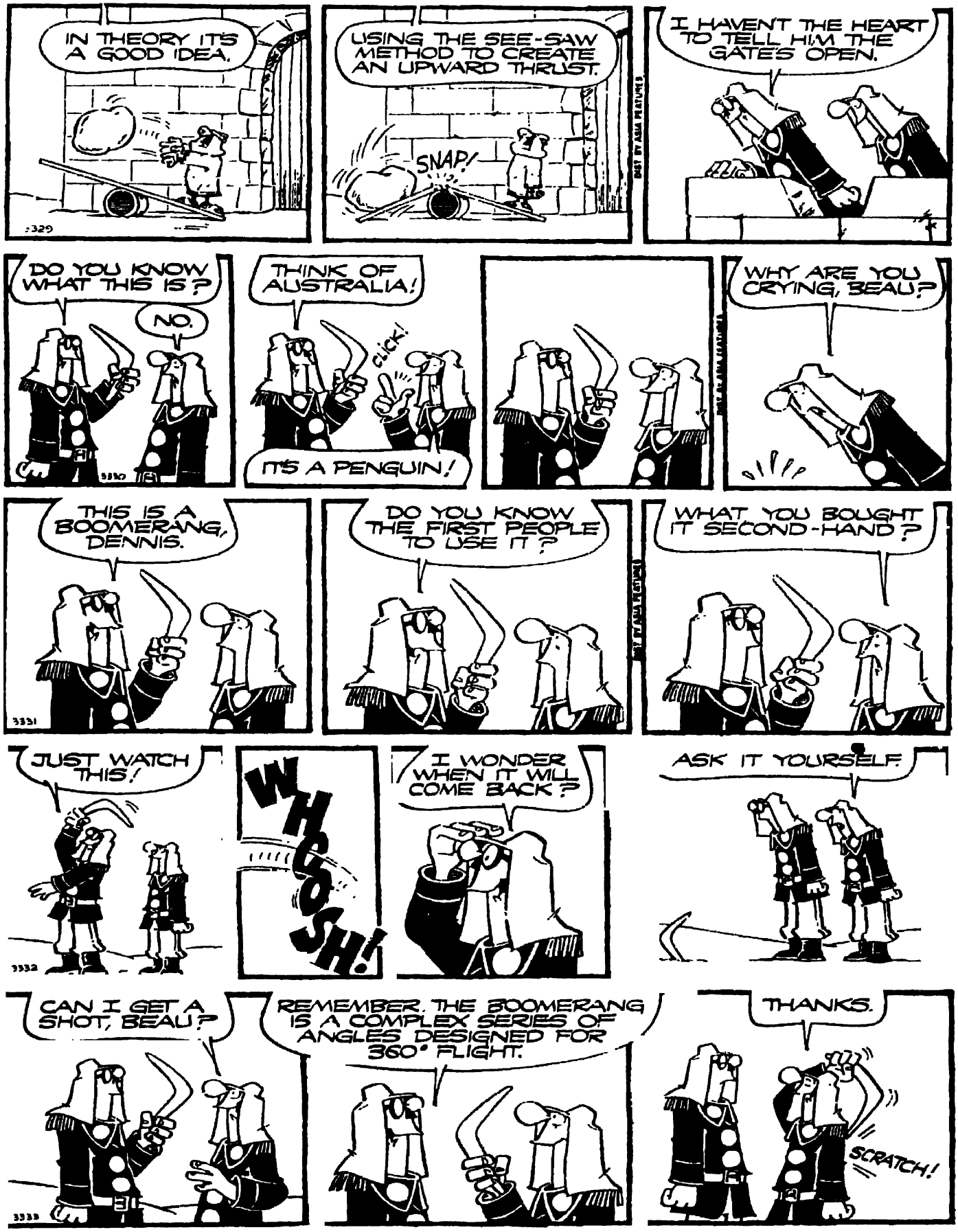
"THIS IS SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST DINNER, LORETTA . . . IT'S ATTEMPTED MURDER."

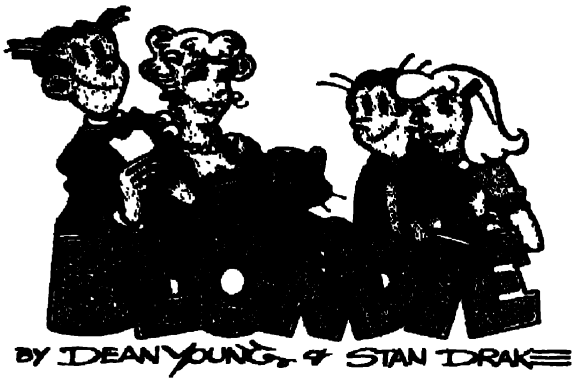
"LORETTA LOVES HER CELLULAR PHONE . . . NOW SHE CAN GOSSIP AND SHOP AT THE SAME TIME."

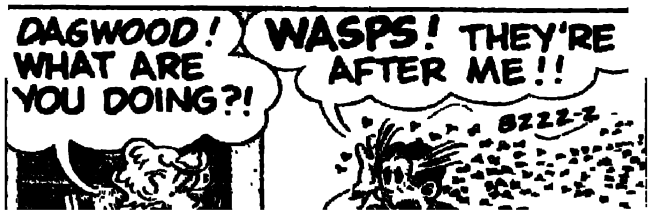
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

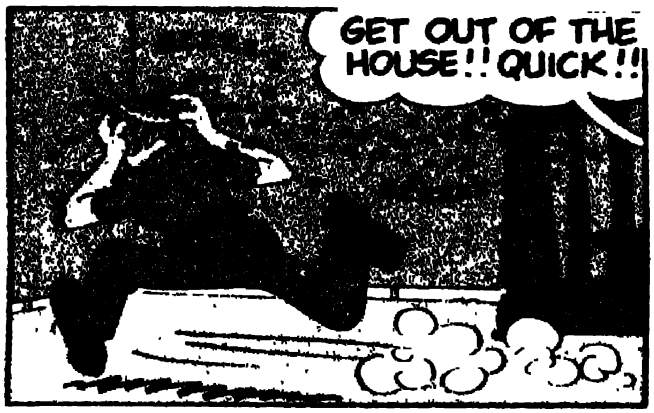


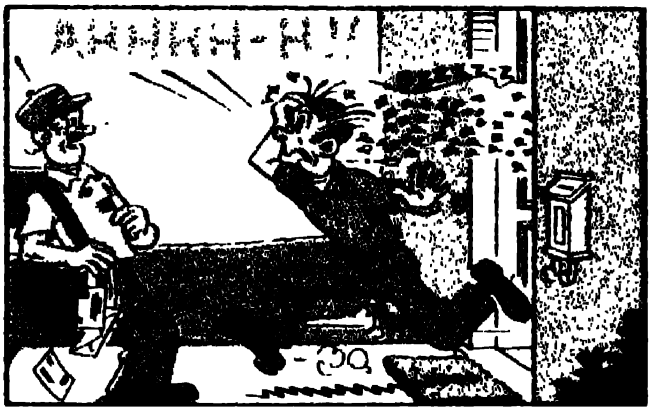
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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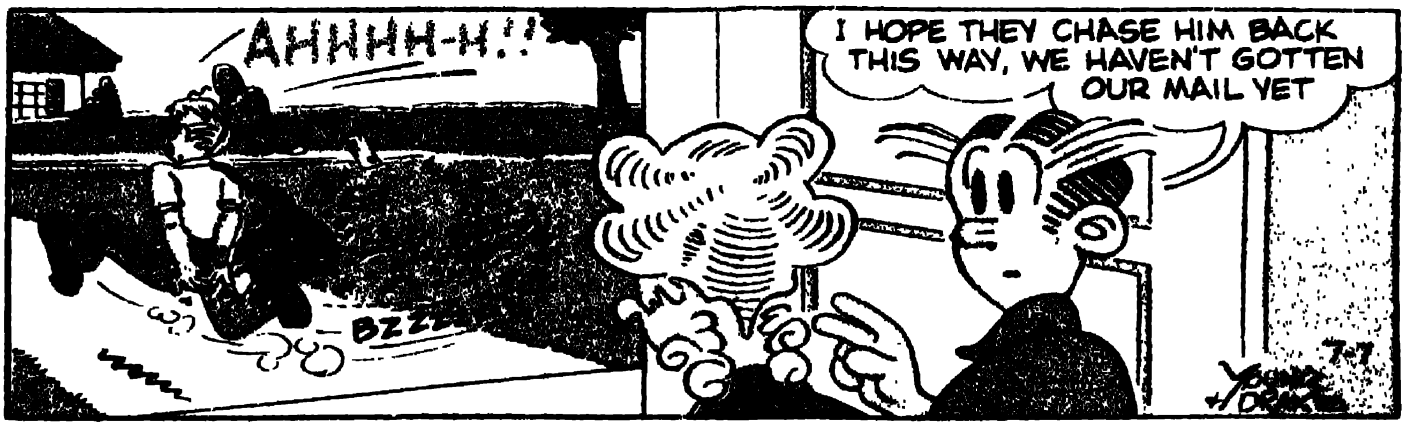
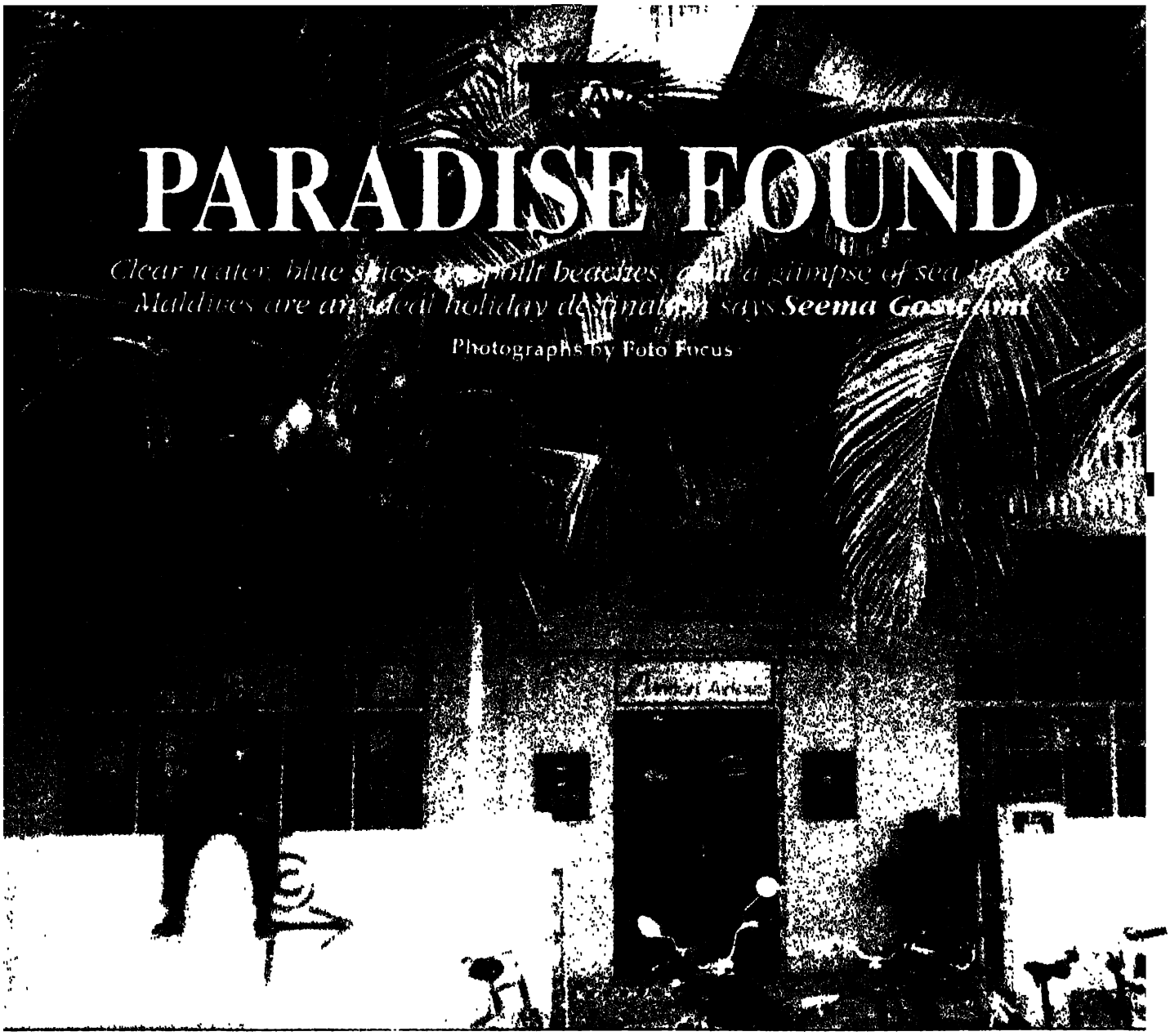


PARADISE FOUND

Clear water, blue skies, no spoilt beaches, and a glimpse of sea life: the Maldives are an ideal holiday destination, says ***Seema Goswami***

Photographs by Foto Focus



The Indian Airlines office in Male: It runs a daily service to the Maldives

One thing you can be sure of. visit the Maldives, and you'll never want to set foot in an Indian beach resort ever again After seeing the clear blue waters of the ocean that laps the 3000-odd islands of this tiny nation, everything pales in comparison.

Did I say clear blue? Well, that's just one of the many shades that the water assumes in these parts. The shallow lagoons are a pale acquamarine blue, venture out a little further and the sea turns navy, and then, deepens to a royal purple. These shades of blue are leavened by occasional patches of green, and the water is so clear that you can see the ocean floor —and the fishes that occasionally come right up behind you and nibble curiously on your calves.

Clearly, they want you out of the sea that is their home. But while you are in the Maldives it is difficult to stay out of the water for any length of time; it looks far too cool and inviting for anyone to resist its allure in the tropical heat. So, visitors—most of whom are from Europe, with the occasional American, Sri Lankan, and even more rare Indian thrown in—spend little time on solid ground.

If they're not swimming, they're floating in the shallow waters, either on their backs or on rafts. The more adventurous take a course in deep-sea diving and go back home with a license to plumb the depths of the ocean. Others go snorkelling, taking in the wonders of the ocean bed. And nearly everyone goes island-hopping on motor boats.

The best way to get an overview of the Maldives, however, is by seaplane, which takes around 20 minutes to take you around the length and breath of this tiny state. These planes are small—seating around 17 – but they still make the most infernal noise as they land on the water, churning up the sea as they glide right up to the beach. Passengers can then walk up the beach and enter the plane, which is so small, that you can't even stand upright.

A ride costs US $ 60 per head, but is well worth the expense. The view of the waters is terrific, and you get a panoramic look at all the

A resident of Male with his daily catch

Lagoon Room at the Em-boo-dhu Fin-olhu Island Resort: Living on the water

various resorts that dot the Maldives, and are housed on different islands. The islands where the locals live are easy to identify by their humble one-storey houses with tin roofs, the resorts, on the other hand, are large sprawling structures with rooms built right over the water, with private beaches, sun beds, and a restaurant or two.

But then, this two-tier system is well entrenched in the Maldives. The resorts do not have to follow such Maldivian laws as that enforcing prohibition They can get an import license and serve foreign liquor. But there's a catch: no Maldavian can even pour liquor, let alone drink it. So, all the resorts have Sri Lankan barmen, with the locals being employed as waiters, instead

But remain warned.The Republic of Maldives takes its no-booze'policy very seriously. The first inkling most first-time visitors get of this is when they fill in their disembarkation cards in the airplane, and are informed that it is an offence to import liquor into the country Once you're through immigration--Indians needn't apply for a visa before-hand, it will be stamped on their passports at the airport, free of charge—and have collected your baggage, you have to queue in front of an X-ray machine.

And the moment those manning it identify something that looks like a bottle, they will ask to see the offending object. If it does contain liquor, customs will confiscate the bottle—only until you reclaim it on your way out of the Maldives, though Customs officials will fill out a slip with your name and passport particulars, and after you've cleared immigration on the way out, you can collect your booze as well. What's more, the duty-free shops at Male airport are full of liquor of every kind—from premium whiskey to vintage champagne—and you can shop away to your heart's content.

Arriving at Male airport can prove to be a bit of a culture shock—what with interminable queues in front of the X-ray machines—but getting there is quite painless. Indian Airlines runs a daily A-320 service from Trivandrum airport, and the fare is very affordable. Rs 2,000 for a one-way economy class ticket, and Rs 2,600 for a one-way executive class ticket.

Considering that the difference is so marginal, it makes sense to spend a little more and travel in the wide-bodied seats—quite the most luxurious in the business—and

arrive in splendid shape for what is the holiday of a lifetime. But, if you'd rather save on the fare and splurge in Male, well then, you couldn't do better than Indian Airlines economy class, where the service is both quick and efficient, and the seats are comfortable.

From the airport—which is housed on a small island, opposite the capital city of Male—all visitors have to take speed boats or *dhonis* (what they call ferries in the Maldives) to their resort of choice. In fact, boats are the principal mode of transport in this country, which is made up of thousands of tiny islands, and can turn out to be your major expense. So, make sure that you keep aside a reasonable amount of money for just getting from one island to another.

But that may well turn out to be your only extra expense. Nearly every hotel here operates on a full-board basis, that is, the room rate includes all three meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner. And since there is virtually no shopping that you can do in Male—most Maldivians come to India to buy Sumeet mixer grinders—there is very little that you can spend on otherwise.

Male itself resembles nothing more than a quiet Kerala town, though the streets are far cleaner than that of any Indian city. It is small—you can walk across the length and breath of the city in just over an hour—but there are a few sights you can take in. The one that most guide books recommend is the Golden mosque, so named because of its golden dome. It is a modern structure, and even non-Muslims are allowed in to visit, so long as prayers are not going on, and they have their knees and shoulders covered.

Other places that might be of interest to an Indian visitor in particular is the Presidential Palace, which is a dead ringer for a sprawling bungalow in an up-market Delhi colony. It was from here that President Gayoom of the Maldives called up Rajiv Gandhi in Delhi when his political rivals hired some mercenaries and attempted to take over the government.

Gandhi responded by sending in the Indian army and air force, which

A seaplane landing on the waters: The aerial view of the island is quite terrific

Virgin beaches of the Maldives: The ideal getaway

Male Port: Ports are the principle means of transportation here

took over the airport – which the rebels had rather inexplicably failed to capture—and after securing it, went into Male and foiled the coup attempt. The mercenaries attempted to escape by boat, but were intercepted by the Indian navy, and handed over to the Maldivian authorities.

So, it might well be said that the Maldives have a special relationship with India. But despite that, it is not an easy relationship to maintain. Like most of our neighbours, the Republic of Maldives too is rather wary of the Big Brother syndrome, and the residents are often suspicious of Indians, who they feel might want to take over their country.

Not that you would ever feel their animosity as you walk down the streets of Male. Like most island people, the Maldivians are laid-back and easy-going. And as long as they have their rice and fish curry, and the freedom to do as they please, they don't really get too worked up about politics.

When it comes to choosing the resort of your choice, it is difficult to go wrong in the Maldives. Most hotels have a certain minimum standard, and all of them have provisions for such water sports as snorkelling and deep-sea diving. The room rate varies between US $ 100 -175, but groups can often negotiate a discount on this as well. Off-season rates also vary, so make enquiries at your travel agent before you make your booking.

For Indians, the best bet would be Em-boo-dhu Fin-olhu Island Resort on the South Male Atoll, which is run by the Taj Group of Hotels. This is one hotel that is geared towards their special needs, with Chef Kannen offering to cook Indian vegetarian meals for those who don't particularly relish roast lamb and Chinese stir fries. Even some foreign visitors occasionally opt for the Indian option, and nearly everyone who has eaten his food would admit that his *rasam* is to die for.

The hotel has 16 beach bungalows and 48 lagoon rooms While the former are cheaper, it makes sense to spend a little more on a lagoon room, because of the unique experience they provide. Constructed on stilts over the calm waters of the lagoon, the rooms have balconies which lead to a sun deck, which in turn has a ladder that leads right into the water.

So, you wake up to the sight of the sea, spend your afternoons lazing on the sun-deck with oil slathered all over body, and swim or float—depending on how energetic you feel— in the blue waters and watch the sea life all round you.

If you want to go native with a vengeance, then try Cocoa Island, also on the South Male Atoll. Here, you will find walls made of white coral, roofs thatched with palm fronds and silky sand floors. But don't be fooled by the back-to-nature approach; you can still order the best French wine with your dinner.

But if creature comforts come first for you, then Kurumba Village may be the place for you. Here you can surf and snorkel as much as you want, but you can also play tennis in the well-maintained courts of this hotel. The highlight of your trip could well be the nightly beach barbeque, which features the catch of the day.

Remember, however, that there are 60-odd beach resorts scattered around the islands. And it might be a good idea to spend a couple of days in each, before deciding on which is the best value for you After that initial exploration, you can come back and stay in the hotel of your choice. And believe me, when it comes to the Maldives, you will want to come back—again and again and again.

Indian Airlines flies to the Maldives from Trivandrum every day at 12.50 pm, and arrives at Male at 13.30 pm. The return flight leaves Male at 14.30 hours. On Fridays, however, the flight leaves Trivandrum at 13.35 and the return flight is scheduled at 15.15 hours.

SEEMA KAPOOR, *one of the current hot favourites of the small screen, started her career in Calcutta as a stage actress, grabbing public attention with plays like* Heer Ranjha, Shashiputra, Mirza Saheb *etc. It was Ramesh Sippy who gave her her first big break on television with* Kismat, *a serial which instantly catapulted her to stardom. Other soaps followed like* Hasratein, Silsila *and* Kurukshetra. *But despite her success on the small screen and many film offers, the stage, swears the former Miss Chandigarh, remains her first love.*

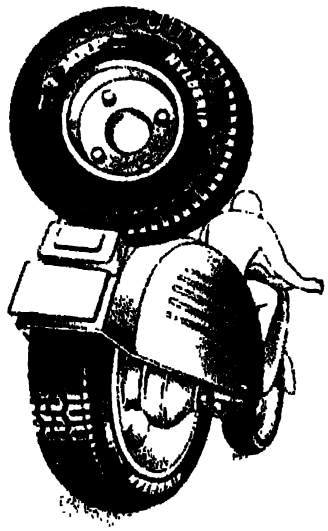
What is your idea of perfect happiness?
All my dreams being fulfilled.
What is your greatest fear?
To be emotionally, physically or financially handicapped.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
William Shakespeare, Raj Kapoor and Cleopatra.
What do you dislike most in others?
Double standards and hypocrisy.
What is your most precious possession?
A photograph of Lord Jesus Christ which I have since childhood.
What objects do you always carry?
Usually my mobile and sunglasses.
What makes you most depressed?
Insecurity.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My nose and excess fat, if any.
What is your favourite word?
Oh Jesus!

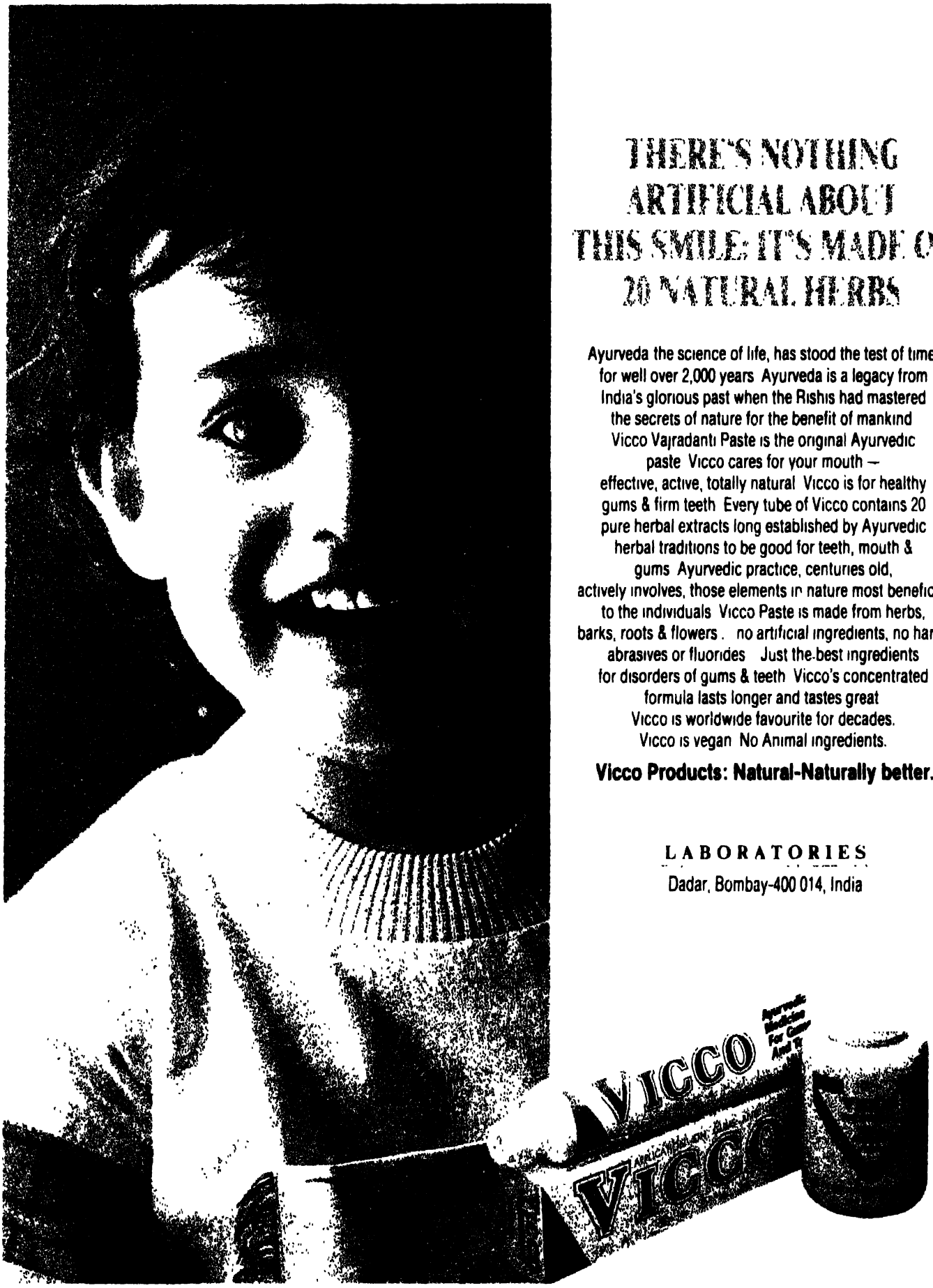
What is your favourite dream?
Possessing a magic wand

What is your favourite journey?
Anywhere abroad.
What is your favourite dream?
To possess a magic wand.
What is your nightmare?
To be a failure.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
The three Js of my life—my job, my Lord Jesus and my pet Julie
What is your source of sustenance?
Faith in God and in my abilities.
On what occasions do you lie?
I hate to do so.
What is your greatest regret?
Not having a Godfather.
What has been your happiest moment?
Each time when I have performed well.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Anger.
How do you relax?
By waking up late.
What do you envy most in others?
Happiness.
How would you like to be remembered?
As one of the best actresses and human being.
How would you like to die?
In my sleep.

The Advantage ...NO SCOOTER CAN BE DENIED

MRF NYLGRIP





THERE'S NOTHING ARTIFICIAL ABOUT THIS SMILE: IT'S MADE OF 20 NATURAL HERBS

Ayurveda the science of life, has stood the test of time for well over 2,000 years Ayurveda is a legacy from India's glorious past when the Rishis had mastered the secrets of nature for the benefit of mankind Vicco Vajradanti Paste is the original Ayurvedic paste Vicco cares for your mouth — effective, active, totally natural Vicco is for healthy gums & firm teeth Every tube of Vicco contains 20 pure herbal extracts long established by Ayurvedic herbal traditions to be good for teeth, mouth & gums Ayurvedic practice, centuries old, actively involves, those elements in nature most beneficial to the individuals Vicco Paste is made from herbs, barks, roots & flowers . no artificial ingredients, no harsh abrasives or fluorides Just the best ingredients for disorders of gums & teeth Vicco's concentrated formula lasts longer and tastes great Vicco is worldwide favourite for decades. Vicco is vegan No Animal ingredients.

Vicco Products: Natural-Naturally better.

LABORATORIES

Dadar, Bombay-400 014, India

The Telegraph

20 OCTOBER 1996

POST MORTEM

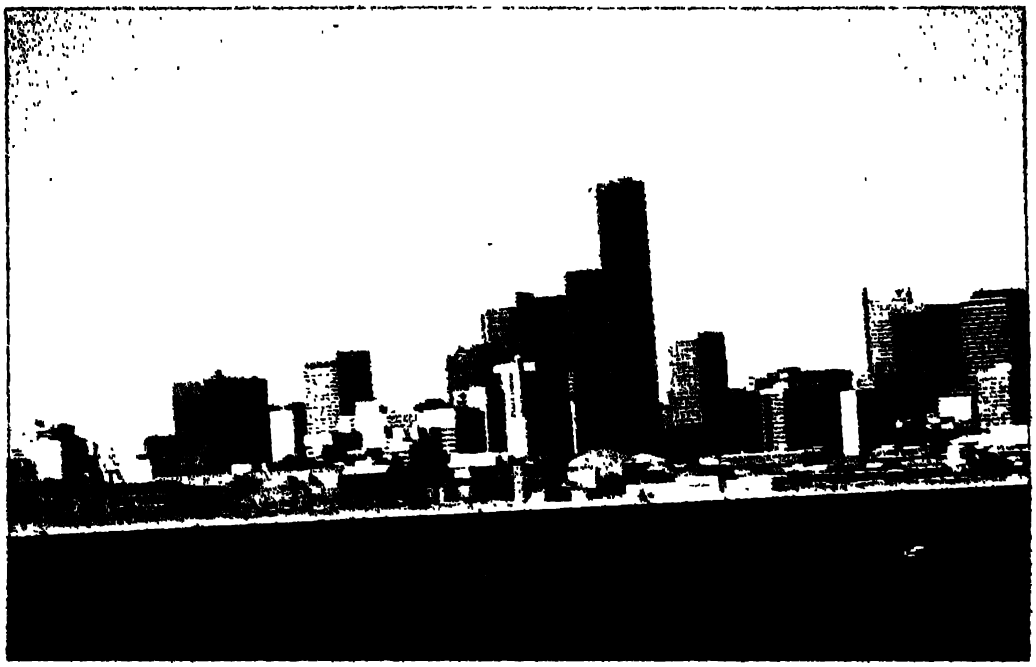
In the Land of the Kangaroo

■ Thank you for the cover story, 'In the Land of Oz' (August 25). That the country is a tourists' paradise with an abundance of the sun, sea and mirth was brought out very well in the account.

It is not that India is lacking in natural beauty. We have perhaps the finest combinations of snow-peaked mountains, lakes, valleys, sun-kissed beaches, golden deserts and dense green forests. But we have not been able to preserve them well or showcase them to the world so as to attract foreign tourists.

An ever burgeoning population has eaten into our natural resources; pulling down trees indiscriminately, hunting down animals and precious sea life, all for pure survival.

Apart from biological compulsions, certain socio-political forces have also been at work leading to the destruction of natural beauty. Think of what has become of Kashmir: the once paradise on earth. Instead of blooming, the chinar is now burning.



A picturesque view of beautiful Melbourne

It is for us to preserve our natural beauty.
Anirban Dey,
Calcutta

■ I was in Australia studying for three years. I have returned to India only recently. I had some opportunity to travel around in Australia and so the cover story was more like a journey down memory lane for me.

Australians are a lovely group of people: fun-loving and hospitable. I, too, would recommend this place to anyone planning a holiday abroad.
Sharmeela Sengupta,
Calcutta

■ The cover story was very informative. More so the section on the Aboriginal issue. I wish I could afford a vacation to this colourful continent.
Ashok Roy,
Calcutta

■ It is quite evident why Sydney was gifted the prestigious 2000 Olympics. Unlike any American city, Sydney has a lot to offer to the world.
T. Sireesh Rao,
Calcutta

■ Thank you for the colourful cover story. Not everyone can afford an Australian vacation though. So for us travel pieces supplement our travelling urges.

But why was there no mention of the beautiful province of Tasmania?
Abhishake Kr Saha,
Ichhapur

INSIDE

Shailesh Mule

PAGE 4

FOR PRITISH Nandy journalism, poetry and environment take the back seat as Net surfing becomes his latest passion. Meet the new Cyber Cowboy.

PAGE 26

ANJOLIE ELA Menon, despite her fame, remains stubbornly modest.

Pritish Nandy

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
26 ART
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Shailesh Mule

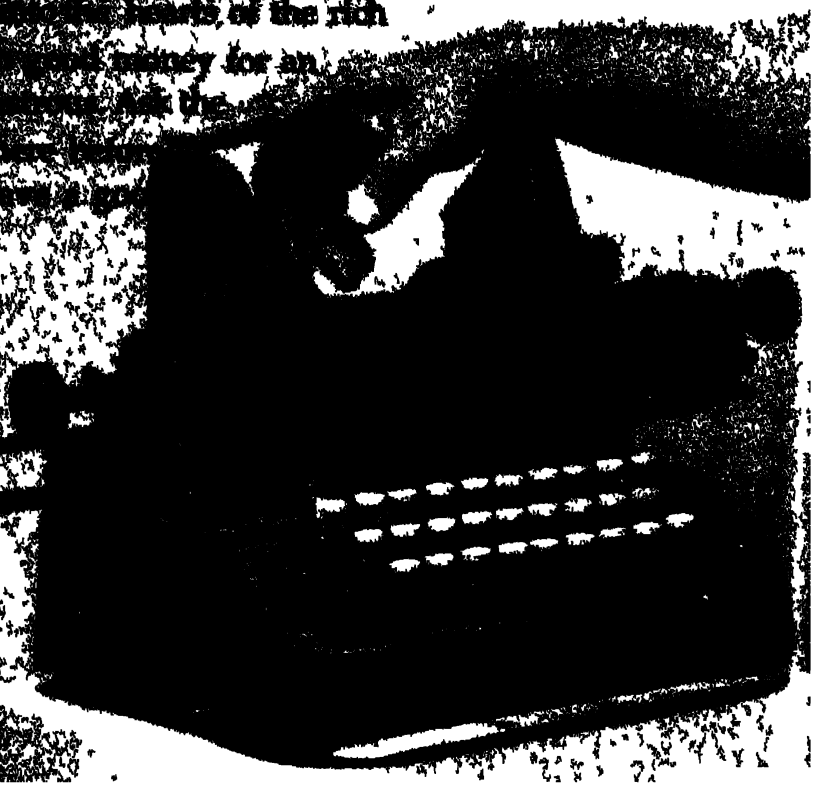
[illegible]CED [illegible]UT

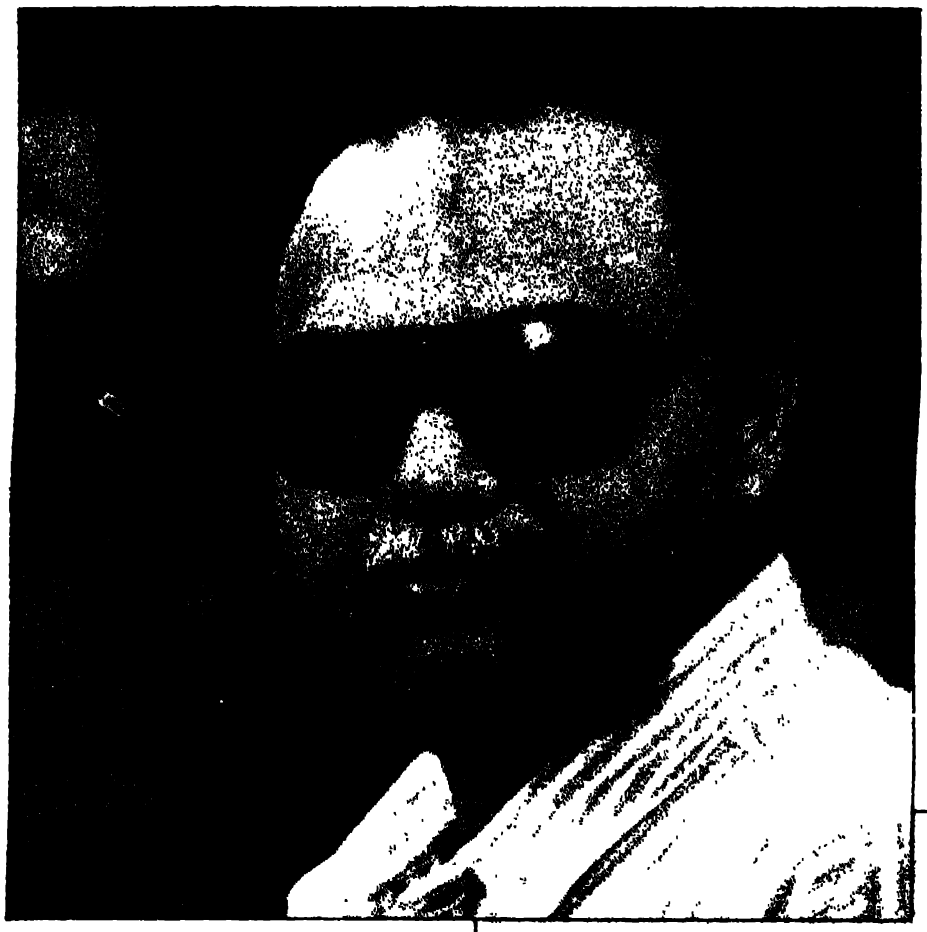
[illegible] and the environment. Now, Pritish [illegible] Vaishali Honawar reports

[illegible] AS APPEARANCES GO. THE BALD PATE [illegible] key chain that would hang around his [illegible] He looks less like Yul Brynner and [illegible] brought up in Shyambazar. This [illegible] almost be dubbed conventional.

[illegible] perhaps, but certainly not put off. [illegible] because of the waistcoat. But I do still [illegible] he says.

[illegible] outsiders, Pritish Nandy has been anything [illegible] colourful life notwithstanding, he's been seen [illegible] hearts of the rich [illegible] money for an [illegible] Ask the [illegible]





The old Pritish Nandy

has gone from dabbling in virtually everything to concentrating on virtual reality. And of late, he seems to see himself as a Cyber Cowboy, surfing the last frontiers of the Internet.

But Nandy would rather not talk about the new love of his life: the Net. At least, he says, not until his plans materialise. And specially, not to the media, which, he says, "makes a *natak* over me, so that everything I do gets lost."

Despite such disclaimers, though, Nandy doesn't seem to mind being interviewed at all He's got used to it, you see. Sitting in his art-and-antique-decorated office ("it was converted from an attic," he offers helpfully), Pritish answers with enthusiasm questions on everything from his vegetarianism to his art, his poetry and, of course, the Internet.

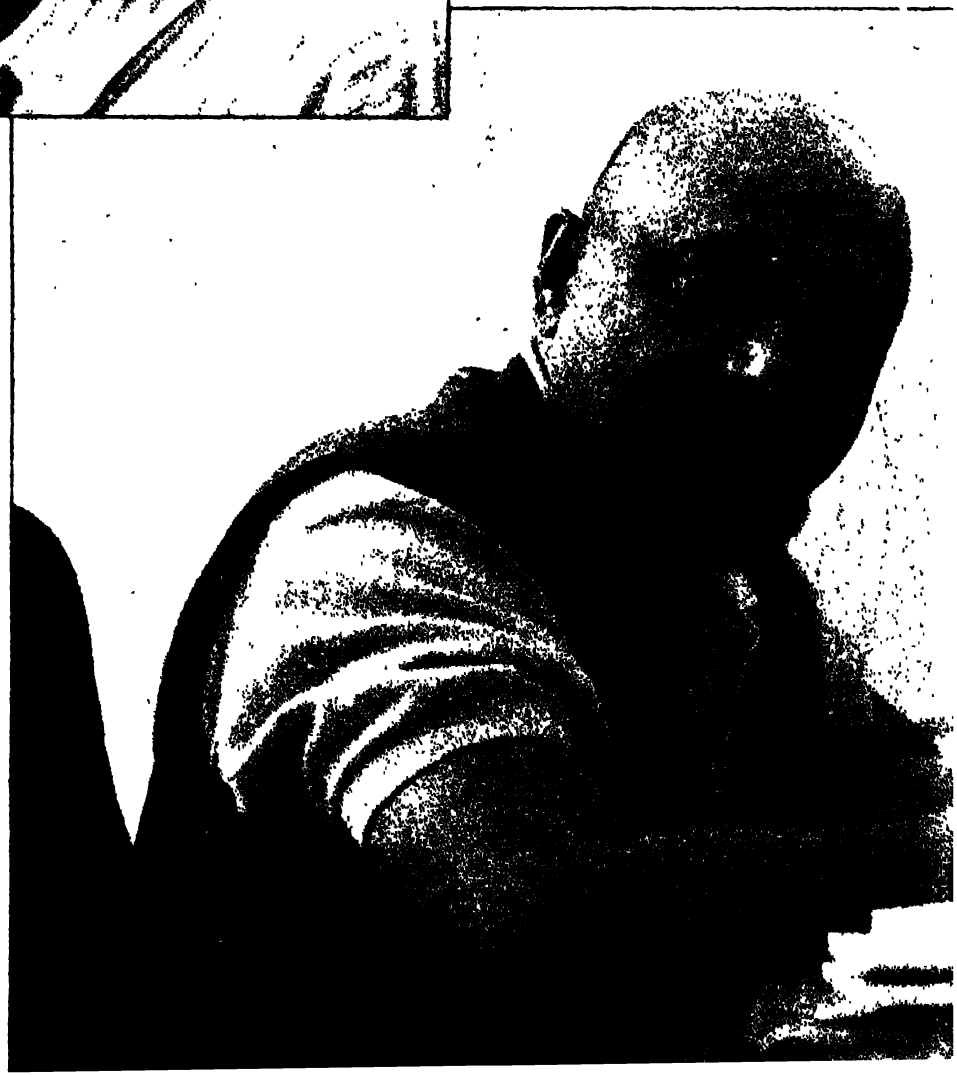
Nandy's got huge plans for the Net. In fact, he sounds all set to usher in a cyber-revolution in India. And he's been at it for a while now in a planned manner, setting up cybercafes around the country, planning thousands of cyberbooths where people can surf the Net "for a pittance".

But Pritish plans to proceed in easy stages. He would first like to push up the usage of the Net before setting up a "really spectacular site — something they have never seen before," he announces, in typical Nandy style. The site, he adds a moment later, is being set up in strategic alliance with Hindustan Thompson Associates and Silicon Graphics.

Plans are already under way, with the cooperation of the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and Computer Maintenance Corporation. "VSNL has the primary right to open a site in India and we are on their backbone, so when our site comes up it will be by far one of the strongest and best-located sites in the world," says Nandy.

Pritish has been involved in the setting up of cybercafes around the country and there are plans for many more, he says, including one in Calcutta where talks with a major chain are already in progress. And mind you, he's into this "as a journalist, not a businessman. I'm very keen to increase the

The self-confessed weird man



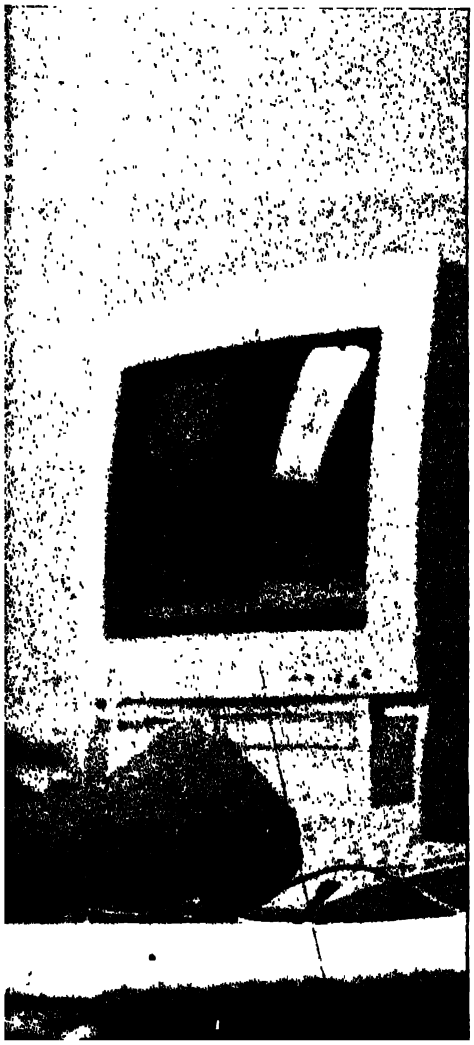
reach of the Net and I'm not looking at business opportunities yet," he says.

The Net has a brilliant future, insists Nandy, for the people "are fed up with the mindless entertainment of television driven by the lowest common denominator, and the controlled information that emanates from print. The Internet has not made much of an impact so far, but one fine morning you will wake up and find there's a huge quantum leap; that's what happens with the media."

The Net, he adds, is also beyond the ability of governments and media-owners to control and that is another reason why he sees great potential in it. "As a journalist it has always been my idea to get closer to evolving a delivery platform beyond censorship," he says.

Nandy illustrates his point further. "You've seen the kind of journalism I did in the *Illustrated Weekly*," he says, "which was substantially different from the kind of journalism you've seen in the *Times* at that time or since. I had complete freedom from owner control — that was the strength of the weekly. After I left they couldn't sustain the fierce independence of the magazine."

The new love of Pritish's life: The Net



But where the Internet is concerned, Pritish is looking at the big picture. Television drew readers away from print, he claims, and now the Net is going to do the same thing with both print and television. The future belongs to the electronic media, he announces.

And to environment-consciousness.

The environment, and the state of our fragile eco-system, is a favourite bugbear of Nandy's these days. "More and more countries around the world are going to stop allowing trees to be cut to support this amazing hunger for paper. One will see more and more communication moving on to non-paper mode. Everything which is environment-friendly will have an edge over everything that is not," he says.

Not surprising words from the man who became vegetarian a few years and, along with Maneka Gandhi, founded the animal-rights group, People For Animals. "It's the fastest-growing NGO in the country," he says proudly of this organisation. "We've done a lot of significant work and people have shown a great deal of interest too. Environment helps us change our lifestyle."

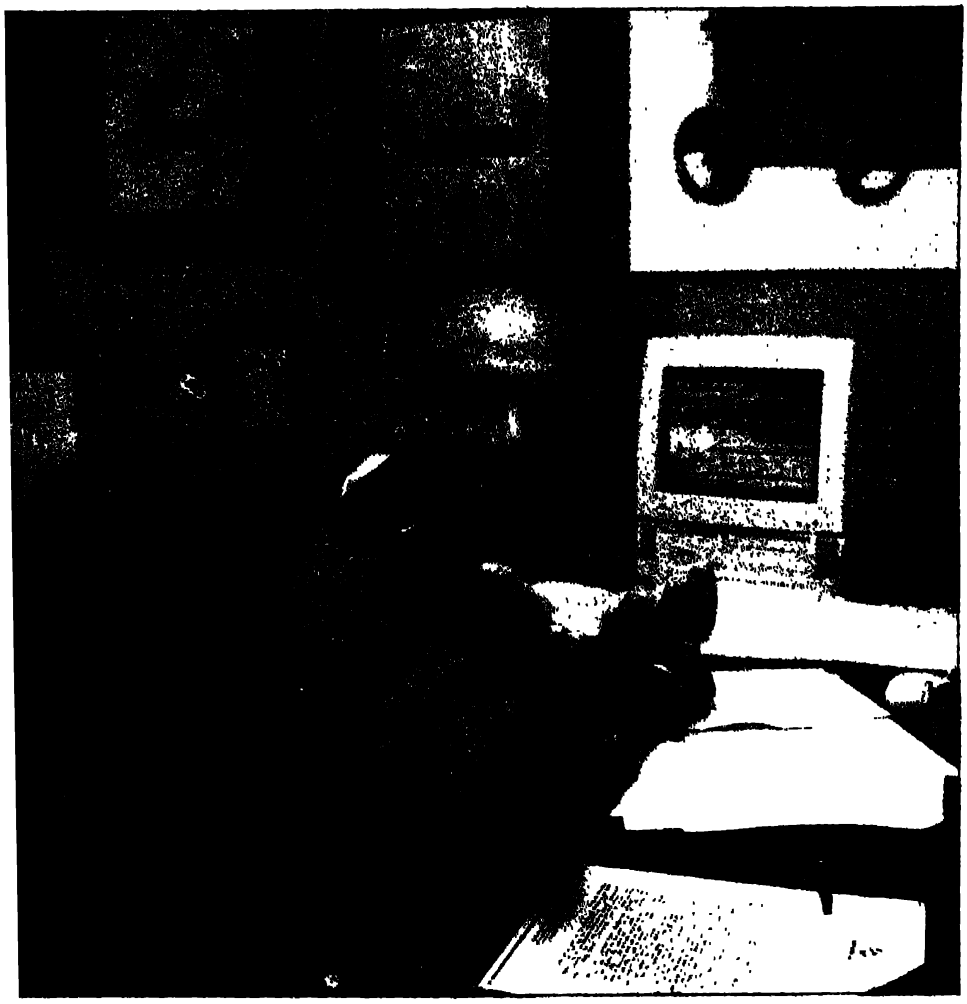
That does sound impressive, but doesn't he miss his seafood once in a while?

"Well, I do," he laughs, "I would still be lured by the idea of seafood but it's the question of making a moral statement. And I don't say I'm a vegetarian, I just say I don't like eating anything that has a mother."

Environment is one subject he can go on about forever, that's easy to see, as he talks energetically about the depleting fish in the waters around India, about the number of birds killed in the process of caging that one bird which will adorn a living room, about the country becoming a slaughter-house for the West.

India and her future and his plans for both figure in his talk with frequency. He isn't thinking of getting into politics yet, is he? "Who knows. I just might someday, if I feel I could contribute effectively," says Nandy gravely. "I don't just want to go in there and become an eunuch."

Through all these changes in his life, the one constant has been his passion for writing poetry. He had recorded a few cassettes of his poetry, read by himself of course, and is now planning another. He has also done six books of translations from Sanskrit erotic poems "which have actually been published". But he's not talking about the sort of poetry he's writing now. "It



Gautam Patole

A charmer all the way

all depends," is the cryptic answer. "Maybe I'll publish some soon."

Poetry was his first ladder to fame, bringing him the Padma Shree at 26. Did he decide not to stick with it because it doesn't pay?

"You'd be surprised," says Nandy. "I made more money in my years as a poet than I ever did in my years as a journalist. But that was okay because I wanted to do something which would change India, that's why I moved to journalism." And while today he feels that "it's not an easy country to change," he is quick to add, "But one can stand up for the things that are right. That's what I see my role as. That's what I have done all my life."

He's also held four or five shows of his art — drawings made for his children, ceramics and poetry manuscripts — and claims to have even sold off all of them. He recalls a "fun" exhibition he held in Calcutta. The event, featuring drawings for children, was inaugurated by Amitabh Bachchan while Anupam Kher and Satish Kaushik performed a children's play on the roads. All of Calcutta stopped dead in its tracks!"

Calcutta, he believes, thinks him to be completely "whacko," but then it's also a creative city and "they're proud that I've been a creative person," he says. "It is the city where my heart is. I love Calcutta, I enjoy it," he says, though he left it at 29 to make Mumbai his home. "Calcutta to me is like the old man in Sindbad story — he's on your back, never leaves you." But he's quick to scotch any suggestion that he surrounds himself with Bengalis wherever he works.

And so, he also doesn't agree with what most seem to think has been his lighthearted dalliance with various careers. He's had a fun time, he agrees, but he has also been faithful to his one passion — communication. "I am essentially a creative person and I can change my medium at different times. Today what I am doing has become fashionable — it's being called multimedia," says Nandy. "I've done multimedia for a decade and a half now, looked at multiple communication options."

If and when he returns with the *Illustrated Weekly*, the title to which has been bought for him by a controversial industrialist from Tamil Nadu, he will revive it across various media like television, the Net, and print. "Let's see which way it survives and does best," he says. He insists he has definite plans for it but will launch it only when things "settle down for the media. Right now the media is in a bit of a chaos. Lot of papers and television companies are going through a rough patch."

Besides, at the moment he has his software company, Pritish Nandy Communications, keeping his hands fairly full. It makes shows on news, entertainment, environment and "we've been on every channel around — you name it," says Nandy proudly.

But after *The Pritish Nandy Show* was taken off the air by DD for having "busted a politician, which is a sacrilege", he's not been out in front of the camera. Well, except for acting in a Stylebhai video. But the moment he can do things his way, he plans to have the show back on air.

Open media, says Nandy, is the real need of this country. And whether that happens to be foreign or Indian is irrelevant so long as one can get uncensored, free information. "Indians must have a choice to decide what information they want. People are not fools," he says emphatically. "Hopefully one day the power of the state will be replaced by the power of the people. That's why I am a believer in weak governments. They do good for the country."

He also has great belief in the future, he tells you, and in himself. "I never look back," he says strongly. "I've always discovered that the future is a zillion times more colourful than the present or the past." That hope, and his love for freedom, are what have really sustained him, he says, and for some reason that is not difficult to believe.

Unputdownable he certainly has been, through his various flings and career changes. "I'm not awed by anybody," he continues. "I'm not frightened by anybody, I'm not intimidated by anybody. I've enjoyed the freedom to be myself. And that is the ultimate delight." ■

Photographs by Shailesh Mule

BEJAN DARUWALL

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, your ambition will be all fired up, and because of that, you will be motivated and successful. That's how it works. Relationshipwise, however, expect a see-saw and some dramatic turns. News and messages will decide the issue. You should pay heed to it. Travel is a possibility.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Journey and overseas connections might tip the scales in your favour. Mercury and Mars helps you to earn money, trade, try for a better job, but health is certainly suspect and you are advised to be a bit more careful. Expenses will be quite heavy. Many of you will be in the midst of changes.

Gemini
May 21 -- June 20

The name of the game is money. You will have it in one way or another. Your creativity will be phenomenal and almost plethoric and abundant. Children and partnerships will be unduly important and pivotal to you. An addition to your wardrobe will make you happy with your image.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Proceed relentlessly to your ultimate goal. You will be in a position to work wonders from next week, so why worry. This is a strange week of partnerships, separations, changes, people coming and leaving, but overall a preparation for a glorious future. Home conditions will also influence you.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Hard work will begin to pay in the next month or two, therefore, do not be disappointed and do not give up, as you are prone to do, from time to time. Travel plans and renovation, decoration, alteration plans might go simultaneously. Deeds, documents and contracts will be signed.

Virgo
August 22 - September 22

Ganesha says the focus is on finances and trips, and the two could have a link or a connection. New offers will come to you within 37 days and you should take full advantage of it. Neighbours, relatives see more of you. You will show your true worth at meets and conferences.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

A friend could be responsible for a business or personal contact, and that, should stand you in good stead. Surprising romantic developments are foretold, so also is a little confusion. Wear the latest, present products or ideas intelligently, and you will win the day, despite opposition and upsets.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

You will be taking the initiative, says Ganesha and within a fortnight, results will start to show. Many of you will be in for new and varied experiences. At group meetings, debates and conferences, your views will be heard with respect. Romance is in the air. Just this week go slow on hard work.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

The contacts you develop should serve you well for a long time. Finances are strongly emphasised and so are personal affairs. You may have to do some tight rope walking between the two. October 22-23 show the way the wind will blow for you. Health of elders may cause concern.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

While certain things do need to be sorted out, or straightened out, rest assured, you will be able to do it, within just 27 days, and then, there should be quiet contentment about it. Group activity, a touch of classy romance makes you happy. There could be a temporary falling out with colleagues.

Aquarius
January 20 -- February 18

The law of averages will help you to get lucky. Foreign lands and distant places will beckon you. These in sales, teaching, arts and crafts, philosophy and meditation, business and industry come rightfully into their own. Just be careful if riding, driving or swimming. Travel is a distinct possibility.

Pisces
February 19 -- March 20

A bout of passion awaits you. Stay clear from financial transactions which are shady and are of doubtful value. Avoid stale food. At gatherings and socials, you will be happy and popular. Travel plans will be finalised. Work will bring rich dividends. Be a little outgoing and bold.

BIRTHDAYS

October 20: Moon conjunction Uranus helps you to be inspirational and bold, says Ganesha. Children, hobbies, creative pursuits give much pleasure.

October 21: Moon trine Mercury helps public figures like teachers, politicians, judges, lawyers, actors, playwrights, musicians and so on.

October 22: The planetary positions indicate that a major change in your life is likely. Be cautious while signing deeds and documents. Friends will be of immense help.

October 23: Moon sextile Venus means opportunities will knock at your door. Those in government service, beauty salons, politics, acting, and music have it made. This is a fine year to take chances.

October 24: Moon conjunction Saturn trine Pluto could bring about depression and difficulties in alliances or relationships. But Pluto effect should do much to nullify it.

October 25: Venus trine Neptune is an excellent formation for artists, writers, managers and those in travel and trade. Otherwise also, you will make the right moves.

October 26: Saturn trine Pluto indicates a long term gain and advantages. The next three months will also be lucky for you. Many of your plans will come true.

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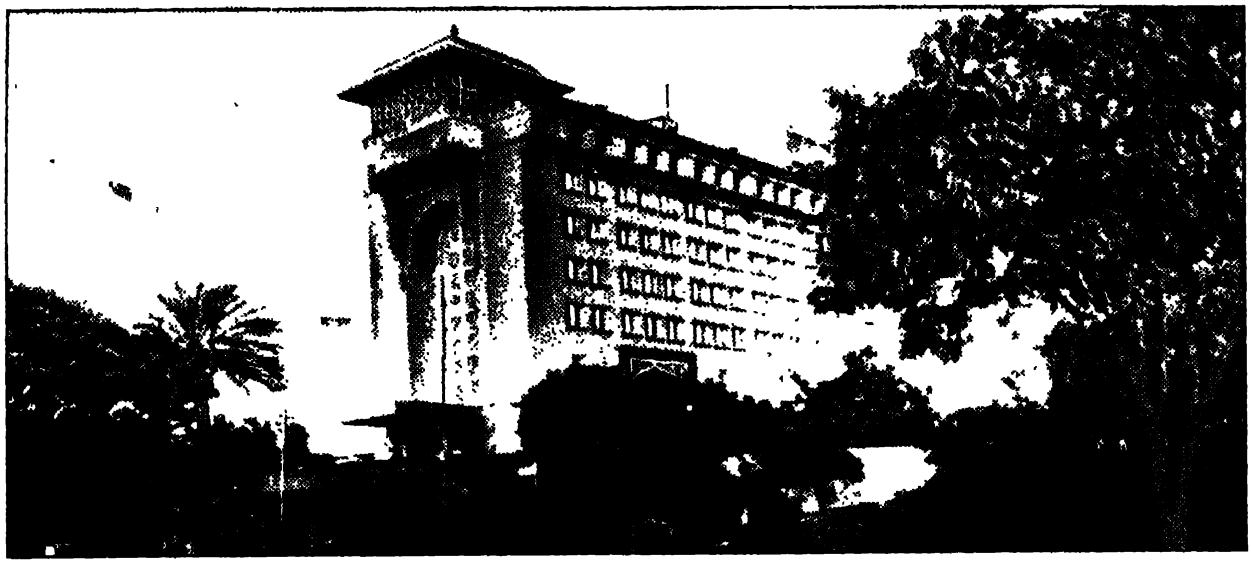

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- Hotel Jammu Ashok
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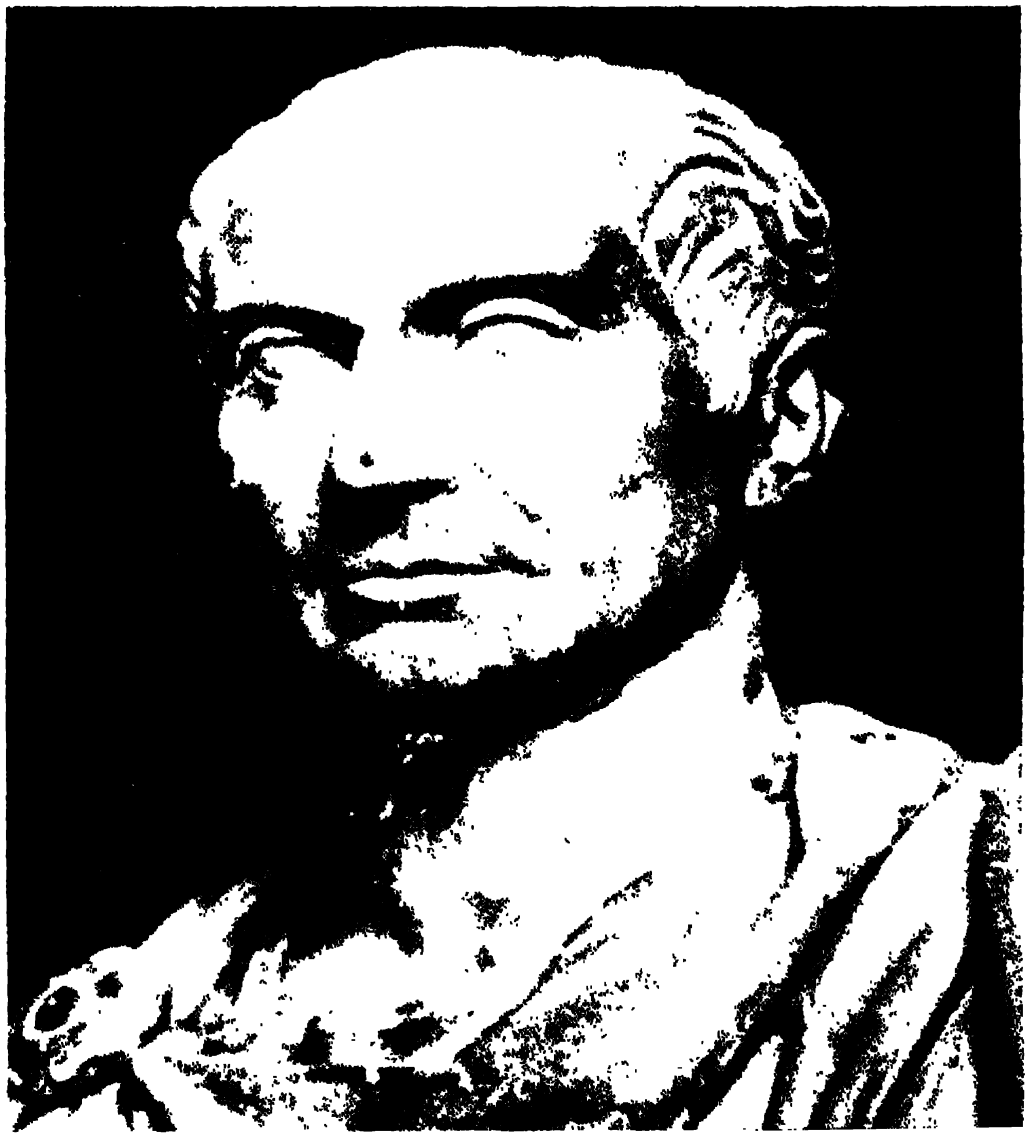
EXTRACT

Anthony and CLEOPATRA

An extract from ***Achala Moulik****'s novel,* Kings, Queens & Lovers, *resurrecting royal romances, from Cleopatra to Diana*

Cleopatra is perhaps the most fascinating queen of all times. She had all the ingredients of success—beauty, a sharp mind, a keen intellect and erudition, a great capacity to captivate, and even a greater talent for intrigue and manipulation, which she used for attaining her ambition. But in the end, like Mary, Queen of Scots, her very ambition to rule a great realm was her downfall. It is always a surprise to find that those who live so closely attuned to power do not always perceive its destruc-

A bust of Julius Caesar



Extracted from *Kings, Queens & Lovers*
by Achala Moulik
Published by UBSPD
Price Rs 165

Elizabeth Taylor in a still from *Anthony and Cleopatra*

tive potential.

It is tempting to speculate what might have been the fate of Cleopatra and the empire of Egypt if she had been the wife of Julius Caesar instead of his disciple Mark Anthony.

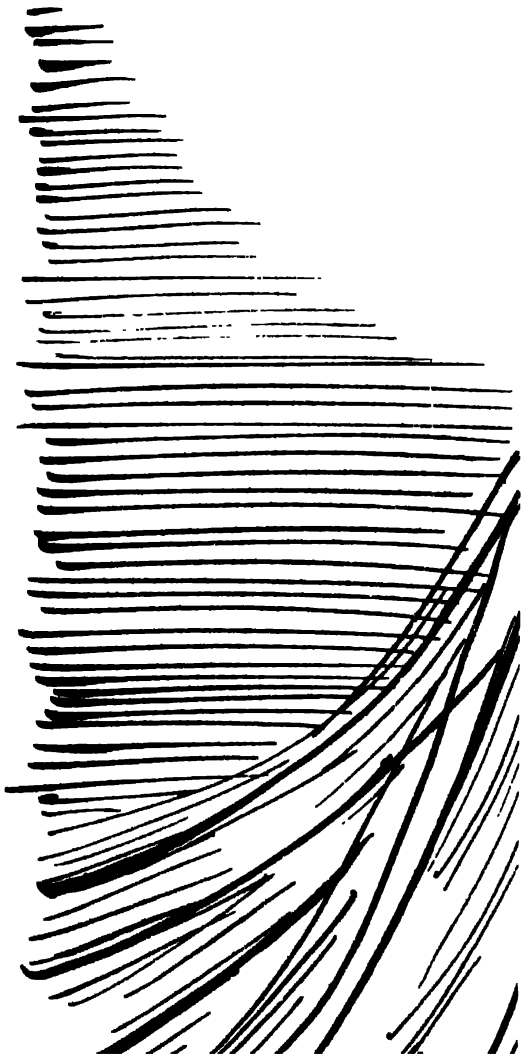
Macedonia had produced the great emperor Alexander, who had established the city of Alexandria on Egypt's northern coast as he marched to India. A century later, a Macedonian named Ptolemy made Alexandria his capital and ruled the land of the pharoahs. The line he founded became the Ptolemic dynasty of Egypt. For a century the Macedonians ruled Egypt with vigour and competence but as in other cases, exposure to oriental luxury and vices undermined their energy and abilities. Their inertia and enervation invited the Romans whose republican domain expanded with an eye on markets, and Alexander's dream of a world-empire

Julius Caesar, the greatest ruler of Rome, arrived in Alexandria in 46 B.C., when the young Ptolemy XII and his sister Cleopatra were decreed as joint monarchs of Egypt In time, according to the custom of Pharoahs, she would marry her brother, and beget another Ptolemy of pure Macedonian blood. This pure blood also produced intemperance and immoderation, which could obliterate the cooler and steadier qualities of the mind.

Julius Caesar saw a young and beautiful princess with an impressive education, a talent for speaking Greek, Egyptian, Syrian and a knowledge of classical literature and philosophy. She displayed better administrative and financial acumen than her brother and yet could array herself in gorgeous garments and ornaments that dazzled the austere Romans Sensing Clepatra's superior powers and ambitions, her brother Ptolemy XII banished her from Alexandria. Hearing of this Julius Caesar sent for her and she came ingenuously swaddled in quilts. He was impressed by her courage and intelligence and commanded Ptolemy to take her back on the throne.

In the insurrection that followed Caesar fought back from the royal palace; part of the fighting led to the destruction of the famous library of Alexandria. In this time of trouble, young Cleopatra remained a loyal ally When Caesar once more established order he arranged the exile (or assassination) of Ptolemy XII, and set Cleopatra on the thrones of the Pharoahs with a younger brother Ptolemy XIII. Cleopatra became the supreme ruler of Egypt.

Even an astute ruler like Caesar lost his heart to the entrancing Queen. Despite growing unrest in Rome he stayed behind to dally with Cleopatra, feasting all night with her on the royal barge. At the end of nine months, Cleopatra bore the



great Roman a son who was called Caesarion. Like many women after her, Cleopatra's great dreams of aggrandisement began with a birth of a son. She conveyed her desire to Caesar—of uniting the Mediterranean world under the throne of the pharoahs.

Julius Caesar was no Mark Anthony. He realised how his long absence from Rome had stirred Pompey, Caelius and Milo to revolt and the Roman garrisons in the Levant, and Asia Minor to mutiny. In a series of bold moves, he quelled the insurrections and mutinies to restore order and turn his attention to administration and legislation

In his triumphal return to Rome, Caesar brought Cleopatra and Caesarion with him when Romans scrutinised both her beauty and alien status Cleopatra was installed in the mansion of Doria Pamphilia—not far from the present Borghese gardens. Here, in enforced idleness, Cleopatra wrote treatises on cosmetics and recipes for beauty. When a Roman matron asked her how she managed to keep her skin fair and unblemished, she advised the lady to bathe in ass' milk which she claimed to do herself . "There are plenty of asses in Rome," she twittered. Cleopatra's diaphanous dresses and exotic hair styles were soon avidly copied by other women. For shopkeepers and merchants she gave discourses on weights and measures.

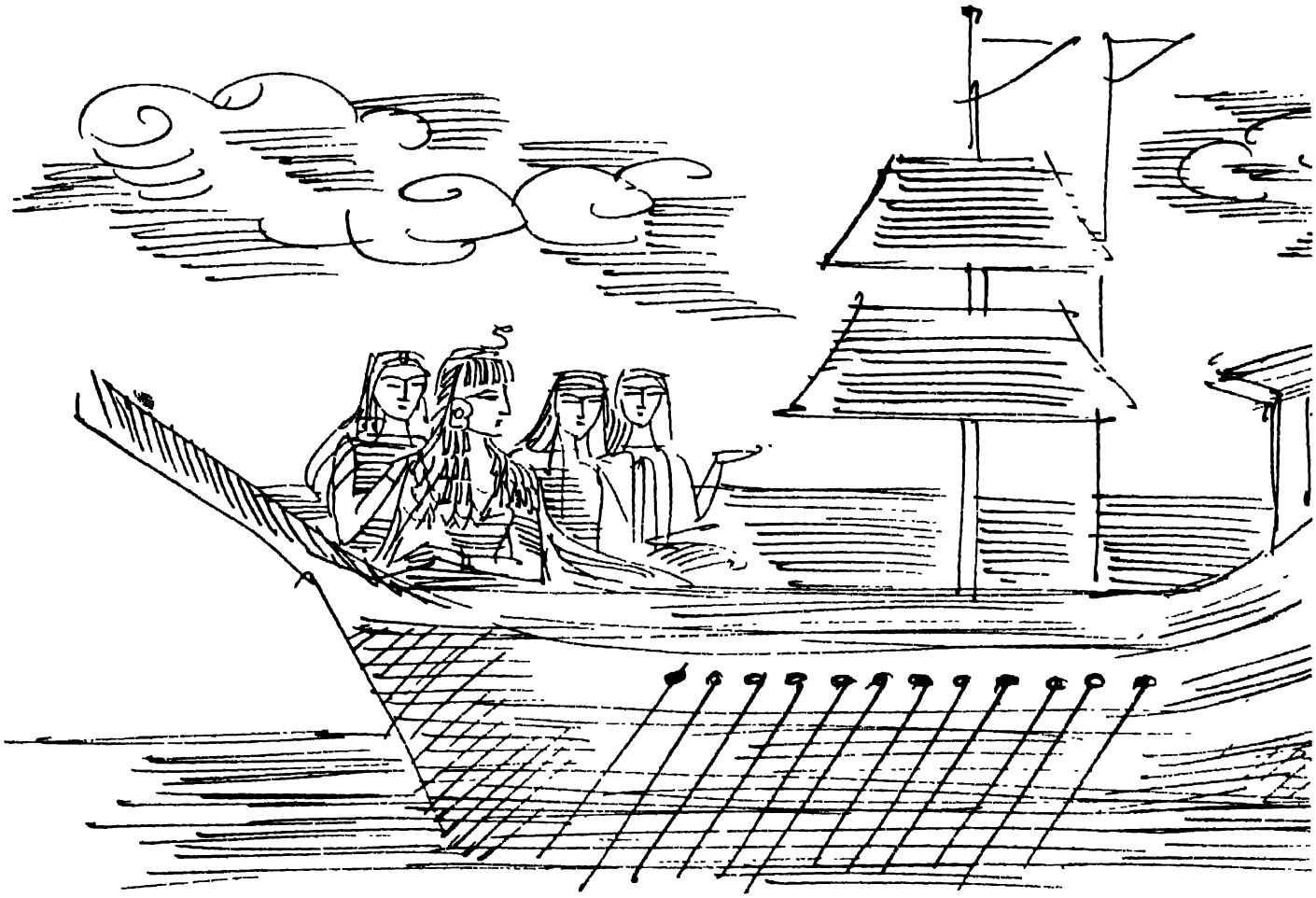
However, these were mere diversions; as Caesar's mistress and Egypt's queen, she never stopped intriguing. Indeed, Cleopatra both fascinated and frightened Romans with her ambition and the desire to take Julius Caesar to Alexandria which would become the capital of the Roman empire.

Caesar, however, had no intention to comply with Cleopatra's designs. He lived in outward harmony with his wife Calpurnia and strove to restore Rome to its full glory, laying the foundation of the great Augustan age of Julius Caesar's grand nephew Octavian.

Reformers are not popular with those who have enjoyed privileges that are abolished and wealth which is redistributed. Though popular with the people, Julius Caesar's reforms and administrative measures infuriated the Patricians who sought to restrain him. Since no other means was possible to do this, a group of conspirators decided to remove Caesar by assassination.

Shakespeare has immortalised the plot of Brutus, Cassius and Casca which arranged the murder of one of the greatest rulers of the world who was both statesman and administrator, scholar and soldier, hedonist and humanist.

In the chaos that followed, Caesar's two heirs—Caius Octavian and Marcus Anthonius who destroyed the conspirators and divided Caesar's realm between them. Octavian inherited Caesar's statesmanship while Anthony possessed Caesar's gifts of a commander. Underneath their temporary truce lay a deep conflict as to who would inherit Caesar's mantle. Lepidus, a general, and the third triumvir, was given Africa, Octavian took the Western empire while Anthony took Egypt, Greece and the Levant.



Egypt brought Anthony into contact with Cleopatra Flushed with success and territories, Anthony arrived in Alexandria and sent for Cleopatra She kept him waiting for a while and then came sailing up the Nile on a gilded barge fluttering with silken sails and attended by band maidens dressed as nymphs

The Roman general was enthralled and captivated, literally by the Graeco—Egyptian queen. He forgot he had an empire to govern and dallied with Cleopatra at Alexandria With a folly, rulers can scarcely afford, Mark Anthony mixed politics with romance While Anthony gave his heart to Cleopatra, he used his love to acquire Phoenicia, Syria, Cyprus, Cilicia, Judaea and part of Arabia. Her ultimate design was to bring Rome to Alexandria and to control Anthony as a consort.

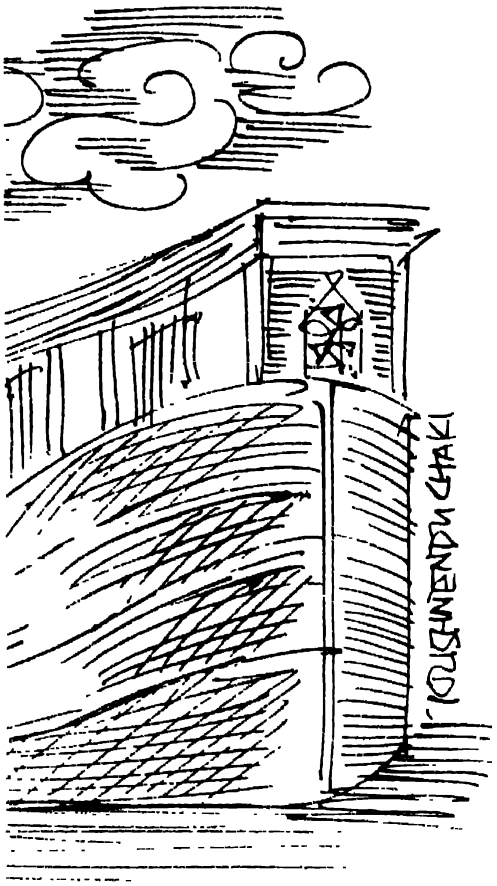
In Rome, Anthony's wife, Fulvia, was trying to undermine the power and authority of Octavian and raised a revolt against him which Octavian's general Agrippa quelled. Fulvia died of exhaustion and heartache over Anthony's faithlessness. Taking advantage of this, Anthony came to Rome and married Octavian's sister, Octavia, whose modesty and kindness was a total contrast to Cleopatra's ruthlessness and ambition With this marriage, Anthony hoped to disarm his rival Octavian

But Cleopatra had truly enthralled Anthony After a brief spell of harmonious domesticity with Octavia, Anthony left her in Rome and returned to Cleopatra and Alexandria where they began to raise armies for further conquests He took the step which brought his latent hostility to Octavian in the open; Anthony divorced Octavia and made Cleopatra his new wife, establishing her and Caesarion as co-rulers of Egypt, and his children by Cleopatra as his heirs. Octavian and Rome suspected that Cleopatra would use Anthony to rule Rome. Octavian declared war on Cleopatra but in effect on Anthony.

The two navies met at Actium near Naples Bay where Octavian defeated the combined forces of Anthony and Cleopatra who retreated with her fleet towards Alexandria Anthony knew that all was lost

He sent offers of truce to Octavian but the victorious triumvirs did not need such offers Octavian marched towards Egypt. Cleopatra sent Octavian offers of peace and a golden crown as a token of submission. Octavian replied that he would leave her and Egypt untouched if she would surrender Anthony to him or have him assassinated.

While Cleopatra considered this offer, Anthony wrote to Octavian and offered to surrender his own life if Octavian spared Cleopatra. Even now, the gallant Anthony refused to betray the woman who would not have hesitated to betray him. Certain of victory, Octavian marched towards Alexandria Anthony gathered a small force and gained a small victory. Overwhelmed and awed by the spectacle of Octavian's vast forces, Cleopatra's soldiers surrendered. Hearing that his beloved queen had committed suicide, Anthony stabbed himself but hearing it was a false report he implored his last adherants to take him to the palace tower wher Cleopatra had enclosed herself with her hand maidens—Charmion and Iris, and her vast treasures The wounded Anthony was pulled up to the tower on a basket. There, in the arms of the woman who had bewitched him to



destruction. Anthony died

Octavian allowed Cleopatra to bury her consort the brilliant triumvir who could become an Augustus Caesar— had he not been enamoured of and enslaved by Cleopatra who had used him only to further her own ambition to rule Rome

Not even Mark Anthony's death daunted Cleopatra She was still queen of Egypt and wanted to protect her realm and her interests It was this what had been of paramount interest, which had been the motive for her alliance with Caesar and then with Anthony She had loved neither Julius Caesar nor Mark Anthony. They had been her means to attain glory and power but she had not been content with the prize that Anthony had brought her Cleopatra had wanted more power Being queen of Egypt was not enough; she wanted to be Empress of Rome as well And it was this dream which had brought about the destruction of Anthony

Now, aged thirty-nine, no longer the voluptuous beauty who had dazzled Caesar and enslaved Anthony, Cleopatra sought and was granted an audience with Octavian

It was Cleopatra's hope that she would be able to win concessions from this Roman general as she had with his grand-uncle Julius Caesar and later with Anthony. Indeed, she felt that with Caesar's son Caesarion as a pawn, Octavian would find it difficult to harm the Egyptian queen whose son Caesarion was after all a cousin and kinsman of Octavian.Cleopatra nursed the plan of wresting the mantle of Julius Caesar through Caesarion

So came Cleopatra, dressed in finest silks and jewels with traces still of her great beauty Dignified and charming, she refused, however, to do obeisance before the pale, cold, unimpressive man of thirty-three. Octavian saw in her, as he had seen from the beginning, a threat to his dominion, and not the entrancing siren to whom Julius Caesar had given his heart and Mark Anthony his head

Coldly, he informed her of the terms of peace, the conditions for leaving her unmolested Cleopatra heard with astonishment the humiliation that he offered, as well as a position of subjugation Shorn of power, dignity, wealth and freedom, she would live in the shadows, an apology to her past Cleopatra gave no indication of her intentions as she left the audience chamber of her own palace. Promising to consider the terms of truce, Cleopatra went to her own chambers where Octavian held her as a virtual prisoner and pondered.

She realised that Octavian was cast in a different mould from either the great Caesar or the dashing Anthony He was all mind, all purpose and strategy, just as she had been in her youth Two such cold-blooded people could not co-exist, she acknowledged, in one kingdom And since she was the vanquished one, Octavian would ensure that never again would she pose a threat to her dominion or his ambitions There had been rumours that he would take her to Rome in his triumphal march, displayed not as the Queen of Egypt as Caesar had done, but as a captive to be scorned.

Dressing in royal robes as a reminder to all of her exalted status, Cleopatra decided on suicide Since all weapons had been removed for such eventuality, she had arranged to have small serpants of asps brought in with a basket of figs Placing one on her breasts, she waited for death with the calm majesty that she had possessed all her life

Octavian found her deadon the gilded throne. He may have paused to muse on the fatality of beauty and the tragedy of ambition But the sight of her death did nothing to soften his heart or halt his purpose.

The future Augustus Caesar who presided over the greatest age of Rome began his reign by a series of murders First he sent orders to Rome to arrange the death of the eldest son of Mark Anthony by his first wife Fulvia since this youth of twenty-two could challenge the hegemony of Octavian and ask for his father's inheritance Then, the future emperor sent his emissaries to search for eighteen-year-old Caesarion, who was a fugitive in the Nubian desert There the emissaries found the youth and brought him back to Octavian who saw for the first time his own cousin, the son of Julius Caesar, by Cleopatra, who could claim the Roman empire for himself as well as Egyptian kingdom The boy was executed at once, leaving Octavian as the master of Rome

Cleopatra's dreams had ended in tragedy for herself, her beloved son, and Mark Anthony Unlike many queens who allowed themselves the luxury of love only to be destroyed by it, Cleopatra's head always dictated her actions Nevertheless, she had charmed two powerful men and bent them to her will and purpose. Julius Caesar had installed her on the throne of the Pharoahs while Mark Anthony had attempted to bring the Roman empire under the crown of Egypt Even when Anthony had been defeated she had tried to buy peace with Octavian.

Perhaps in the end, it was Cleopatra's tragic fate which concluded the story Perhaps the ending might have been different if a different man had been her adversary. Neither Julius Caesar nor Mark Anthony would have treated her with the cruelty that Octavian did. They were men of passion and romance Octavian was devoid of passion where statecraft was concerned He wanted the empire for himself and tolerated nothing to come in the way of his purpose

From Alexandria, Octavian went to Asia to quell rebellions and then returned to Italy to impose law, discipline and order after two decades of turmoil and civil war The people disliked the loss of freedom but welcomed order and did not protest when Octavian became a virtual dictator as Augustus Caesar and went on to become along with Julius Caesar the greatest ruler of Rome.

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 712	0845	[illegible]
			IC-712	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	[illegible]	120	daily
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AHMEDABAD					
MY-[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	129/[illegible]/301	[illegible]	[illegible]
AIZAWL					
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BANGALORE					
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BHUBANESWAR					
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GUWAHATI					
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HYDERABAD					
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IC 769	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1405	[illegible]
IC-211	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-213	1540	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
MY-304/[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	1300	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
JAMMU					
MY 304/[illegible]	0230	[illegible]	MY 128/301	1900	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
JORHAT					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 257	1550	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	0830	[illegible]	9W 622	1320	[illegible]
LILABARI					
D5 [illegible]	0645	[illegible]	D5 304/302	1635	[illegible]
LUCKNOW					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-811	2100	[illegible]
MADRAS					
D5 [illegible]	0700	[illegible]	IC 541	0940	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily			
MUMBAI					
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			
AI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	AI [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PATNA					
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1820	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-285	1100	[illegible]
RANCHI					
IC-249	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 249	1820	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0700	[illegible]	IC 254	0940	[illegible]
IC 255	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 256	1405	[illegible]
TEZPUR					
IC 214	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 213	1540	[illegible]
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	[illegible]	D5 406	1835	[illegible]
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5 401	0700	[illegible]	IC 541	0930	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
IC 542	1015	[illegible]	D5 401	1230	[illegible]

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ 185	[illegible]	4	RJ 184	0700	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL-876	[illegible]	[illegible]	KL-87	[illegible]	[illegible]
BANGKOK					
B 105	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 106	1020	[illegible]
B 105	[illegible]	1	KB 106	1240	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	TG [illegible]	1240	[illegible]
			IC-732	1505	2, 5
IC-855	1105	[illegible]	IC 856	1730	4, 7
TG 311	1355	[illegible]			
AI 306	1910	[illegible]	AI 309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2140	[illegible]	RO-075	1100	5, 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC [illegible]	0700	1	IC-226	0920	

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG 698	1735	2, 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2 3, 6 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2 3 6, 7
IC 723	1300	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1 2, 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1 2, 3, 5, 6 7
BG 094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1000	3	Q7-060	1230	2
[illegible]					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC-747	1035	1 2, 4 6	IC-746	1350	1 2 4, 6
[illegible]					
BA 142	2115	3, 7	BA 143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
SU-538	2100	4	SU 537	0930	4
[illegible]					
KB-106	1105	7	KB 105	0810	2
KB 106	1325	5	KB 105	1210	4
[illegible]					
BI-108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	2 5	SQ 416	2230	2 5
[illegible]					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
[illegible]					
AI-306	1910	5	AI 305	182	6
[illegible]					
IC 227	1530	4 7	IC 228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	14 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	2317
[illegible]	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7 55	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13 00	3004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya-Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2368
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2301
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2309	13 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12 50	2301
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4 40	2308
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shalabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tue Wed & Sat	11 [illegible]	3074
3019	[illegible]	**Guwahati Samjhauta Express** Dep Tues Wed & Sat, Arr Tue Fri & Sat	12 25	3046
5044	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
5044	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon, Wed & Fri	4 30	5046
3009	[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	[illegible]	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3039	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5 15	3040
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21 00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
5659	17 25	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3231	[illegible]	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3232
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santhiliaan Express**	15 40	3016
3017	5 45	**Rampurhat Express**	21 45	3018
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon, Tue & Thurs, Arr Mon, Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun, Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 15	1172
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-30	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri, Arr Tues	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	14-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20 15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5-15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kaliber Express**	4 15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5185	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr, Tues, Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 15	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	10 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2806	12 25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 30	2809
2021	8 00	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20 30	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 40	8033
8030	10 45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	14 00	**Coromandal (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12-20	2842
7001	7 50	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19 40	7004
6511	22 35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6512
8013	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8011	6 50	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	21-35	8012
8005	20-40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21 35	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	5 20	8016
8007	22 00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
3409	11 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 40	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	11 15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 20	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12 05	8018
8079	15 40	**Tirupati Express**	4-15	8080
1030	15-40	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep Sunday Arr Friday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah Sunday only	16 10	2421
2412	11 10	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah Saturday only	10-45	2422
6320	2 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	22 15	
	14 30	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13-45	6321
	11 50	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	15 45	6313
6314	2 30	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	-
6324	22-35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep & Arr Tuesday	13 45	6323
6316	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	22 15	
	14-10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13-45	6519

ENQUIRIES. For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 136 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday) For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry)

BODIES OF EVIDENCE

***Geeta Sharma** examines the state of our cultural institutions; and finds them sadly lacking*

A couple of years ago, Bhaskar Ghosh, the then secretary of the department of culture, had remarked at a seminar in Delhi "I and my colleagues in the government are indeed of the view that the department of culture should be allowed to wither away. We agree that the artistic community should be given the responsibility of running cultural institutions directly."

Today, given the prevalent situation in most cultural bodies in the national capital alone, his statement — a rare one coming from a government official — sounds very ironic indeed. After all, these days the bureaucrats in the department of culture (DoC) in Delhi, from the secretary downwards, are holding charge of one or the other premier cultural institution that has been lying headless for years now.

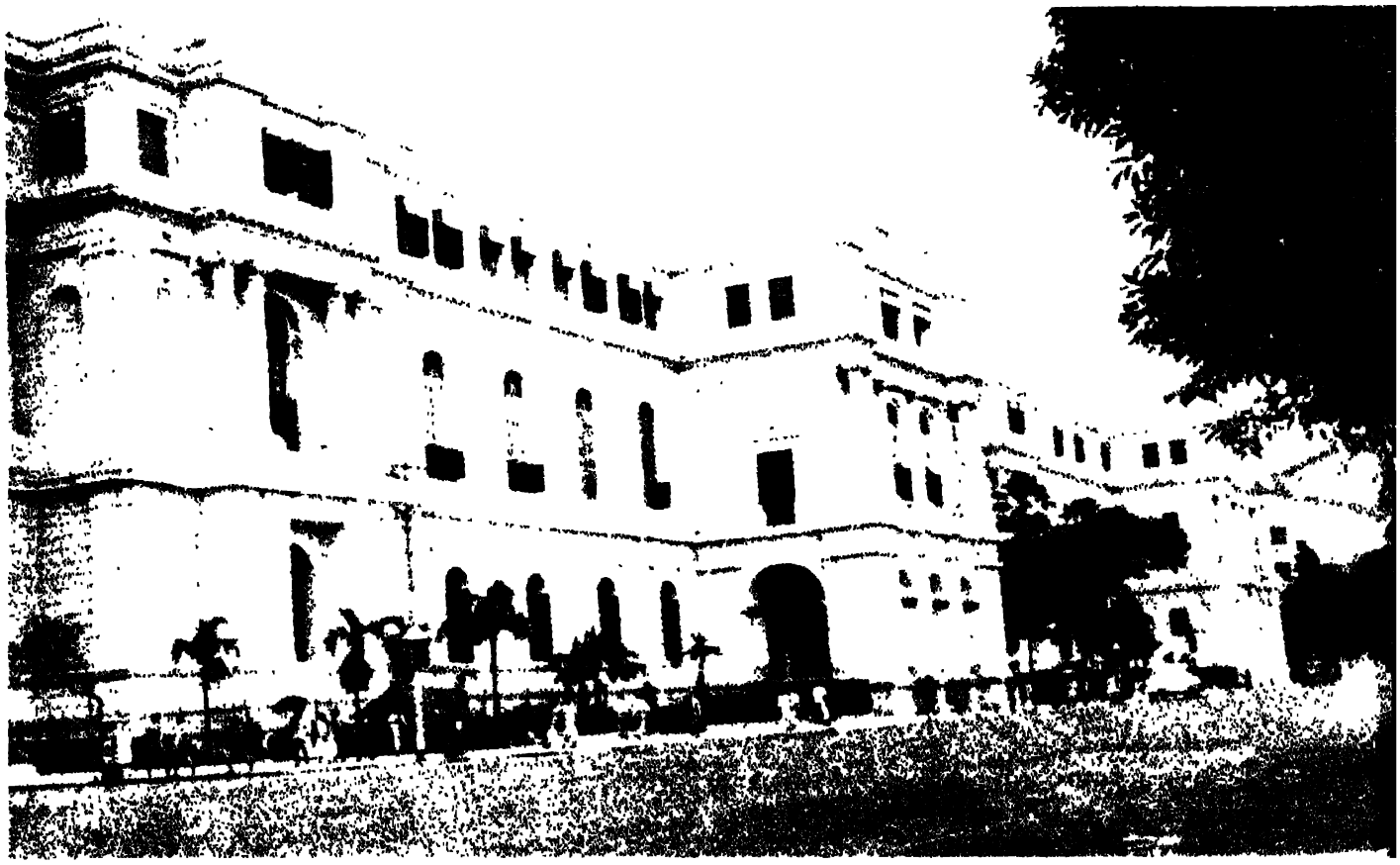
The present culture secretary, B.P Singh, is officiating as the director general of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) while the joint secretary, Ashok Vajpeyi, is overseeing the affairs of the beleaguered Lalit Kala Akademi, which is without a chairman and a duly selected secretary. Anjali Sen, deputy director in the ministry is officiating as the director of the National Gallery of Modern Art

The National Museum, the repository of the nation's priceless artifacts, is the only exception as the director general's post, lying vacant for over two years, was filled a couple of months ago with the appointment of Dr S.S Biswas, the previous head of the Indian Museum, at its helm But there is a catch here too, for his appointment has been challenged in court by a host of cultural luminaries in the capital, on technical grounds

The situation is a sad pointer to the government's ad hoc approach to culture As eminent artist Krishen Khanna laments. "Culture in the government's list of priorities is relegated to a lowly place It's only worth it for them in its entertainment value, its adage like quality to be fitted in as a filler in political entertainment sessions "

More relevantly, it leads one to question whether our archaeologists

Indian Museum: Housing some of the country's most precious artifacts



museologists and artists are not competent to run the bodies and institutions where they have been working and training for years and are acknowledged international experts. Also it makes people wonder how does a government decide that, in the absence of administratively competent people around, the official pen pushers are better placed to understand not only the administrative but also the technical and creative side of the profession.

The present mess can at least partly be explained by the strange and incomprehensible recruitment and promotion rules which have led to a catch 22 situation in these institutions. According to the rules, which are overseen and enforced by the Union Public Service Commission, anyone appointed to the top post has to serve for a certain number of years in the post just below it — as an additional DG or Deputy DG — to become eligible for the top post.

But thanks again to the faulty promotional procedures, not many have been able to make it, leaving a big gap between the top and the middle rung hierarchies. As a consequence, even professionals competent enough to head the bodies cannot do so on technical grounds. After some bad publicity in recent times, the ministry set in motion a recruitment reform process with a view to get around the rules strictly upheld by the UPSC which oversees the recruitments. But when that will actually come through is anybody's guess.

Culture secretary B P. Singh, who took over last year, says he is

J. Swaminathan: Artist and a good administrator

harat Bhavan: The Museum of Man was successfully run by an artist, J. Swaminathan

foxed why none of his predecessors suggested the setting up of a separate cadre for various cultural institutions to prevent such a situation from arising again. Singh has himself mooted the idea to the Pay Commission and the Planning Commission, both of which, according to him, have reacted favourably to it.

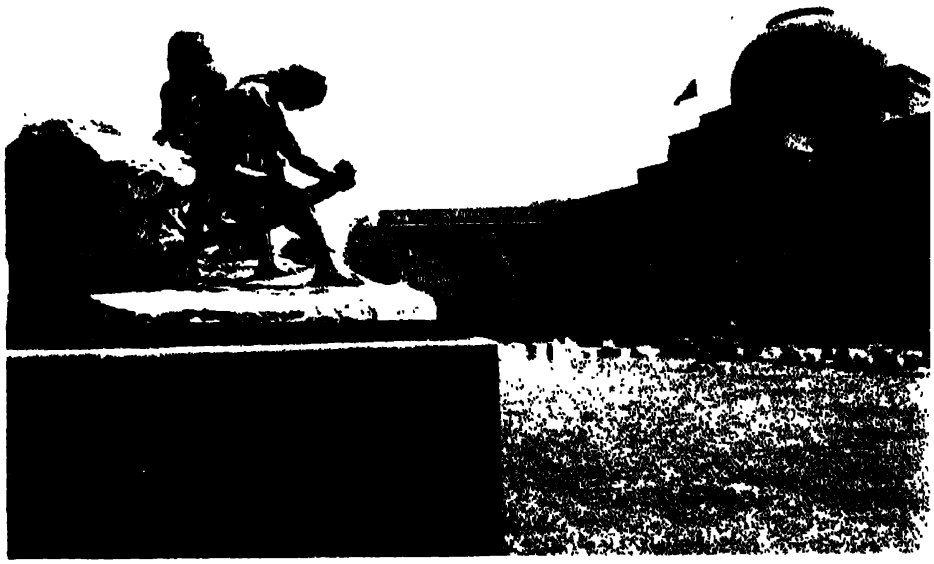
To be fair, though, not many in the artists' community have opted to raise a voice against the vacuum. Some, in fact, have even supported the idea of civil servants running such institutions if need be. Anjolie Ela Menon, for instance, who says : "I don't think there should be any principle that bureaucrats can't run an art institution and that only artists or museologists should. In fact I don't think that it is an artist's job to run an institution in the first place because it involves mainly administrative work. That is not to say that there cannot be exceptions like J. Swaminathan who successfully ran the Museum of Man at the Bharat Bhavan "

Ram Kumar, another eminent artist, voices similar views when he says that a creative person is so enmeshed in his creativity and attuned to his own ideological viewpoint, that he may not be the right person to run the day-to-day affairs of an organisation " The likes of Krishen Khanna and J. Swaminathan may have that capability too, but not the Tyeb Mehtas, Akbar Padamsees, and Ram Kumars," he adds

But not everyone feels this way. "For the bureaucrats, the experience of heading such prestigious institutions with all the accompanying glamour and media attention, is like having tasted blood and they are then unwilling to give way to those who deserve to be at the helm here," says a Delhi based artist requesting anonymity.

"For all practical purposes, these institutions are being run the way a bureaucrat would run them — like government offices," adds Pupul Jayakar, the high profile cultural luminary and former head of the Festivals of India Committee. And there are many who would agree with her.

The controversy, earlier this year, over M.F. Husain taking objection to the appointment of poet-bureaucrat Ashok Vajpeyi as the chairman of the Bharat Bhavan trust, is only one such manifestation of this feeling. Husain at a press conference during his visit to Bhopal for the birthday celebrations of Bharat Bhavan, had reportedly threatened to resign. He said bureaucrats should not be selected for such posts as they have little knowledge and understanding of art and culture.



National Gallery of Modern Art: Has seen some good initiatives being taken

Pupul Jayakar: Against bureaucratic control

Vajpeyi, of course, lost no time in setting the record straight. He pointed out that he had not been made part of Bharat Bhavan (which he, among other personalities, had helped set up in the first place) in his official capacity but was nominated to the body in his capacity as a writer poet.

Such protests apart, there is little denying the fact that even though there is no 'creative audit' or assessment of the programmes and objectives of these cultural bodies from a creative point of view, all is not well with them.

And one needn't look far for this. The Archaeological Survey of India is the most obvious — and worrisome — example. It has been under bureaucratic rule since 1992. According to the rules, any professional has to first work as an additional DG for at least two years before being appointed as the head of the organisation As no senior archaeologist has been able to fulfill this technical requirement, thanks again to the stiff promotional policies an IAS officer, Ms Achala Maulik, had been at the helm (though as additional DG)

This has, apparently, led to enormous resentment among the archaeologists at the ASI. "Only a professional man can understand the needs and expectations of the ASI. This is not a finance or commerce ministry that anybody can be put in charge," says a former ASI DG, requesting anonymity.

The resentment against a bureaucrat heading it, has already cost the ASI dear, since all excavation work has virtually come to a standstill. The culture secretary, who is officiating as DG, has now brought some semblance of order to the Survey, which had come to be referred to as a torso without head and feet

The only exception to the current scenario is perhaps the NGMA, which has been headed by deputy director

Anjali Sen after the last incumbent Anis Farooqui's sudden death in 1994. Her presence at the helm of the country's premier art gallery, has seen many far reaching initiatives being put into effect. The employees who were virtually up in arms during Farooqui's tenure, describe Sen's presence and approach as a 'healing touch' after the 'dictatorial regime' of Farooqui.

But more than that Sen has initiated work in the second wing of the gallery, a plan that had been almost given up by her predecessors. She has also remained open to the advisory committee of eminent artists, critics and historians in deciding on the exhibitions and purchases by the NGMA, which is now being hailed for its innovative approach

The exceptions notwithstanding, however, it is fair to say that the situation prevalent in most cultural bodies is far from satisfactory. And everybody is agreed that some solutions are needed — and fast.

Lalit Kala Akademi: The artists' 'democracy' which has been reduced to a mobocracy

Bhaskar Ghosh: For artistic freedom

That, of course, does not necessarily mean simply giving over all powers to the artists or museologists. The state of the Lalit Kala Akademi, is a case in point. The Akademi, which is functioning under the so-called 'democracy' of the artists has, according to its critics, turned into a mobocracy controlled by a small group of small-time artists This has, say the Akademi's detractors, alienated those who matter in the art world.

Incidentally, the LKA is the only Akademi, which has refused to accept and implement the Haksar Committee report set up to suggest reforms in the running of the LKA, the Sahitya and the Sangeet Natak Akademis. The Haksar Committee had recommended a multi-pronged strategy — allocation of more resources, delegation of more powers, granting of greater autonomy and better coordination with state academies and more accountability, as an effective formula to put these bodies on their feet.

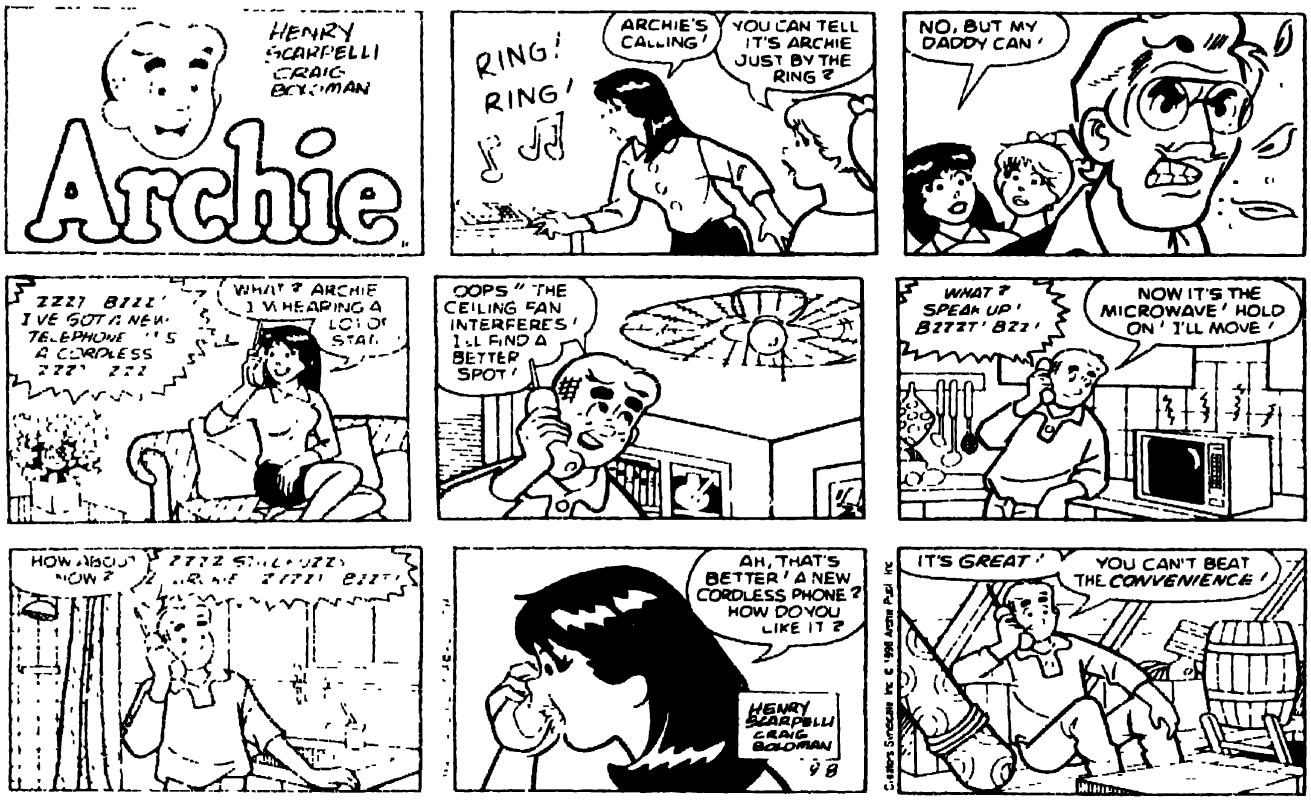
Since not many artists have administrative skills and not all bureaucrats have the creative vision for a head of any cultural institution, Vajpeyi says that what we need is a plurality of people with different skills to manage an institution. "Cultural management will have to become a specialised area in which a number of professionals, or 'artocrats' as the US already has, would have to be involved," he says

The institutes of management should also offer courses in cultural management and corporate houses could also be involved in the venture to provide the infrastructure through their financial support, he suggests. Krishen Khanna also stresses the need for such a cadre of cultural managers. Khanna also feels that art schools like those in Baroda, Delhi, Hyderabad and Madras, could incorporate the administration of culture in their curricula. "Not all those who join these art schools become professional, successful artists. So why can't they be trained instead to become managers of art?" he asks.

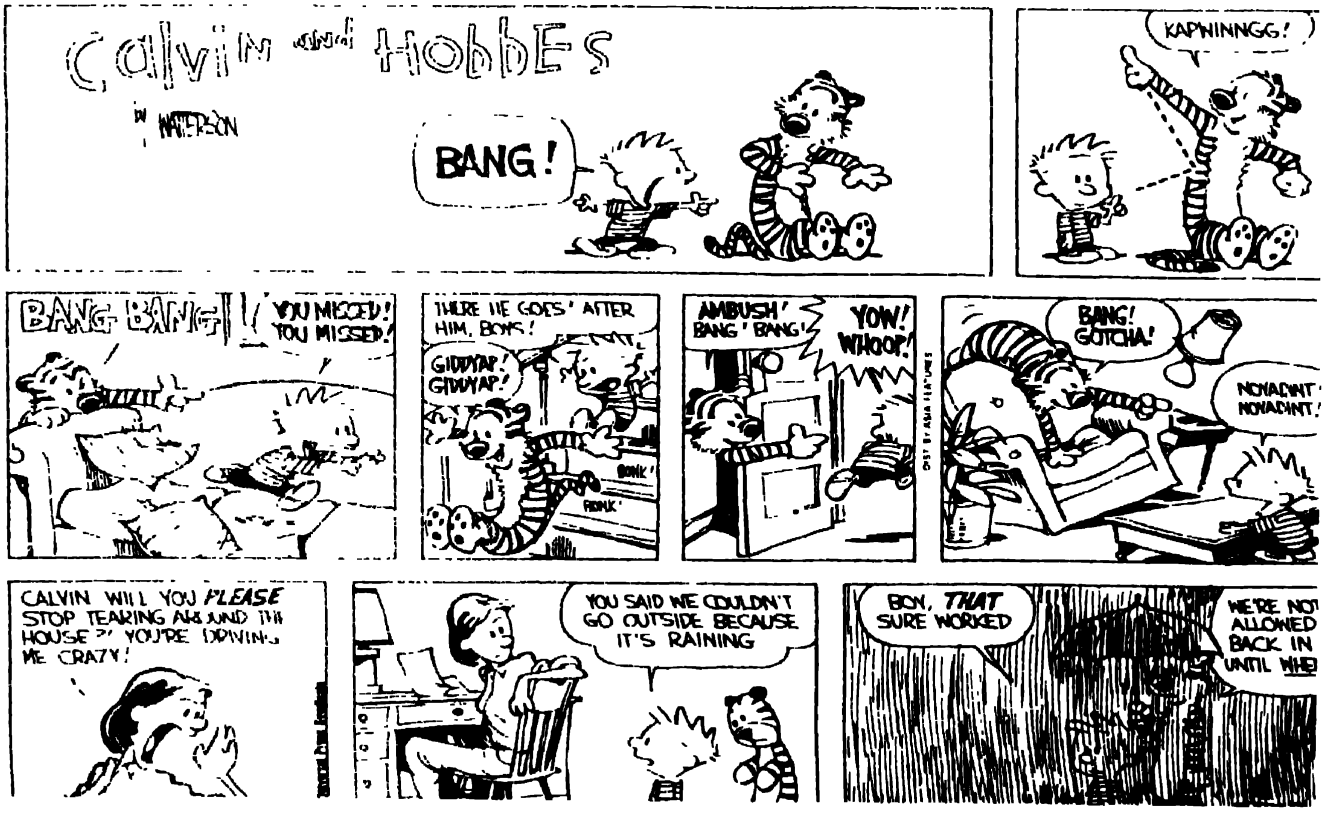
Secure in the confidence that the creative community is of little political significance and incapable of becoming too much of a troublemaker, the government has to date taken a casual, laidback approach to the problems that have beset its management and care. But, warns Pupul Jayakar, if it continues to overlook this vital aspect of our lives, the nation as a whole — not just the artistic community — will suffer a tremendous loss And this may well prove to be quite irreparable in the future. ■

COMICS

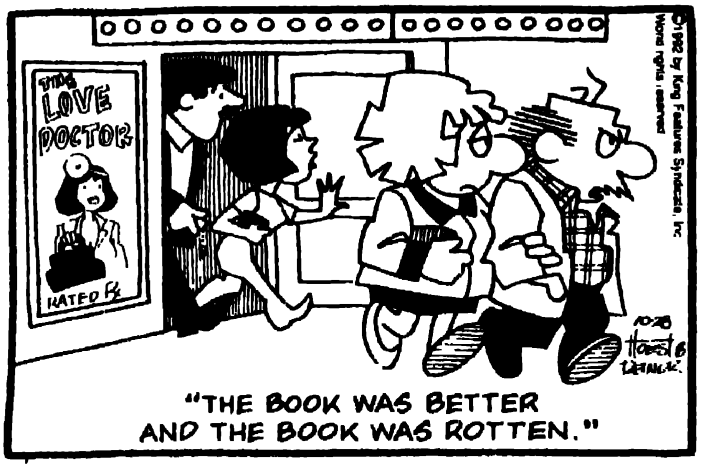
ARCHIE

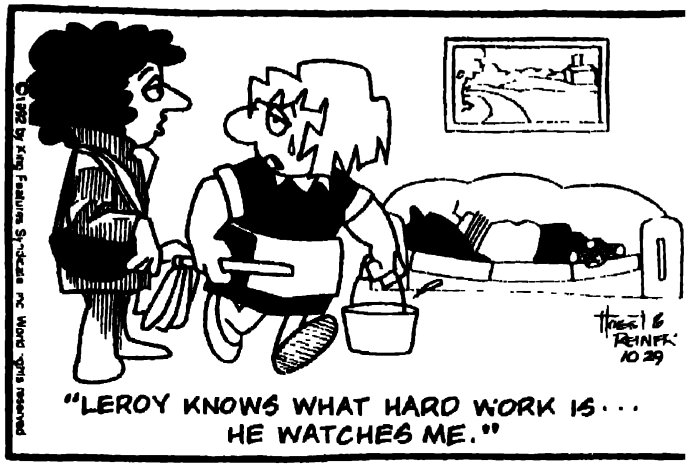


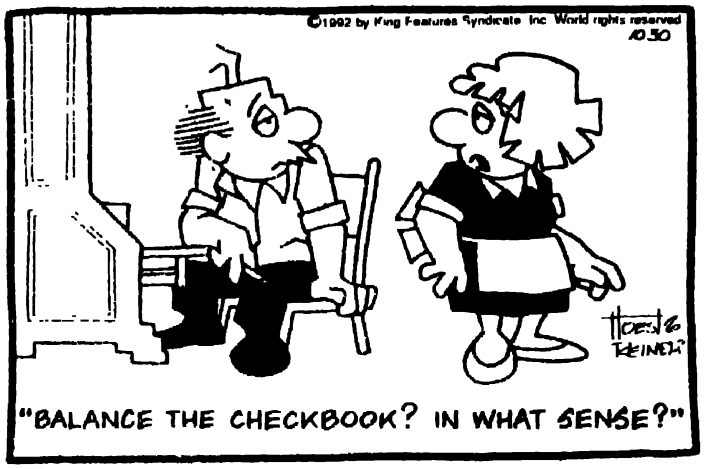
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

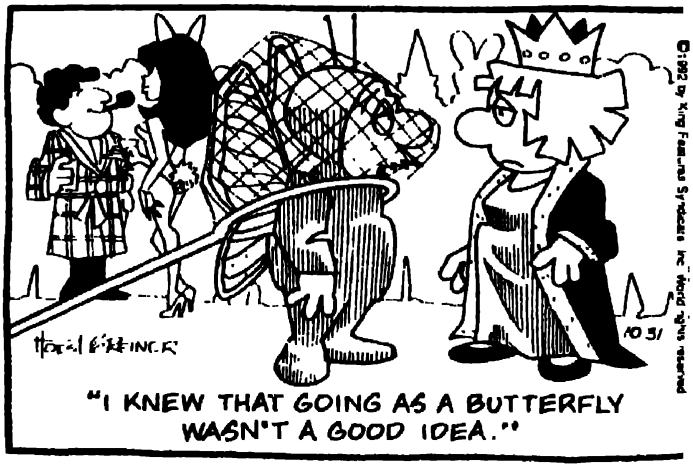


THE LOCKHORNS

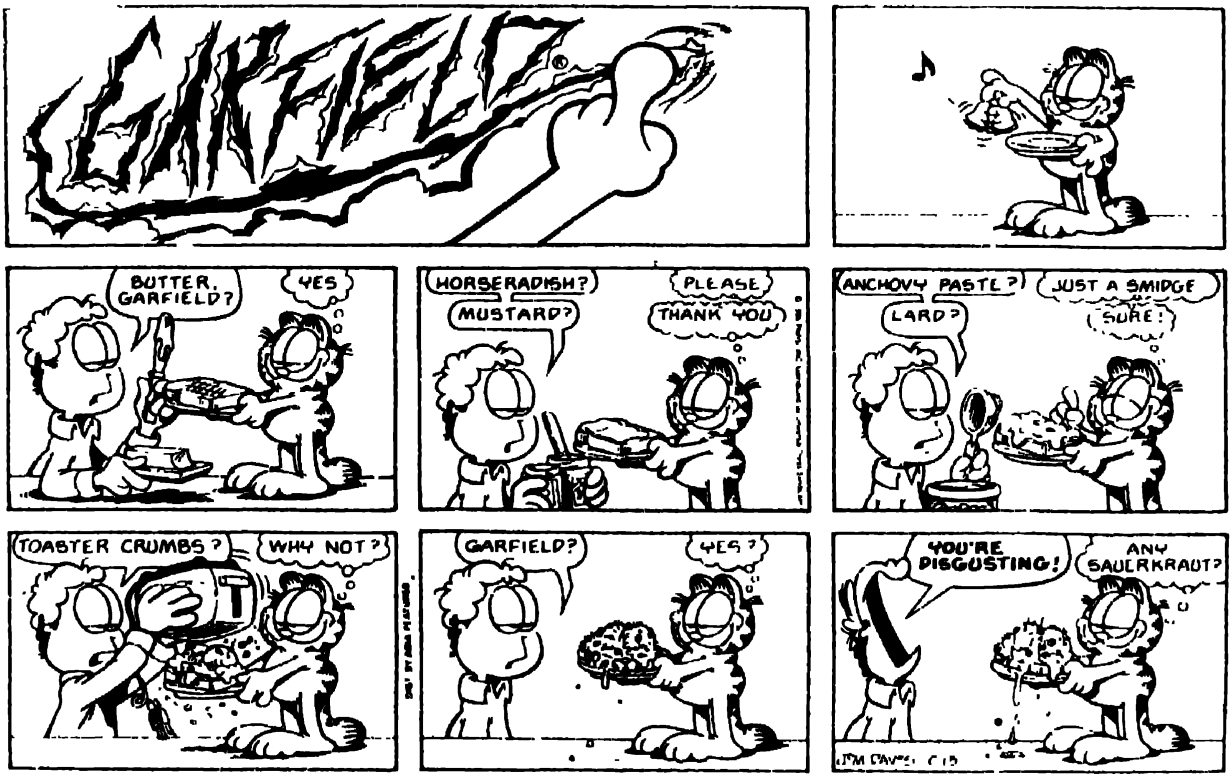




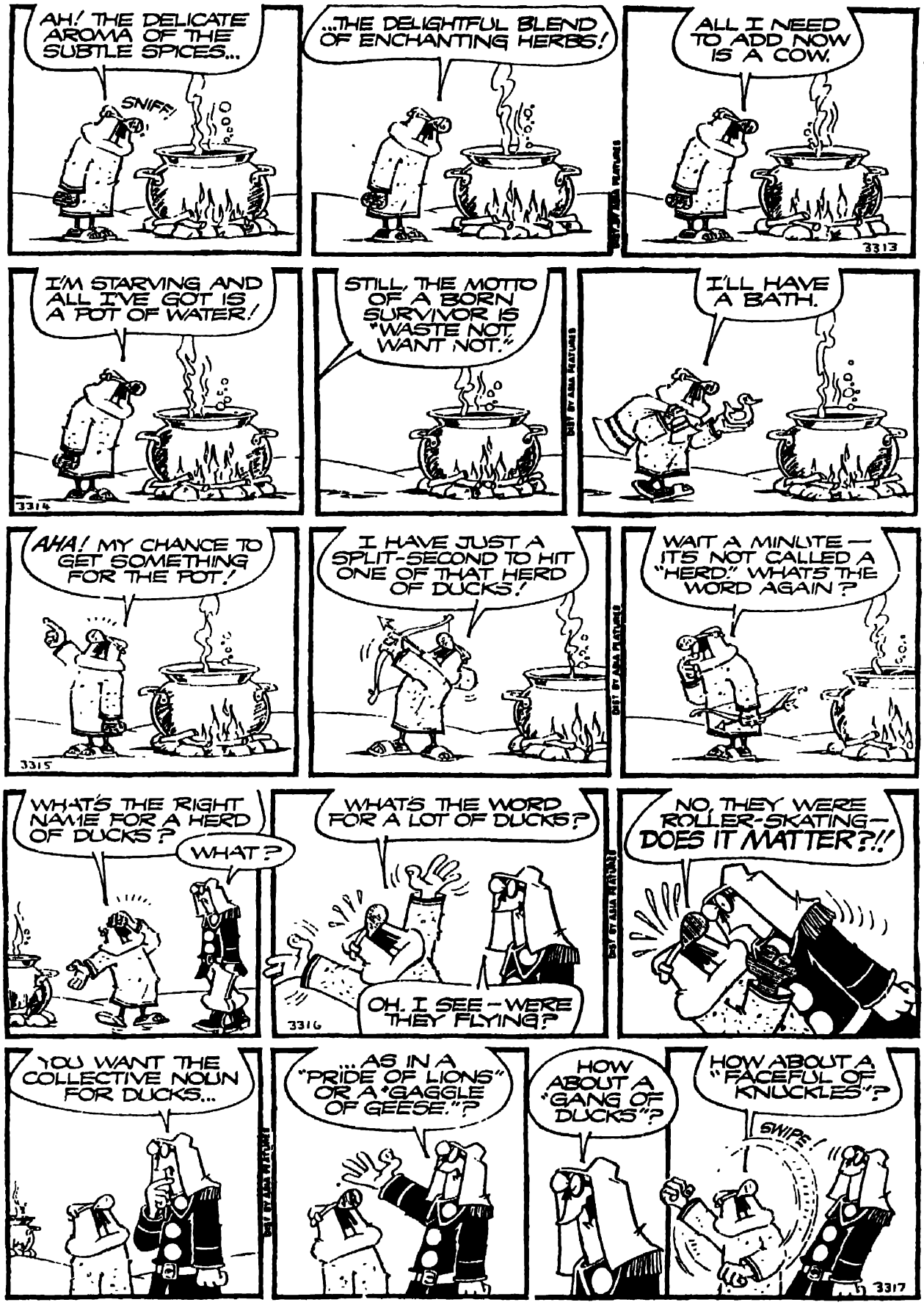


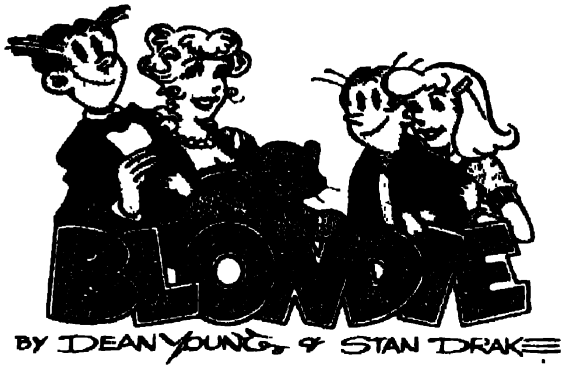


GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



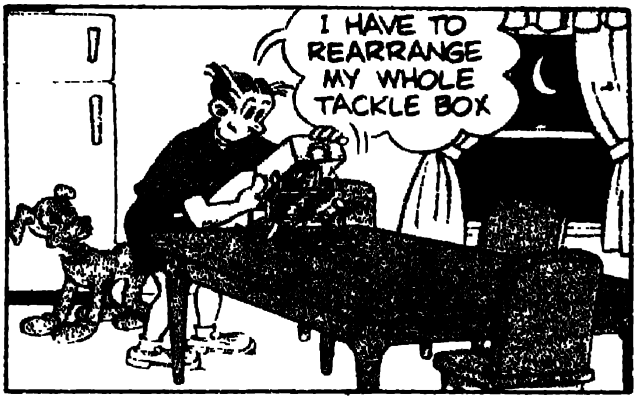
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

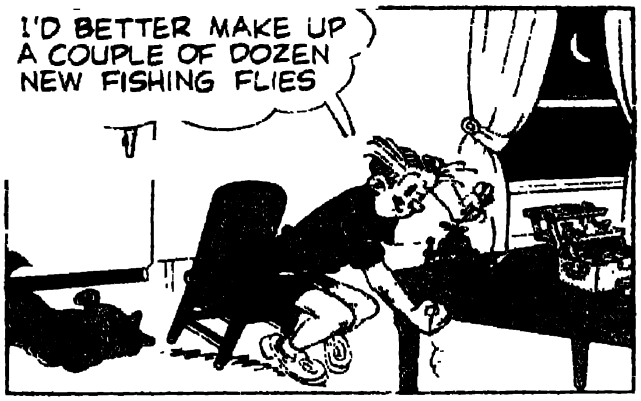


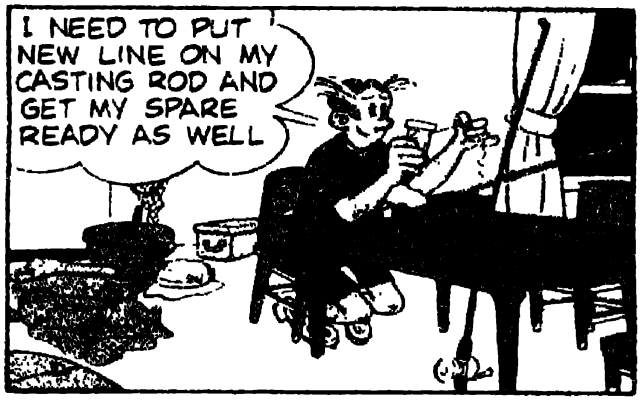

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

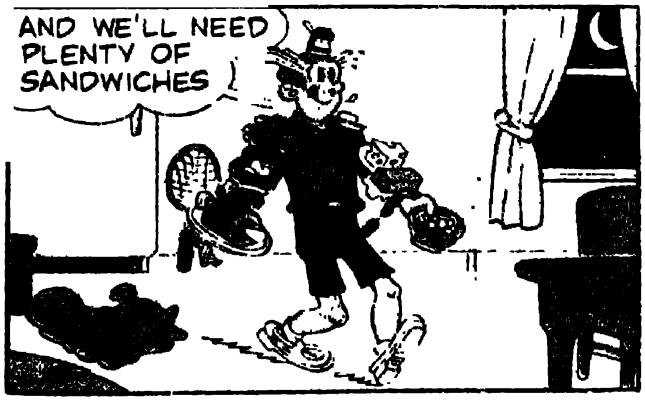
YOU'LL HAVE TO GO UP WITHOUT ME TONIGHT, HONEY

I'M GOING TO STAY UP LATE AND GET READY FOR MY FISHING TRIP TOMORROW


I HAVE TO REARRANGE MY WHOLE TACKLE BOX


I'D BETTER MAKE UP A COUPLE OF DOZEN NEW FISHING FLIES


I NEED TO PUT NEW LINE ON MY CASTING ROD AND GET MY SPARE READY AS WELL


AND WE'LL NEED PLENTY OF SANDWICHES

IS DAG READY ?
I'M AFRAID NOT, HERB.. HE'S TOO TIRED TO GO

ART

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Her brush with fame has left Anjolie Ela Menon remarkably unaffected, says ***Geeta Sharma***

She is an art historian's nightmare. Her style and technique overlap over centuries, which makes it difficult to fit her into any of the neat little slots of modernist, post-modernist, impressionist, pre-cubist school of painting. But that is the last thing Anjolie Ela Menon, one of India's most accomplished painters, is worried about.

"I am not interested in tags and styles because painting is a very personal and selfish exercise and all other things around it become peripheral to the major act of creating a work of art," she declares. In fact, Menon is quite reconciled to being called a maverick, who finds self-expression in an idiom out of context with the times in which she lives.

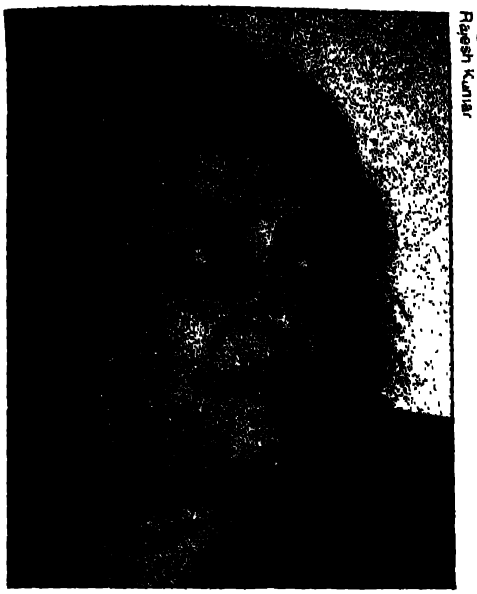
To Anjolie, who is today poised on the top-most echelons of the Indian art world and whose paintings have gone for four times their reserve price at the Christie's and Sotheby's auctions where her works came under the hammer recently, painting does not mean creating works of art in the hope that they would find a market somewhere. "Inspiration suddenly comes to you and you are blown over and left with the urge to try it out till it is out of your system," she says, explaining the creative process.

Sitting in her plush, sprawling South Delhi apartment, adorned with her works — portraits, nudes, interiors and landscapes — and the choicest bric-a-brac, she affectionately cuddles her eight-month-old granddaughter Madhavi, as she talks about her latest exhibition, currently on at the Wallace Galleries, New York.

Titled 'Mutations' the exhibition is a mix of computer images, photographs and paints and typifies Menon's penchant for dabbling fearlessly in new techniques and materials, the onslaught of criticism notwithstanding.

The exhibition is a body of 27 large works in which computer

Anjolie Ela Menon: Not afraid of using new techniques



Rajesh Kumar

Anjolie Ela Menon

images have been broken and assembled to form a new imagery with photographs, collages painted over and over again with acrylics, oils and inks resulting in an intriguing surreal matrix.

The inspiration came to Anjolie while she sat one day in front of a scanner, in her son's computer software company in Bangalore, selecting photographs for the first-ever book on her life and work, *Anjolie Ela Menon: Paintings in Private Collections* brought out by Dayal Publishers.

The artist whose works occupy pride of place among the major collections and in museums such as the National Gallery of Modern Art and in several elite private collections in India, Europe and the US, has come a long way since dabbling in oils in school.

Born in undivided Bengal, Menon had her early schooling at the Lawrence School in Ooty where she also met her husband. After school, she joined the JJ School of Art in Bombay, where she found she was much ahead of the class and dropped out to study English literature, but painted all along.

She had her first exhibition before her final year in college. It was a collection of 50 paintings. The grand old man of Indian art, M.F Husain, took half the show and presented it in Bombay. Since then, Menon has not looked back.

The exhibition was followed by a scholarship to the Ecole Beaux Art in Paris for a course in frescoes. On its completion, Anjolie hitchhiked her way back through southern Europe with a friend. From there and later in the Soviet Union, where her husband was posted, came the strong influences of the Renaissance and Byzantine art. The tradition of the cathedral icon painting, where thin layers of translucent paint are applied and then heavily varnished, influenced her greatly.

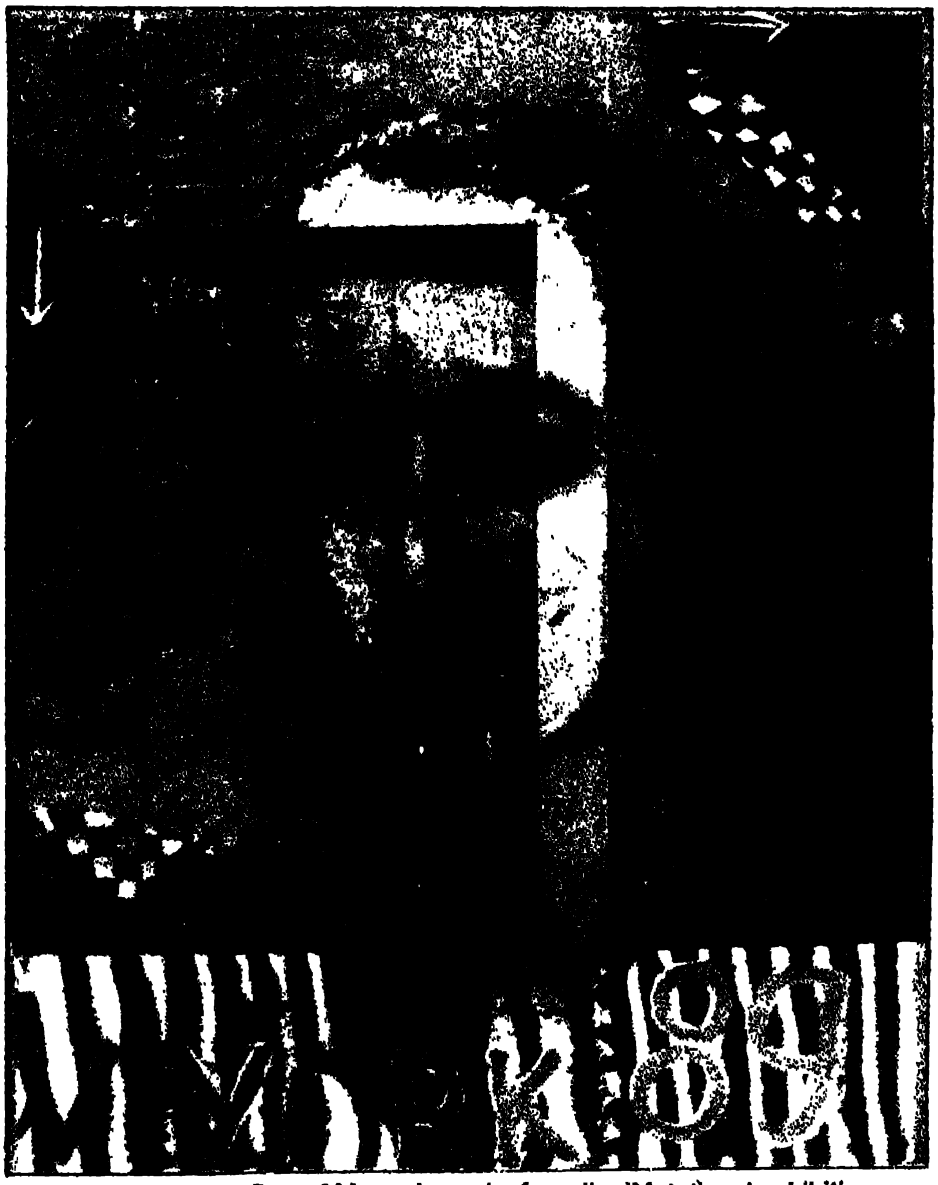
In contrast to her earlier nudes and portraits, the Romanesque influences of the Soviet phase produced many works with a central Christ-like male figure, set off in counterpoint to the 'Madonna and Child' series. These, in turn, came at the intersection of motherhood in Anjolie's life.

The nudes made a re-entry later as well — paintings of empty-eyed women in idyllic settings with goats, monkeys, lizards and crows. "I found the crow regularly visiting me in Bombay when I painted. It is a very human creature with a lot of personality and it seems to have moved in and established its presence in my work," says she.

This phase was followed by the chairs — of all shapes and sizes. They were a move away from the figure. As noted art historian Isana Murti says, "The solitary chairs and empty landscapes ricochet from forgotten sepia photographs, leaving a great deal unspoken and unarticulated even in the furthest reaches of the mind."

But in Anjolie's own words, "the window was an idiom, looking in on secret interiors or looking out onto mysterious landscapes."

Anjolie's marriage with her childhood love, Ravi Raja, in 1962, took her through thick and thin, through cushy and tough postings around the world with her naval officer husband. Stints in such varied



Translantic Journey: One of Menon's works from the 'Mutations' exhibition

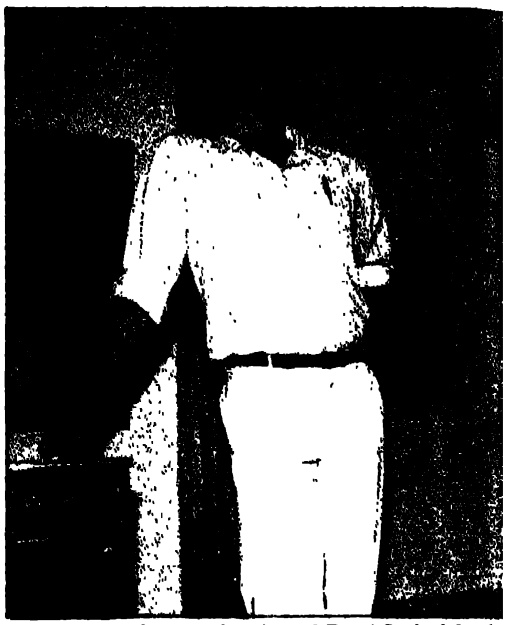
places as Lucknow, England, Russia, West Germany, besides trips to America, Iran, Europe, all combined to shape her canvases with minarets, domes, icons, desiccated bodies and pastoral nudes Alongside came her initiation into motherhood and the joys of bringing up her two sons.

Influences and phases in her art apart, a major break in her career came when the Menons moved to Bombay in 1974 and Anjolie was offered a solo show by a big gallery In a small corner of her flat she made a makeshift studio and set out to create a large enough body of work to do justice to the opportunity.

"In retrospect," she says, "it became a turning point in my career as it drew very favourable reviews and was sold out Just being solvent gave me a great deal of courage and confidence. The children were in school and the days of painting with a ladle in one hand and a brush in the other were coming to an end as I could even afford a cook!"

Then followed a spate of exhibitions and several commissions to paint murals while Anjolie longed to do frescoes. But no patron was willing to give her a year's time, which is required to make one. So, in the years that followed, she painted several mock frescoes.

Neha with a Cat at an exhibition in Vadhera art gallery

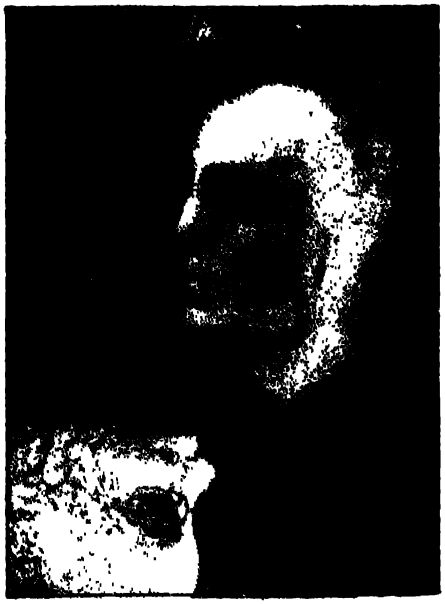


The artist with her husband Ravi Raja:Ideal

As Murti observes, the Nineties have seen the prevailing socio-cultural turbulence finding a noticeable echo in Anjolie's works. Her foray into resurrecting bric-a-brac and old furniture is a case in point. Her parodies of garish posters depicting characters like well-known South Indian film star Kamal Hasan on cupboards and chairs, have been hailed as both innovative, wry and even as a gimmick to sell art in a new way.

By her own confession, though Anjolie's work reflects a feminine sensibility, it does not capture the

Vishwanath



couple

predicament of the Indian woman. "Sometimes, I think I am only a crypto-Indian (her grandmother being an American), and having had the best opportunities — freedom and success — I cannot pretend to identify with the typical Indian woman, especially one who is seen as oppressed and exploited."

In the book, *Anjolie Ela Menon: Paintings in Private Collections*, she says "My world is far more immediate — many of the women I paint are my sisters and aunts, close friends, people who have worked with us, brought us up. And, of course, there are women whom I respect and have great sympathy for."

But above all, being a traditional mother, and a conservative wife, Anjolie is a woman who has balanced all her roles with excellence. "They all run parallel to each other" she states simply. At the same time, she voices her disregard for women artists who constantly complain of having to struggle on both ends. "I feel sorry for women who have to work to a nine to five regimen."

But educated women who can work at home have no business to complain specially when there is domestic help available here, she feels. "I really get angry with promising, talented women who tell me,'Oh! You are still painting! I had to give it up because of my two kids.'" Anjolie, who has been through the grind when she had to strap her kid to her back and paint and go around cooking and dusting, in the house, all by herself, feels 24 hours in a day is long enough to find time to pursue one's interests.

Almost as if to vindicate her point, her media-shy husband, walks in to comment that "Anjolie has never had any fancy feminist conflicts about working at home and painting." Anjolie's architect daughter-in-law Vandana chimes in, "She is the most easy-to-get-along-with mother-in-law. She decides the day's menu, cooks excellent Chinese and continental meals, and is glued in to everything going on at home, despite her busy painting schedules."

As with the stereotypical picture of Indian womanhood, Anjolie also does not identify herself with artists who make a virtue of the physical hardship they may have gone through. "Perhaps it is true that suffering is often the well-spring of creativity. I too have been through my bit of it but do not want to make a virtue of it as do many of our crypto-communist peers," she says.

She recalls the times when she did not have money to buy a canvas so she painted on whatever she could lay her hands on — on paper, on the back of shoe boxes, and on the inside of a cupboard!

Then, there was her 1963 Bombay exhibition, the only one in water colours, organised on the most meagre resources. The works, were mounted on the back of shoe cartons and the frames were made by her husband with bamboo and nails on a budget of Rs 17!

Buoyed by today's vibrant art scene, Menon feels what is happening in the world of Indian art is not something in isolation. It is the natural outcome of creative freedom that has seen the extraordinary work of Indian writers, scientists and scholars to catch the attention of the world.

Malabar

She says there are several painters in India today whose works are highly original and bear no resemblance to any school of art anywhere. However, except a few, who actually live abroad, not many have made an impact outside India. This according to her, is because of the workings of the global market, "which has become totally dominated by the dealer-critic nexus, almost impregnable for any outsider, which also means those residing in the Third World."

Shabnam

According to Anjolie, among the most outstanding artists of today are Arpita Singh "who doesn't think of herself as belonging to the Baroda group but is the most brilliant artist of that genre., K.G Subramaniam, who has achieved a brilliant synthesis of folk art with a genuinely modern idiom; Jogen Chowdhury, who has the most satirical and provocative paintings; Santosh, and Raza, who have formalised the most complex ideas and precepts from the tantra art; the late J. Swaminathan for his contribution to tribal art and Manjit Bawa for his original indigenous work." As for the adulation that has come her way, Anjolie is stubbornly modest "What ever has happened has happened in spite of me, not because of me I have never sought the press nor have I gone after critics and galleries. And believe me, I am not enjoying all this fuss at all. All I hanker after today is the joy of ordinariness." ■

BAPPI LAHIRI *took the Bombay film industry by storm when songs from films like* Zakhmee *and* Chalte Chalte *became great hits in the early Seventies. These were followed by numerous chartbusters from* Tohfa, Disco Dancer, Sharaabi *and* Aankhen. *He now plans to go international after his* Habiba *number was ranked 23rd in the Billboard charts. Branded as the master of plagiarism by his detractors, the man is unfazed by such criticism and feels it requires* `akal' *to make* `nakal'.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Composing superhit tunes.
What is your greatest fear?
Living in a non-musical atmosphere.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My family.

What is your nightmare?

The Latur earthquake

What do you dislike most in others?
Insincerity.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Having to get up early in the morning.
What is your most precious possession?
Music and my ability to sing.
What objects do you always carry?
The awareness of being a good human being.
What makes you most depressed?
When I remember my mother, late Bansari Lahiri.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Nothing.
What is your favourite word?
Music.
What is your favourite journey?
Going to Europe for holidays.
What is your favourite dream?
To get an Oscar.
What is your nightmare?
The Latur earthquake.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a lovely person

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My wife Chitrani Lahiri.
What is your source of sustenance?
My family.
On what occasions do you lie?
I try not to lie.
What is your greatest regret?
That I could not save my mother.
What has been your happiest moment?
Receiving the China Gold Award for *Disco Dancer*.
What brings tears to your eyes?
I hate tears.
How do you relax?
By watching cricket matches on television.
What do you envy most in others?
Nothing.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a lovely person.
How would you like to die?
Peacefully.

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27 OCTOBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Unforgettable Rohit

■ It's good to see Rohini Khosla has remembered her talented brother, Rohit, in such a novel way ('Remembering Rohit', September 1).

With his good looks, the designer Rohit Khosla could have given models a run for their money had he been alive. Rohit started off at a time when fashion was in its nascent stage in India. Only the very bold and privileged tried out some of the cuts and colours of fashion pundits, or rather the handful who dared to project themselves as 'fashion designers'. Rohit's success story was one of struggle and single-minded devotion.

Today, every Tom, Dick and Harry flaunts his status as a fashion designer and some of their creations wouldn't warrant a second glance.

Yet, they are big names in the industry and quote astronomical sums for their fashion statements.

Rohit was indeed a rare name among his tribe; his creations were aesthetic and sensible.

Rohit Khosla: The first to make Indians fashionable

Though of course well beyond the reach of the common man.
Shome Mukherjee
Calcutta

■ Rohini Khosla's literary adulations for her brother are laudable. But like designer clothes, her book is priced exorbitantly.

So, the book, like the outfits of some of the top designers of the country remains out of our reach.
A.R. Vasudevan,
Bokaro

■ Thank you for featuring the great Rohit Khosla on the cover. The photographs were real works of art. The artist in Rohit craved for harmony in thought and colour and this is in evidence in his fashion modelled by some of the best names in the trade.

Rohit's lifestory proves that art cannot be taught. It's finally talent that makes you a winner.
Sourav Ghosh Chowdhury,
Calcutta

Beautiful Shilon Bagh

■ Shona Adhikari's 'The Hills are Alive', (August 18) was a marvellous piece and quenched the thirst of many a reader bitten by the travel bug. The lucid, first person style in which the author has recounted her memorable trip to this wonderful mountain resort, was engaging.

Such pieces really bring back a surge of nostalgia when travelling was such a pleasant experience. The environment was unpolluted, accommodation cheap, there were no nagging fears of *bandhs* and other political movements holding up tourists.

In times like these travel pieces of this nature really revive our faith in the grandeur of nature and that there are still some virginal pockets of beauty.
Nirmalya Roy,
Calcutta

INSIDE

Ashok Ajumder

Lata Mangeshkar

PAGE 4

THEY ARE intelligent, successful, talented, and some of them are even gorgeously beautiful. They have all made a mark for themselves in their chosen fields. *The Telegraph* lists some of the women we can't help but love.

SECTIONS

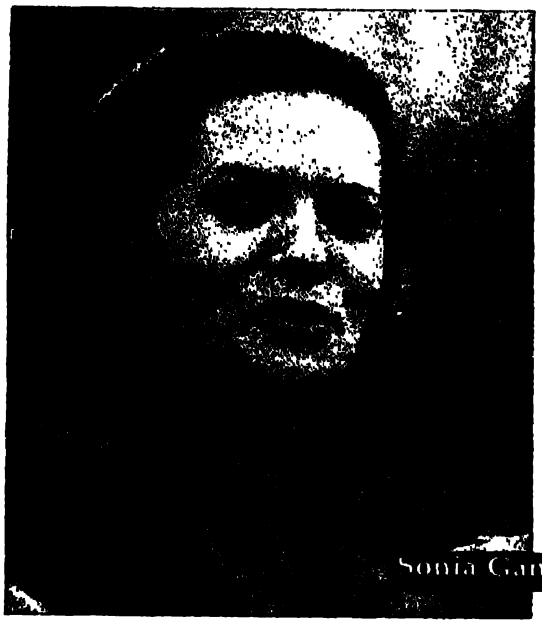
11 EXTRACT
16 TIME TABLE
30 FIRST PERSON

COVER STORY

THE WOMEN WE LOVE

There is no dearth of lists comprising the names of the best-dressed--and worst-dressed—ladies in the world. But, on the grounds that there is more to women than their clothes and accessories, ***The Telegraph Magazine*** *decided to go one step further. The result was this list of women who have been movers and shakers in their fields of endeavour. And what's more, have done this with grace, charm, and with their feminity firmly in place.*

For convenience, these ladies have been clubbed into easy compartments like business, industry, fashion, and films. But what they have really excelled at is life itself. And that's what we celebrate them for.



Sonia Gandhi

POLITICS

Sonia Gandhi

Yes, yes, we know that she's not really in politics. But there are few who could dispute that Sonia Gandhi has had more influence on the course of Indian public life than anyone in recent years. Rajiv Gandhi entered politics only after she overcame her strong resistance to the idea of her husband becoming his mother's heir apparent. Sonia was the ideal hostess during his years in power, and a pillar of support when he was voted out of office. But Sonia showed her true mettle only after Rajiv's tragic assassination. Despite the pressure exerted on her by a powerful section of the party, she refused to take over as Congress President. Instead, she devoted her energies to the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, and its programmes of social upliftment. And whatever political influence she retained within the Congress party, she used to expedite enquiries into her husband's death. If Sonia wanted she could have emerged as a major player in Indian politics. It is to her credit that she resisted that tempta-

tion, and chose to restrict her 'political' work to nurturing the traditional Gandhi constituency, Amethi.

Renuka Chowdhury

Call her loud. Call her brash. Call her crass. And there are plenty of people who call her all of the above. But love her

Renuka Chowdhury

or hate her, there is no ignoring Renuka Chowdhury. We, of course, love her. And with good reason. This is one woman who has strong views on most subjects, and the courage to stand by them. So, if she is appalled by N.T. Rama Rao's decision to inflict his new wife, Lakshmi Parvathi on the party, then she won't just sit on the sidelines and sulk. Nor will she paste an artificial smile on her face and pay obeisance to the rising star. That's not Chowdhury's style. She'd much rather make her displeasure public, even if that means incurring the displeasure of the Great White God (NTR) himself. And if he chooses to expel her from the party, well then, she'll just do it alone and take her chances. But if Renuka is on your side, then you have nothing to fear. This is a woman who, legend had it, once snatched the gun of a policeman—who wanted to arrest the fasting NTR—and threatened to shoot him with it. And who has no compunction in slapping anyone who treads on her toes.

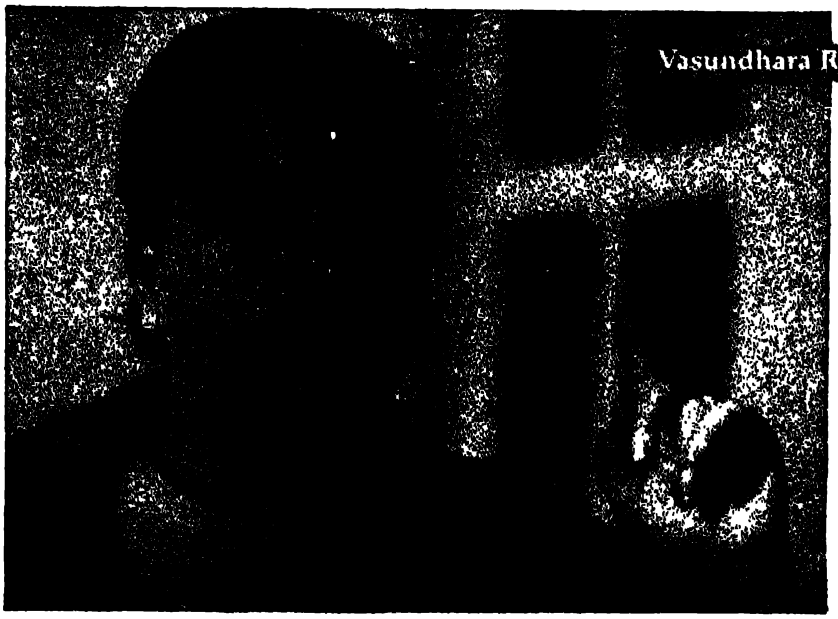
Vasundhara Raje

By rights, she should have had a fairy-tale life. Born into the royal family of Gwalior, Vasundhara Raje Scindia was the princess of all she surveyed in her early childhood. However, she learnt to her surprise at boarding school in Ooty, that her wish was not everybody's command. But adjusting quickly to the demands of a non-royal existence, Vasu, as she is popularly known, soon became head girl and believed—somewhat naively as it turned out—that life was her oyster. But things began going badly wrong soon after. Her marriage to the scion of the Dholpur royal house unravelled soon after the birth of her son, and Raje had to begin looking for another centre to her life. She found it in politics. Joining the BJP, where her mother, Vijaya Raje, was a prominent presence, Vasundhara was elected to the state legislative Assembly, and later to Parliament, where she excelled in raising issues that may not have been media-friendly, but were very relevant for all that. Much more importantly, she excelled in her role of single mother, bringing up her son, Dushyant, as a normal, down-to-earth boy, who had no pretensions about his royal lineage, and no scars as a consequence of his parents' separation.

Sushma Swaraj

Beginning life as a socialist—in which guise she was the youngest-ever Union minister in the Janata government of 1977— Swaraj was soon converted to the saffron cause. And it is in her *bhagwa avatar* that she has found fame. A fanatic admirer of BJP leader, L.K. Advani, Swaraj was appointed spokesperson of the party for all the right reasons. Not because the BJP wanted to soften its image by having a woman peddling the party line, but because Sushma was both articulate and fluent in Hindi as well as English. But what is creditable about Swaraj is not that she is a woman who has got ahead in a man's world without asking for any special favours, but that she refuses to regard women as the weaker of the species who need positive dis-

Born into the royal family of Gwalior, Vasundhara Raje Scindia was the princess of all she surveyed in her early childhood. However, she learnt to her surprise that her wish was not everybody's command



Vasundhara Raje

Nitin Kale

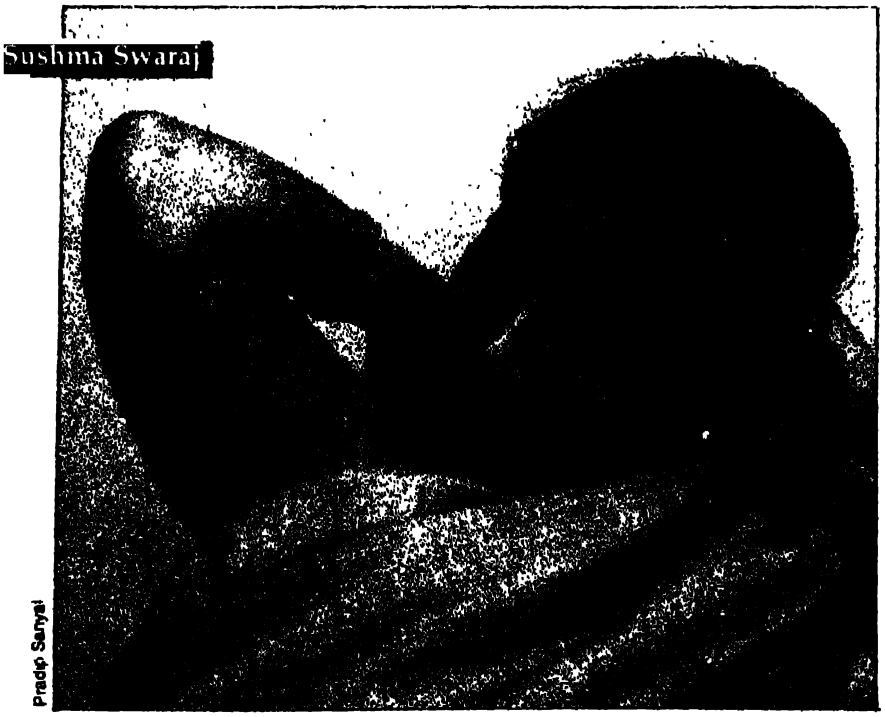
According to her [Sushma Swaraj], a level playing field is enough; once that is achieved, Indian women have enough talent, perseverence and chutzpah to make it to the top on their own steam

crimination to succeed. According to her, a level playing field is enough; once that is achieved, Indian women have enough talent, perseverence and chutzpah to make it to the top on their own steam.

BUSINESS/ INDUSTRY

Maureen Wadia

She may look like your typical industrialist's wife in her designer suits and pearl jewellery; the perfect socialite down to her manicured nails. But don't judge Maureen Wadia by her splendid *coiffure* or the ease with which she circulates in the A-list of Bombay society. If you want to see the real Maureen, drop into her *Glad Rags* office, and watch her wrestle with page lay-outs, argue with printers, and fuss over the participants in her Supermodel contest. Yes, Wadia is more career woman than pampered rich wife. Even at her husband's Bombay Dyeing she has her own well-defined role, as head of the ad department. In this capacity, she decides on how all Bombay Dyeing products, from sheets, towels, shirts and fabric will be marketed. But not content with just being part of the family empire, Maureen has created her own little kingdom in *Glad Rags*. What's more, she has made the magazine work. Critics may snigger about the number of swimsuits in it, but Wadia has the satisfaction of knowing that her product breaks even. And she has been the wife of an industrialist long enough to know that the bottom-line never lies.


Sushma Swaraj

Pradip Sanyal

Rita Singh

When it comes to Rita Singh, it appears as if nothing succeeds like excess. The woman behind Mescos lives in a plush suite at the Maurya Hotel in New Delhi, while her Rolls Royce occupies pride of place outside the entrance of the hotel. But that's only Singh's town house; she also has a huge mansion in Chattarpur, and a home in Ghaziabad, from where she stood for election as a

Maureen Wadia

Rashbehari Das

Congress candidate a few months back and lost. But the glitz and glamour hides a story of back-breaking work, and the kind of enterprise that builds empires. Singh began small, with a few buffaloes which she had bought on loan to start a dairy business. Once that took off, she diversified into sugar. And then, came the venture that made her a household name in India: Mescos, the shoes that have taken India by storm. If Singh's story teaches us anything, it is that dreams can be translated into reality, as long as you have the vision to back them up.

Sunita Pitamber

Daughter of the legendary obstretician, Dr Shirodkar, Sunita is married to R.K. Pitamber, golfing champion and managing director of Mahindra and Mahindra. But there's more to her than a distinguished pedigree and a successful husband. To Sunita goes the credit of starting Artistic, which sold India's first designer shirts. But not content with just selling clothes, Pitamber branched off into making reproductions of antiques — called Fabulous Fakes — with the view to popularising them. Her artistic nature next found expression in Inner Spaces, an interior decoration company she started in collaboration with Parmeshwar Godrej. Their glass-leather-marble-chrome look soon caught on, and is best show-cased in

that up-market Bombay restaurant, China Garden. Godrej and Pitamber went their separate ways in due course, and these days Sunita specialises in a softer look as far as interiors go. She has also collaborated with Shakira Caine in a jewellery business, and is a fully paid-up member of the jet-set, consorting with the kind of people who are featured in *Vanity Fair*. But despite all that, Pitamber has her feet planted firmly on the ground, and still takes the greatest pride in introducing herself as Dr Shirodkar's daughter.

Camellia Panjabi

Educated at Queen Mary's School in Bombay and at Cambridge University, Camellia Panjabi was the first woman member of the Tata Administrative Service. She was then transferred to the Taj Group of Hotels and, along with Ajit Kerkar, was responsible for revamping the Taj chain, and making it the up-market, efficient outfit it is today. In recent years, however, Panjabi has become better-known for her interest in food. She changed the face of Chinese food in India by opening The Golden Dragon at the Taj Mahal in Bombay, which introduced Schezchwan cuisine to India. She was responsible for introducing Dum Pukht in the Taj Palace,Delhi's Handi Unfortunately, the concept never really caught on, and the Maurya stole a march over the Taj in this regard. To Camellia goes the credit for taking Indian food into the up-market bracket in London with Bombay Brasserie, the restaurant that she helped open in London. Panjabi's book, *50 Great Curries of India*, has been described as the most intelligent book on Indian food, and it would be no exaggeration to say that Camellia is today one of the best-informed people about food in India And it doesn't hurt that she is on

Rita Singh

Sunita Pitamber

first-name terms with such internationally renowned chefs as Anton Mossiman.

Priya Paul

Few people could have had as sudden a growing-up as Priya Paul did Brought up in luxury in Calcutta as one of the heirs of the Apeejay empire, Paul was initiated into adulthood by a major tragedy Her father, Surrendra Paul, was assassinated by ULFA terrorists, and Priya—along with her sister Priti and brother Karan—was forced to grow up in a hurry. But that wasn't the only blow that fate had in store for her. Priya, who had married a Hong Kong-based businessman in one of the most glittering weddings that Delhi has witnessed in recent times, found her marriage going terribly wrong. And it wasn't long before a divorced Priya—who had reverted to her maiden name, Paul— was back home in Delhi. Paul, however, proved to be a true survivor. Throwing herself into the business, she began re-creating The Park chain as a boutique hotel group. Interiors were completely re-done, menus were overhauled, new cuisines were introduced, and a night-spot, Someplace Else, came into being Today, The Park – whether in Delhi, Calcutta or Vishakhapatnam – is one of the most happening places in town. And in the process Priya Paul has proved that when it comes to running a business – and running it well – she's got what it takes.

F A S H I O N

Ritu Beri

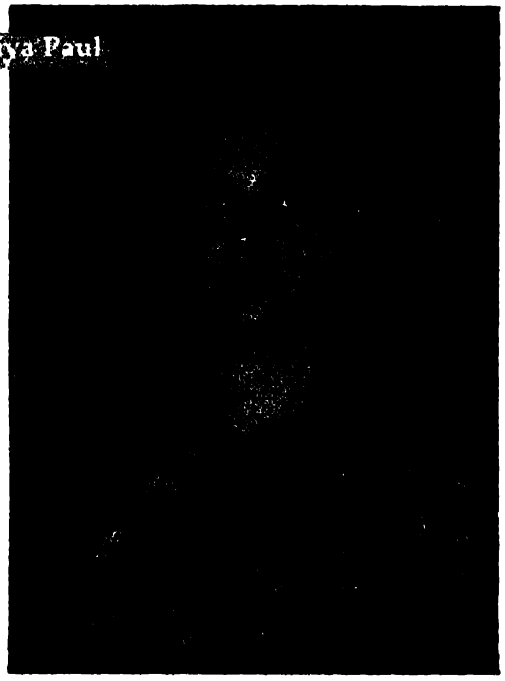
Even five years ago, there were few people who were familiar with Beri's design label, Lavanya. Today, however,

If you want to see the real Maureen [Wadia], drop into her *Glad Rags* office, and watch her wrestle with page lay-outs, argue with printers, and fuss over the participants in her Supermodel contest

Camellia Panjabi

only visitors from Mars would not be familiar with the gamine designer's perfectly-formed features and richly-embroidered designs. Beri has gone from being a lesser-known B-division designer to becoming the person most eligible for inheriting Rohit Khosla's mantle, as the leader of India's fashion world. That's partly because Ritu doesn't restrict herself to fashion alone, but is also devoted to causes – both fashionable and otherwise. Everyone remembers her product line for Menaka Gandhi's People for Animals project, which virtually flew off the shelves, for instance. Pretty enough to model her own clothes on the ramp, Beri's is a face made for the centrespreads of magazines. But she still prefers to get by on the basis of her design talent, than her looks. You can't say that of too many people.

Eliya Paul



She (Madhu Sapre) is what she is— wonderful figure, beautiful face, hoarse voice, *ghati* accent—and proud of it. You can't help but admire her for that

Madhu Sapre

Splendidly athletic, Sapre is an original. Not for her the anorexia and bulimia that plague most models. Madhu would much rather go for an hour-long jog along the beach—with weights attached to her arms and legs, for good measure. Unfortunately, it was this obsession with keeping fit that cost Sapre the Miss Universe title. Having made it to the finals of the contest, she was asked what her priority would be if she were to become Prime Minister of her country. Sapre didn't have to think for too long. "I would build a sports stadium in my country," she offered proudly. Result: she only made it to third place. What is remarkable about Madhu, though, that she does not regret giving such an inane answer to such an important question. In fact, there is nothing that Sapre regrets in life. She is what she is – wonderful figure, beautiful face, hoarse voice, *ghati* accent – and proud of it. You can't help but admire her for that.

Rina Dhaka

She likes to be known as the Donna Karan of India. But Dhaka is darn sight prettier than the American designer, even though she does make the same kind of hard-working clothes that can take you from a day at the office to a fancy party at the local five-star hotel. Dhaka has been in the fashion business for a long time now. Her initiation came when she worked for a garment export house as a gauche teenager. But the woman who was brought up in a conservative Jat household soon found her feet and her own label. Since then, there has been no looking back for Rina. These days, she makes both Westernwear and Indian clothes — even though she began by insisting that she wouldn't do salwar-kameezes—and is the mother of a young son as well. But like the woman of the Nineties, Dhaka makes sure that her son doesn't lose out because mummy is a very busy lady. She takes him —with a maid—wherever she goes, be it a fashion show, a television shoot, or a fitting. And Junior has a makeshift nursery beside her office, to boot.

Aishwarya Rai

The only fault you can find with Aishwarya Rai is that, perhaps, she is too perfect. Not that we mind. It's a long time since we've had a model —and more recently, a film star—who didn't think she had to throw tantrums and show temperament to be taken seriously. Ash believes— and quite rightly too— that she only has to be herself for everybody

Continued on page 26

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says the full moon makes you ambitious and focalises your family affairs and your financial standing, as well as, transactions. Loans and funds, capital formation, investments, buying, selling, purchasing and leasing are emphasised. Also, your romantic impulses will surface strongly

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

This is a time to separate the wheat from the chaff, be realistic, get what you want Weddings bells, engagement, socialising, entertainment, amusements are the highlights of the next 37 days. Many of you will be running into old friends and making new ones too It is, in short, a time to converge and correspond.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Venus is happily placed giving you some much needed love and tender care Your kids do better and that is a source of deep satisfaction Ganesha says a knotty problem will be resolved and you will breathe a sigh of relief The travel bug will get at you, assures Ganesha Take chances if you

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Socialise, cast bread upon the waters and be friendly. Seek co-operation. That is your best bet to money, and more, importantly, happiness. This is the right time to polish your image, sell an idea or product, be dashing and valiant, show the world how good you really are and use your considerable talent.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

A home away from home is what you should aim at. Also, renovation, decoration, buying, selling, renting, land developing either for home, office or shop should interest Leons. The signing of documents and contracts should be of vital importance. Travel is a strong possibility.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Opportunities by the dozen come your way, so to say, and therefore, rest assured that you will do well. Shun and exile nervousness and be daring, bold and adventurous. That's the master key to glory Venus and Uranus help you to make money, have brilliant but eccentric friends.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Many things happen simultaneously on various planes and levels. You get money. Family ties become close and well knit You become decisive and demanding Inspiration helps you to be highly creative. Love slides into your heart. It is absolutely certain, says Ganesha, that you will go places.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha claims happiness and health, wealth and wisdom for you, a great quartet indeed Yes, it is the right time to travel, take a study course, call friends over, get engaged or marry if you want to. Time also to sign deeds and documents, socialise and engage in sports and exercises.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

A possible job-switch, or promotion, may please be anticipated Perks of office also come under the same ambit. At the same time do expect or suspect a lot of things happening behind the curtains, so to say. Secrecy is the name of the game You had better get your travel kit ready. Romance foretold.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Battle stations should be ready, because it is action time, work time, love time and time for happiness too. This is a good phase when you can have children, get engaged or married, take in employees if you are the boss, pursue a career with zeal and dedication, start a venture or take up a challenge

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

What had been kept secret will be out in the open The home and house and property frontiers get a big boost.. The accent should be on commercial enterprise and practical possibilities of a venture People will confide in you because of your great capacity for objectivity and counselling

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Some sort of award, journey, ceremony and publicity were meant just for you, dear Pisceans. News, views, ideas, opinions, come in real handy in arriving at a major decision. Relatives and neighbours will have much to say Do get set to travel Follow up on invitations, clients, business possibilities

BIRTHDAYS

October 27: Moon trine Jupiter means engagement, marriage, children, trips, tips, collaborations and new enterprises. You are now ready to move on.

October 28: Moon trine Venus signifies love and money, romance cum finance. It is obvious that this will be a happy birthyear.

October 29: No drama, [illegible] You will be [illegible] free to go your way, says Ganesha. Romance, [illegible] and relationships will be the key factors [illegible]

October 30: Venus trine Uranus indicates you will be able to do the things you wanted to do. Help is at hand and that should give you confidence. Financial hassles are possible unless you make plans and learn to be dexterous.

October 31: The law of averages work for you and with a little effort and inspiration you can emerge a winner. Time to score over your rivals.

November 1: Moon opposition Neptune, means your judgment can be clouded unless you take expert advice. Journey and [illegible] will take up your time and energy.

November 2: Moon trine Saturn-Pluto indicates a year to consolidate your position, make profits, win hearts and be of good cheer.

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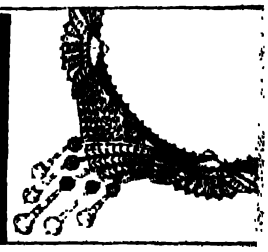
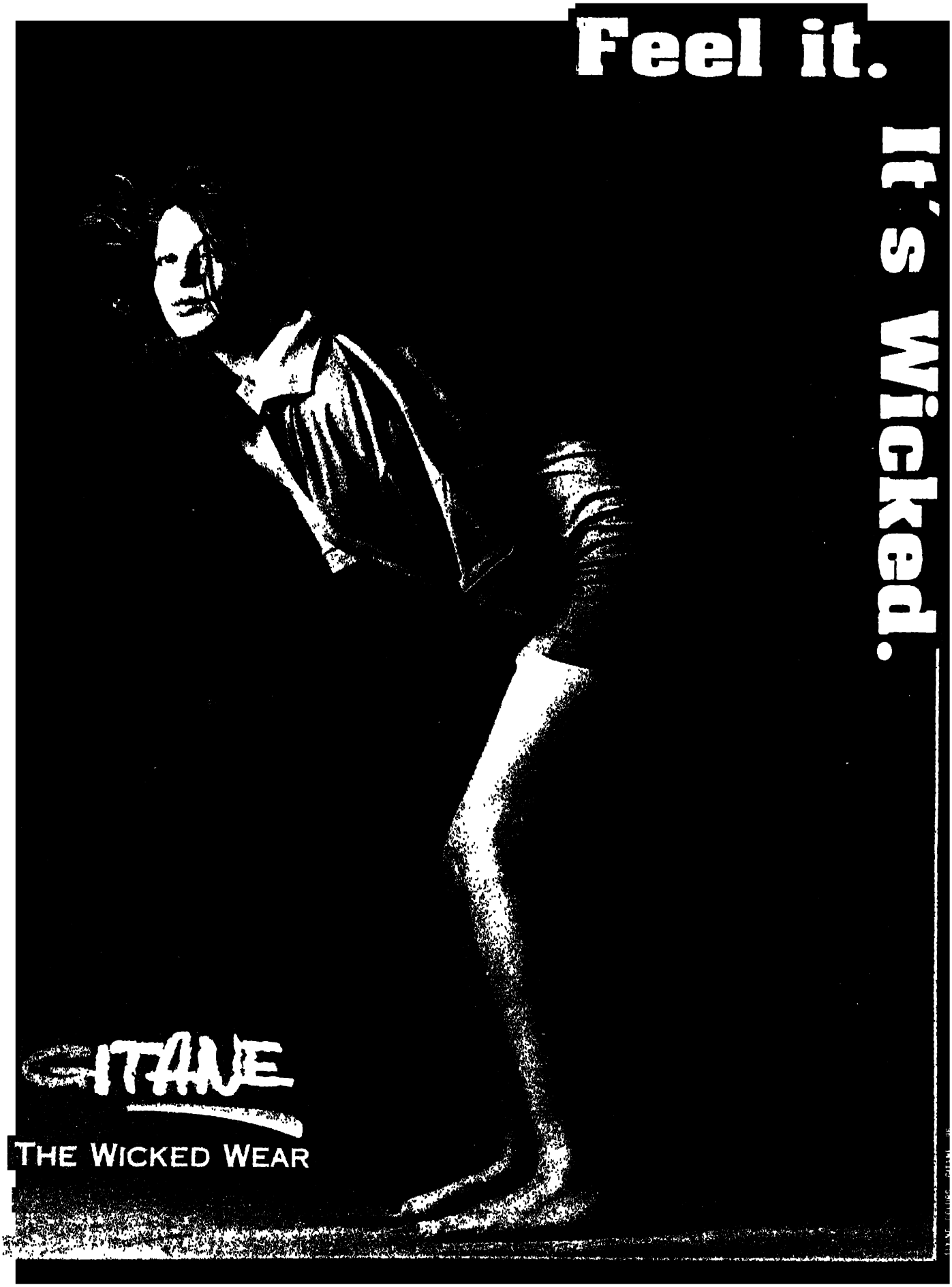



Feel it.
It's Wicked.
THE WICKED WEAR

EXTRACT

Friends and STRANGERS

An extract from ***Ruskin Bond****'s new book,* Strangers in the Night

My train rushed into the darkness, the carriage wheels beating out a steady rhythm on the rails. The bright lights of Kapila were swallowed up in the night, and new lights—dim and flickering—came into existence as we passed small villages. A star falls, a person dies. I used to wonder why I did not see more shooting stars, because in India someone is dying every minute. And then I realised that with someone being born every half-minute, falling stars must be in short supply.

The people in the carriage were settling down, finding places for themselves. There were about fifty of us in that compartment sharing the same breathing space, sharing each others' sweaty odours.

At four in the morning I woke from a fitful sleep to find the train at a standstill. There was no noise or movement on the platform outside. It was a very small station, and the train for some mysterious reason of its own had stopped there longer than ususal, so that those in the train who had woken up had gone to sleep again, and those few who had been spending the night on the platform slept on as though nothing had happened. This was not their train.

The author, Ruskin Bond

I watched them from the window, a very small boy was curled up in a large basket. His mother had stretched herself out on the platform beside him. A coolie slept on a platform bench The tea stall was untenanted. A dim light from the assistant station master's office revealed a pair of sandalled feet propped up against a mountain of files. A bedraggled crow perched on the board which gave the station its name: Deoband The crow cawed disconsolately, as if to imply that—this dismal wayside station was none of its doing. And yet—Deoband!—the name struck a chord. Wasn't this, by tradition, the most ancient town in India?

The engine hissed, sending waves of hot steam into the fresh early morning air. My shirt clung to me We were all smelling of perspiration There had been no rain for a month but the atmosphere was humid, there were clouds overhead, dark clouds burgeoning with moisture. Thunder blossomed in the air.

The monsoon was going to break that day. I knew it, the birds knew it, the grass knew it. There was the smell of rain in the air And the grass, the birds and I responded to this odour with the same sensuous longing. We would welcome the rain as a woman welcomes lover's embrace, his kiss, the fierce, fresh thrust of his loins after a period of abstinence.

Suddenly I felt the urge to get out of that stuffy, overcrowded compartment, away from the sweat and smoke and smells, away from the common places of life, from the certainty of my destination and predestined future. I would be a free wanderer, the last in a world where even the poets had retreated into the sculleries of their minds.

I knew where I was supposed to

Extracted from *Strangers in the Night, Two Novellas* ***by Ruskin Bond Published by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd Price Rs 150***

be going: Delhi. I knew what I was supposed to do there—take the fatal step towards respectability. To be respectable—what an adventure that would be! And this prospect of an ordered, organised life frightened me. I knew that I could not put it off forever, but perhaps it could be postponed. I had five hundred rupees in my best pocket. It would provide me with freedom for two weeks, perhaps three if I was not too extravagant. Five hundred rupees; the smell of coming rain; and outside, an unknown town. The combination was too strong for my wayward spirit.

I clambered over my fellow passsengers, my suitcase striking heads, shoulders, backsides Grunts and curses followed me to the door And then the train began to move. I was seized with panic If I didn't get off quickly, I would never get off. I would be frozen forever into a respectable bulb manufacturer!

I flung the door open and tumbled on to the platform. My suitcase spun away, hit the corner of a bench, burst open. The crow flew off in alarm. A dog began barking.

The train moved on to Delhi carrying with it 600 souls in bondage, while I stood alone on the platform, in temporary possession of my own soul.

The suitcase, which never locked properly, was soon closed. I looked furtively around. The coolie was still asleep—obviously no one ever got off at Deoband at that hour—or he would have grabbed my insignificant burden,carried it for a distance of 20 feet and charged me a rupee. I needed my rupees. I could no longer scatter them about at random or live on credit as I did in my hometown I walked quietly to the turnstile. There was no one there to ask me for my ticket. I walked out of the station and found myself in wasteland of nondescript shacks—some of them labourers' huts, some warehouses, one or two of them uninviting teashops. The scene was a dismal one, and if the train had still been at the station I would have returned to it and gone to Delhi But so far in my defiance of the gods, I had done quite well, and it would have been admitting defeat to have returned to the station to hang around waiting for another train.

By evening I was still disconsolately on a small hotel balcony overlooking the street telling myself that I was a fool. For three hours nothing had happened to me and now it looked as though nothing was going to happen. There was no Mulia to press my aching limbs, no Samyukta to ravish, no Shankhini to battle with my ego. My only acquisition was a headache from drinking too much of the local beer and sleeping too long under the electric fan.

The camel had gone from across the street but in its place was a buffalo. The traffic had increased, there were more people in the street. There were also more flies on the balcony, and one of them came buzzing into my half empty glass in an effort to drown itself in what remained of my drink. It was a suicidal kind of evening. I rescued the fly from my glass, placed it gently on the balcony railing and watched it crawl groggily away. But my compassion was wasted As the fly neared the wall, a gecko, chuckling greedily, swooped on the insect and gobbled it up.

There was no one to talk to. The hotel manager was a moron and the bearer's thoughts dwelled on the contents of my suitcase. A large drop of water hit the balcony railing, darkening the thick dust on the woodwork. A faint breeze sprang up, and again I felt the moisture, closer and warmer.

Then the rain approached like a dark curtain. I could see it marching down the street, heavy and remorseless. It drummed on the corrugated tinned roof and swept across the road and over the balcony. I sat there without moving, letting the rain wet my sticky shirt and gritty hair.

Outside, the street rapidly emptied. The crowd dissolved in the rain. Stray cows continued to rummage in dustbins, buses and *tongas* ploughed through the suddenly rushing water. A group of small boys, now gloriously naked, came romping along the street which was like a river in spate. When they came to a gutter choked with rain water, they plunged in, shouting their delight to whoever cared to listen. A garland of marigold, swept from the steps of a temple, came floating down the middle of the road.

The rain stopped as suddenly as it had begun. The day was dying, and the breeze remained cool and moist. In the brief twilight that followed, I was a witness to the great yearly flight of insects into the cool brief freedom of the night.

It was the hour of the geckos. They have their reward for weeks of patient waiting. Plying their sticky pink tongues, they devoured insects as swiftly and methodically as American's devour popcorn. For hours they crammed their stomachs, knowing that such a feast would not be theirs again. Throughout the entire hot season the insect world perpared for this flight out of darkness into light, and not one survived its bid for freedom.

I had walked the streets of the town for over three hours, and it was past midnight. Shop fronts were shuttered. The cinema was silent and deserted The people living on either side of the narrow street could hear my foorsteps and I could hear their casual remarks, music, a burst of laughter.

A three-quater moon was up, shining through drifting, breaking clouds, and the roofs and awnings of the bazaar, still wet, glistened in the moonlight. From a few open windows fingers of light reached out into the night.Who could still be up? A shopkeeper going through his accounts, a college student preparing for his exams, a prostitute extricating herself from the arms of her paramour who had suddenly fallen asleep....

Three stray dogs were romping in the middle of the road. It was their road now, and they abandoned themselves to a wild chase, almost knocking me down. A jackal slunk across the road, looking to right and left to make sure the dogs had gone. A field rat wriggled its way through a hole in a rotting plank, on its nightly foray among sacks of grain and pulses

As I passed along the deserted street under the shadow of the clock tower, I found a young man, or a boy (I couldn't tell which) sleeping in a small recess under a rickety wooden staircase. He was wearing nothing but a pair of torn dirty shorts—his shirt, or what was left of it, had been rolled into a pillow.He was sleeping with his mouth open; his cheeks were hollow, and his body, which looked as though it had been strong and vigorous at one time, was emaciated.

There was no corruption, no experience on his face. He looked quite vulnerable, although I suppose he had nothing much to lose in the material sense.

I passed by, my head down, my thoughts elsewhere—that is how we of the towns and cities usually behave when we see a fellow human lying in the gutter.

And then I stopped. It was almost as though the bright moon light had stopped me and I started myself with a question, "Why do I leave him there? And what am I doing here anyway?"

I walked back to the shadows where the boy slept and looked at him again. He seemed a very heavy sleeper, the sort of person who can fall asleep anywhere, at any time oblivious to all that goes on around him I coughed loudly, but nothing happened; I whistled, but still he slept; I picked up an empty can and dropped it beside him, but the noise had no effect on the sleeper. In his dreams he was elsewhere, moving among the spirit-haunted mountains, while his material body lay in this town. I found myself wishing that I cold sleep like that—it was a sleep of one who was protected by his own innocence.

I went down on my knees and touched the boy's shoulder. But he must have been touched often in his sleep. His lips moved slightly, but there was no alteration in the rhythm of his breathing.

One arm was thrown back, and I noticed a scar under his armpit where the hair began. Looking at that scar, all the warnings of Mulia and my mother crowded in upon me—tales of crime by night, of assault and robbery. But when I looked again at the untroubled face, I saw nothing there to disturb me.

And since he did not wake, and seemed comfortable, why did I not stand up and walk away and take the morning train to Delhi? I still do not know. Something was pressing me on, urging me to shake the boy out of his slumber

I took him by the shoulders and gave him a good shaking He woke with a loud cry, as from a nightmare, and stared at me with something like terror. He sat up, cringing away, holding his hands before his face. But then, when he realised that I was a man and not the demon of his dream, his fear turned to indignation

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"Nothing, " I said, standing up and moving away "I did not see you there. I am sorry to wake you."

I moved a few steps away, then stopped and looked back at the youth. He was still crouching on the steps, still staring at me, but he had lost both his fear and his anger, and he was only a little puzzled by this apparition in the middle of the night.

"Haven't you anywhere to stay?"

He shook his head

Perhaps the tone of voice I used gave him some confidence, because the hostility left his face and in its place I saw a glimmer of hope.

I had committed myself. I could not pass on.

"Do you want a job?" I asked.

"No."

"You have money?"

"No."

"Do you want some money?"

"No *babuji*."

"Then what do you want?"

"I want to go home."

"Where is your home?"

"In the hills."

"Far away?"

"Yes, *babuji*. In the Jalari hills."

" And how much does it cost to get there?"

"Twenty rupees."

"And how much have you got?"

"One rupee."

He held his torn shirt in his hands It was his only possession. I liked his open look, the way he returned mine without any attempt at evasion.

"I'll see that you get home," I said "On one condition."

A shadow of doubt passed across his mobile face (It was no mask, that face.)

"*Babuji*—I have never done anything—anything shameful."

"Shameful? You have not heard my condition. What did you think I was going to ask you to do—sleep with me?"

He laughed and looked embarrassed

I said, " Don't be an ass. I have always taken my pleasure with women. Listen to my condition before you start getting nervous."

He did not say anything but kept twisting his shirt in his hands—he was no longer looking me in the eye.

"I was about to say that I'd help you to get home provided you took me with you. I would like to see your hills."

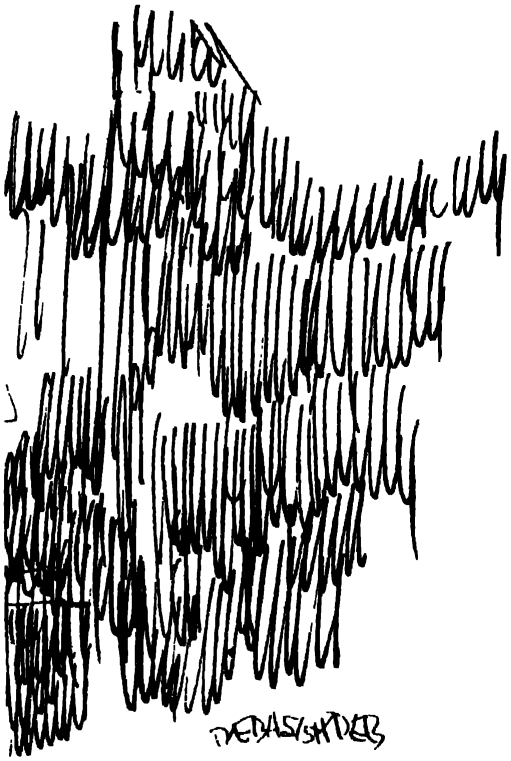
His dark, sombre face lit up. He smiled like an angel. All the latent hospitality of his tribe welled up and burst through the barrier of his poverty

"Oh, I will take you to my home, *babuji*. I have nothing here, but in the hills I have a house, fields, a buffalo! Yes! I will take you to my home."

No longer hesitating, he came to me, brimming over with a simple trust and joy. I could not betray that trust, nor could I fail to trust him. I was committed to a stranger in the night. I had sought him out deliberately, imposed my will on him, and the consequences of the meeting would be entirely of my own making.

And so there were two of us on that lonely street. The rain had held off just long enough for the encounter. Soon it began to drizzle.

"We will go to my hotel," I said. "Have you anything to bring with you?"



"Nothing," he said. "Yesterday I sold my shoes."

"Never mind. Let us get some sleep while the night remains with us. Tomorrow, in the morning, we will leave this place. It has served its purpose, and now there is nothing to keep me here. Nothing to bring me back again."

The boy lay on the mattress which I had removed from the bed and placed on the floor. His face was in darkness but the light from the verandah bulb fell across his legs. There was no escape from my father's bulbs! I lay flat on my belly on the string cot, while the ceiling fan hummed in the moist air immediately above me.

"Are you awake?" I called.

"Yes," said the boy.

"The mosquitoes make it difficult to sleep. So let us talk. Tell me, how do we get to your village?"

"It is a difficult place to reach," he said.

"Well, if it was easy to reach, there would be no point in my going there. Will we have to walk a lot? I have not done much walking."

"We must walk about thirty miles. But first we must take a train or a bus. Later we walk."

"Good. And now tell me your name."

"Roop."

"You have brothers and sisters?"

"A brother, no sisters. My brother is younger than me and goes to school. I never went to school. There was another brother, but he died—he was attacked by a leopard, and the wounds were so bad that he died after several days."

After a brief silence, he asked, "Why do you wish to visit my home *babuji*?"

"Because it is far away. Because I am bored with my own home. I have a mother and father and servants, but I am bored with all of them."

Roop was one of those people blessed with the gift of being able to sleep sweetly and soundly through cannon fire and earthquake. Once he fell asleep, there was little that could wake him. The morning sun embraced him, moved lovingly over his dark, gleaming body, touched his eyelids, settled on his untidy hair. Still he did not wake. He slept on as though drugged. I called him, I shouted, I reached out and shook him by the shoulder, but he did not stir. A fly settled on his lips, but although his mouth twitched, he did not open his eyes.

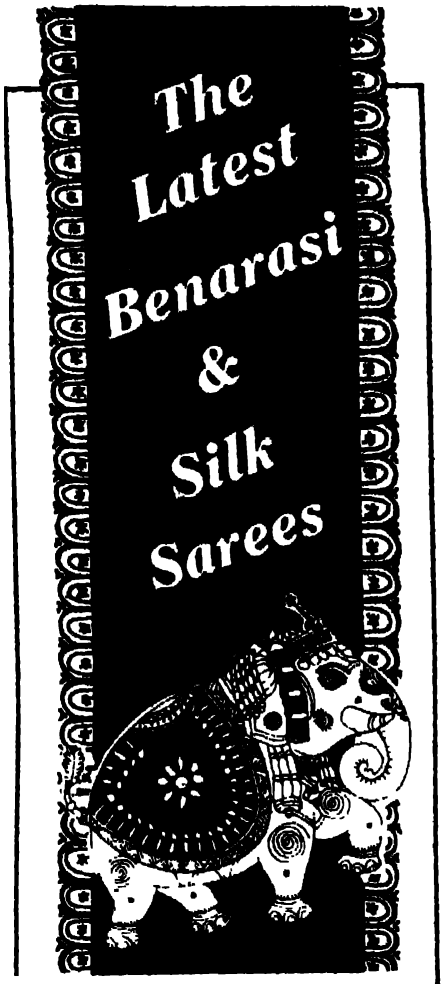
"One of us will have to get up," I muttered, looking at my expensive smuggled watch which showed nine o' clock. "Otherwise we won't get anywhere today."

And I wanted to get away as soon as possible. The urge to stop at Deoband had been strong, but the urge to move on was stronger. During the night I had dreamt of pine forests and mountain streams, pale pink flowers growing in the clefts of rocks and fair hill maidens bathing beneath pellucid waterfall.

I got up and sprinkled water on Roop's face. Nothing happened. I placed my foot on his broad, heavy thigh and shook him vigorously. But he simply smiled. He was still dreaming—of a girl, perhaps; or possibly of the chicken we had eaten on returning to the hotel the previous night.

I decided that I would have to use some more positive method of rousing Roop. Shaking him was of no use, slapping his face would have been impolite. So I compromised—held the water jug over his head and kept pouring until he awoke, spluttering and shaking his head and greeting the day (and me) with foul language.

An hour later, my purse considerably lightened by our short stay at the hotel—we were sitting in a bus and moving hopefully in the direction of the hills. ■



Indian Silk House

COLLEGE STREET MARKET CALCUTTA

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 74[illegible]	084[illegible]	1 3
			IC 742	1010	1 [illegible]
IC 743	0945	daily	IC-744	1.05	daily
D5 [illegible]	0600	4 5 7			
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/145	0850	1 [illegible] 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4
AIZAWL					
PF 30[illegible]	0645	1 [illegible] 4 5 [illegible]	PF 302	1555	[illegible] 4 5
			PF 302	1635	1 [illegible] 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC-721	1030	1 3 5	IC 722	1300	1 3 5
IC 721	1250	4 7	IC-722	1520	4 [illegible]
D2 131	1350	1 3 5	D2-181	1600	1 3 5
BANGALORE					
IC-741	0600	daily	IC [illegible]	1140	daily
9W [illegible]	1400	daily	9W [illegible]	2150	daily
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-402	0700	4 6	D5 401	1230	[illegible]
IC 544	1015	2 [illegible]	IC 543	0935	3 7
IC [illegible]	0[illegible]	1 2 6	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 6
DELHI					
IC 26[illegible]	0[illegible]	daily	M9 303	0930	daily
9W 902	0650	daily	9W 901	0610	daily
M9-304	0550	daily	AI 682	0925	[illegible]
IC 4[illegible]	1715	daily	IC 85[illegible]	0955	4 [illegible]
[illegible]	1840	1 7	IC 401	0855	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	M9 [illegible]	0900	daily
9W [illegible]	1940	daily	9W-911	1915	daily
			IC-764	2[illegible]10	daily
DIBRUGARH					
D2 182	1225	2 4 6 7	IC 702	1030	1 3 5 7
IC 701	1240	1 [illegible] 5 7	D2 182	1620	2 4 6 7
DIMAPUR					
IC-[illegible]	1145	1 7	IC 257	1550	4 7
D5 [illegible]	0645	2 4 7	PF 30[illegible]/302	1555	2 4 5
GUWAHATI					
IC 702	0610	1 [illegible]	IC 704	1020	2 6
D5 [illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 [illegible] 6	IC 730	1310	daily
PF 301	[illegible]	1 3 5	9W-612	1410	daily
IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily	PF 302	1500	daily
9W-611	[illegible]	daily	IC 704	1805	1 3 5
IC-703	1900	1 3 5	D5 605	2030	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W [illegible]	14[illegible]	daily	IC 778	2115	3 5 7
IC 777	[illegible]	[illegible] 7	IC 770	1820	1 2 [illegible]
IC 769	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 912	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC [illegible]	0915	[illegible]	IC 256	1405	3 5 7
IC 212	1140	[illegible]	IC 211	1540	2 6
JAIPUR					
M9 304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
JAMMU					
M9-304/119	0850	2 4	M9-128/301	1900	1, 2 3 4, 5 6
JORHAT					
IC 25[illegible]	1145	4 [illegible]	IC-257	1550	4, 7
9W 621	1010	3 [illegible]	9W 622	1320	3, 5
KHAJURAHO					
PF 301/303	0645	1 3 5	PF 304/302	1635	1, 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1620	1 3 5	IC-811	2100	1, 3 5
MADRAS					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC 541	0930	1 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1015	2 4 [illegible]	IC 545	0915	3 7
IC 544	1015	2	D2-171	1155	daily
D2 172	1640	1 3 5	D5 401	1230	[illegible]
D2 174	1705	2 4 6 7	IC [illegible]	2230	daily
IC 765	1720	daily			
MUMBAI					
			IC-[illegible]75	0610	daily
9W 702	0715	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC [illegible]76	0730	daily	9W [illegible]	0945	daily
D2 103	0850	daily			
AI 309	1930	6	AI 308	1730	5
9W 212	2000	daily	IC 274	1650	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	9W 211	1925	daily
D2 104	2005	daily	D2 103	1935	daily
NAGPUR					
IC-769	1615	1 2 6	IC 770	2120	1 2 [illegible]
PATNA					
D2-401	1130	[illegible]	IC 249	1820	2 6
IC 249	1115	2 6	D5 406	1635	3 [illegible]
IC 812	1620	1 [illegible] 5	IC-811	2100	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC-285	0640	1 3 5	IC-286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 249	1445	2 6	IC-249	1820	2 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0700	2 4 6	IC-254	0940	2 4 6
IC 255	0915	3 5 7	IC 256	1405	3, 5 7
TEZPUR					
IC 215	1140	2 6	IC 216	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1130	3 5	D5-406	1835	3 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5-402	0700	1 6	IC 541	0930	1 2 4 5 6
IC 542	1015	1 2 4 5, 6	D5 401	1230	3 5

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 184	0700	4
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0325	7	KL-875	0130	7
BANGKOK					
KB 106	0855	2	KB 106	1020	7
KB 105	1755	4	KB-106	1240	5
IC [illegible]	0855	2 5	IG-313	1240	1 3, 6
			IC 732	1505	2 5
IC 855	1105	4 7	IC 856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2140	5 7	RO 075	1100	5, 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	0700	1	IC 226	0920	1

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2 5
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1 2, 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2, 3, 6, 7
IC-723	1300	1, 2, 3 5 6	IC-724	1520	1, 2, 3 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3,.6, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
Q7-061	1000	3	Q7-060	1230	2
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	7
IC-747	1035	1, 2 4 6	IC-748	1350	1 2 4 6
RA-142	2115	3, 7	RA-143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
SU 538	2100	4	SU-537	0930	4
KB 106	1105	7	KB 105	0810	2
KB 106	1325	5	KB 105	1710	4
BI-108	0830	7	BI-107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	2 5	SQ-416	2230	2 5
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	182	[illegible]
IC-227	1530	4, 7	IC 228	1955	4 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19-15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	14-20	**Amritsar Mail**	7-55	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13-00	3004
2381	9-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16-15	2382
2303	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16-15	2304
301	16-30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10-45	2302
2305	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12-50	2306
[illegible]	23-10	**Jodhpur Express**	1-40	2308
[illegible]	6-05	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21-10	2020
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat, Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11-35	3074
3015	22-00	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep Tues Wed & Sat Arr Tues Fri & Sat	12-25	3046
5049	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11-35	5050
5047	13-00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4-30	5048
3009	20-30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	5-30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18-15	3008
3039	21-00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5-15	3040
3049	13-20	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11-55	3020
3021	16-05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6-10	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8-35	3036
3231	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6-30	3232
3071	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15-40	3016
3017	5-45	**Rampurhat Express**	21-45	3018
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon, Tue. & Thurs, Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7-55	1160
1171	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7-55	1172
3327	14-30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-30	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri, Arr Tues	7-55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5-15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kaliar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5185	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues, Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20-15	**Madras Mail**	6-55	6004
8002	19-20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	12-25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15-30	2859
2021	6-00	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20-30	**Ahmedabad Express**	5-40	8033
8030	10-45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	14-00	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12-20	2842
7003	7-50	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19-40	7004
6511	22-35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13-45	6512
8013	17-30	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8011	6-50	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	21-35	8012
8005	20-40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21-35	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-20	8016
8007	22-00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-40	8008
8409	19-00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-40	8410
2821	6-15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22-05	2822
8045	10-15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15-20	8046
8017	15-45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12-05	8018
8079	23-30	**Tirupati Express**	4-15	8080
1030	15-45	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep Sunday, Arr Friday	5-15	1029
2421	16-40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	15-10	2421
2422	11-05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10-45	2422
6321	22-35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	22-15	
	14-10	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13-45	6321
	14-10	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	12-45	6313
6313	22-35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22-15	
6329	22-35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep & Arr Tuesday	13-45	6329
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13-45	6315
6520	22-35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	22-15	
-	14-10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13-45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 6 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

RHYTHM AND RAAG

Pandit Gopal Chandra Panda's mission in life is to get Odissi music the recognition it deserves, says ***Geeta Sharma***

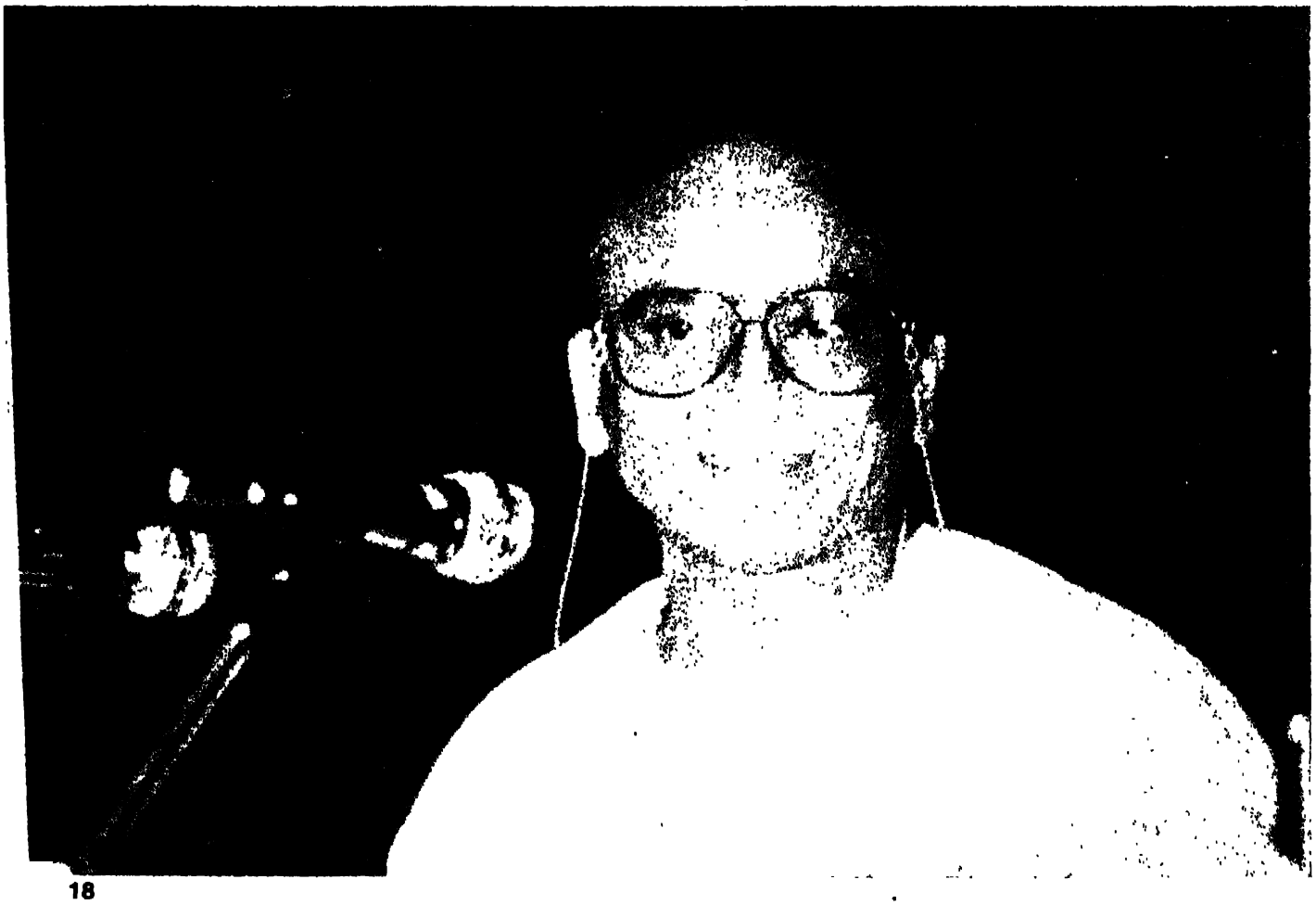
When Pandit Gopal Chandra Panda alighted at the New Delhi railway station, he received a welcome that will live in his memory for a long time to come. The announcements that were being made over the station's public address system were accompanied by music. And not just any old music at that; but music set to *raag Anand Bhairavi*.

To this teacher of Odissi music from Bhubaneswar, the sound of this *raag*, a strong component of Odissi, on the railway platform of all places, added to his resolve to get *'Odre'* — as the locals in Orissa call Odissi — music its rightful place as a classical *sangeet shaili* (form of music).

The guru later gave a lecture demonstration at Delhi's India International Centre (IIC), laying special emphasis on the *Gitagovinda asthapadi*'s (eight-line poems) to which most Odissi performers dance. This lecture, held under the aegis of Kiran Segal's dance outfit 'Pallavi', drove home the point that Odre music was facing the danger of losing its regional flavour because of the heavy influence of Hindustani.

According to Professor Panda, *'Odre'* music needs to be allotted a separate identity of its own, just like Hindustani and Carnatic music have their own identity. "There are several *raags* such as *Varari* and *Mangalagujjari* in Odissi music, that have not been found in any other stream. This and several other pieces of evidence that I have been able to find during the course of my research, prove that Odissi is a separate *shaili* of music and should be recognised as such," says Panda, who has been studying this music for over a decade.

Pandit Gopal Chandra Panda: Striving to give Odissi music its rightful status



Jagdish Yadav

Practitioners of this dance want to go back to the roots of Odissi music

Professor Panda maintains that every *asthapadi* in the extraordinary 12th century book of poems, *Gitagovinda*, composed by Jaidev, mentions at the outset the particular *raag* and the *talu* in which it is supposed to be sung But singers and musicologists are not fully conversant with the original *raag*, and hence rendered the *asthapadi* in the heavily Hindustani flavoured style, thereby losing sight of the original Odissi music, he maintains.

Panda, who is head of the Odissi vocal department of the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, says his contentions are the outcome of his research into the major works of Odissi music such as Geeta Prakash, Sangeet Narayana and Sangeet Bhaktavali.

The guru, who has written many texts on Odissi music, such as *Sangeet Manjari, Odissi Raga Prakash, Gita Govinda Suralipi* and *Odissi Rag Parichay*, says it is not difficult for any Odissi singer to identify the *raag* mentioned by Jaidev atop every *asthapadi*, "It is simply that no one has tried to study or research the way the old *raags* are meant to be rendered and have simply accepted the style that was prevalent or that they had learnt from their gurus," says Panda.

He maintains that *raags* like *Varadi, Desavaradi, Mangalagujjari* and *Gundakiri* which are native to Odissi, go to show that Odissi music is based on the '*Udramagadhi Pravritti*' that was prevalent in the eastern part of the country.

To prove his point, Panda rendered the *Malavagauda raag* at the lecture-demonstration, stating that both Geeta Prakash and Sangeeta Muktavani make the same references about the *raag*. He also rendered some of the *Gitagovinda asthapadis*, notably '*Keshimathanam udartam*' in *Gundakeri* and '*Srtakamala Kuchamandala*' in *Mangalagujjari raag*, as laid down by Jaidev. Panda's daughter Sarita's performed an Odissi dance to the *asthapadis* sung by her father.

Panda's findings and contentions have earned him both bouquets and brickbats from within the music community, but that is not what he is worried about. His main concern is to get people to start rendering the *raags* in their original style so that Odissi music may get its due status.

Kiran Segal, herself a noted Odissi dancer, who organised the event, maintains that dancers like her would be more than willing to understand and accept the original renderings of the *asthapadis* that they dance to. As she says, "In fact, the purpose of getting gurus like Professor Panda to Delhi was to get them the right kind of notice and attention because very often dancers from Delhi go to these gurus, get hold of their findings and then come back and tout them as their own." ■

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: The soap opera

It all began in: America, where else? Television stations in that country had cracked what worked on TV during the evening (news, talk shows, game shows, and the like) but needed a formula for the rest of the day.

They found it in day-time, daily, long-lasting serials that appealed to housewives, who were free during the afternoon and became the captive audience These shows had a fair dose of both high drama and melodrama, and were sponsored — in the beginning at least – by soap companies. Hence, the use of the term soap opera to describe them.

In India: However, soap opera was introduced during prime time, rather than during the day-time. The first such show was the now-legendary *Hum Log*, brain child of Manohar Shyam Joshi It told the story of a lower middle-class family comprising three generations, focussing on the tensions set up by modern living.

The format was still quite primitive, with one of the characters delivering a little homily at the end of each episode. But despite such shortcomings, *Hum Log* soon became something of a phenomenon, with the entire nation tuning in to watch the twists and turns in the plot.

Able successor: To this show, was Ramesh Sippy's *Buniyaad* This serial, too, focussed on the family, tracing the life and times of a Punjabi household before, through, and after Partition. *Buniyaad* made such actors as Alok Nath, Anita Kanwar, Kiran Joneja and Mazhar Khan household names, and the end of its run was occasion for country-wide mourning.

The upper-class segment: Was taken care of by such serials as *Khandaan*, in which Neena Gupta was first introduced to the nation as the super-bitch of television But despite a tautly-scripted storyline and above average performances by the actors, this show never really captured the imagination of viewers in the way that *Buniyaad* did.

The format changed: With the advent of such American day-time soaps as *The Bold And The Beautiful* and *Santa Barbara* on Star Plus. These relied heavily on sexual intrigue to climb up the ratings charts, and it wasn't long before Indian viewers were also biting their nails wondering whether Ridge Forrester would marry Brooke. Or whether he would walk up the aisle with his former girlfriend Caroline, who had earlier been married to his brother, Thorne. (Well, we did warn you about the sexual intrigue bit, didn't we?)

It was, of course, another matter that Ridge had already made this crucial decision on American small screens. And that we were watching episodes that had been aired in the USA several years before.

How did this affect Indian shows?: The storylines of Indian soaps changed, to begin with. The focus shifted from the domestic to the romantic, and love — both marital and illicit — became the moving force behind these shows. Thus, every serial, whether it was on Doordarshan, Zee TV or Sony, dealt with the issue of adultery, both male and female, and pre-marital sex — which had been a big no-no earlier — began to feature regularly.

The biggest success stories of this era: Were *Junoon* on Doordarshan and *Tara* on Zee TV. While *Junoon* gained because it was on a terrestrial channel and had been dubbed into Tamil to appeal to south Indian audiences as well, *Tara*'s heroine, Navneet Nishan, gained an immense fan following despite her rather unconventional looks.

What viewers are looking for: Is probably a mix of *The Bold And The Beautiful* and *Buniyaad*, with a little bit of *Andaaz* and *Dynasty* thrown in for good measure.

But then, knowing Indian producers and writers, such a show is probably playing on a television screen somewhere in the vicinity even as you read this. ■

A scene from Ramesh Sippy's *Buniyaad*

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Indian women abroad take to driving more readily, says ***Vaishali Honawar***

When Mrs Sharad Gupta wanted to go to the supermarket on a rainy day and discovered there were three cars in the garage but no one to drive her, she decided it was time to take action. Mrs Gupta, who was then in her forties and had been living in London for 15 years, had often taken driving lessons but had never managed to muster enough courage to go for a driving test. Her well-intentioned but nervous husband did not help matters by going: "Don't do it this way!" or "Watch out!" every time she sat behind the wheel to learn.

But this time Mrs Gupta was determined. With help from her daughter, Nidhi, she took a few more lessons and soon was the proud holder of a driver's license.

In India a woman behind the wheel still evokes a little surprise and a lot of snide remarks, except perhaps in cities like Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta. But a tiny, old Gujarati lady in a sari manoeuvring a huge Mercedes would not be an uncommon sight in Southall, a suburb in the outskirts of London which is dominated by Indians—or anywhere in the UK for that matter.

Last month a survey carried out in London claimed that of all the ethnic minorities that live in the UK, Indians were the most likely to own a car.

And as Nidhi Dalmia, who has lived there since childhood points out, most of the Indians actually driving would be women who traditionally end up doing much more housework than men. "A woman would drive to the supermarket, drop the kids at school, perhaps drive her husband to the tube station and then drive to work herself," points out Nidhi who drives a Ford Mundial.

In the driving seat: Women drivers are a common sight

Nidhi, who shifted to India for five years after her marriage, finds driving on the streets of Delhi a horror as compared to London. She believes that is one of the reasons why women back home do not take to driving as easily as they do in London. "Also, India is so much more male-dominated when it comes to driving," she says. "There's a great deal of prejudice when it comes to women driving."

"In London it is simply necessary to know how to drive because public transport, while being good, might often not service areas near schools. Also, driving a car is cheaper than using public transport," says Sutapa Bhattacharya, a writer who has been living in London for over 10 years now. Nidhi points out that Indian women— specially those belonging to the older generation—driving cars are becoming an increasingly common sight in the UK.

Mrs Jaya Chauhan, an elderly child-minder, migrated from Uganda to the UK several years ago and was forced to learn driving immediately afterwards. She drives a Proton and describes herself as a "very slow driver who stays within the limits".

Ramesh Choudhury, a journalist who has lived in the UK, however, feels Indian women often make dangerous drivers, flouting the rules and speeding beyond limits. "Every time I am with an Indian woman and am driving, she keeps asking me to go faster," he laughs.

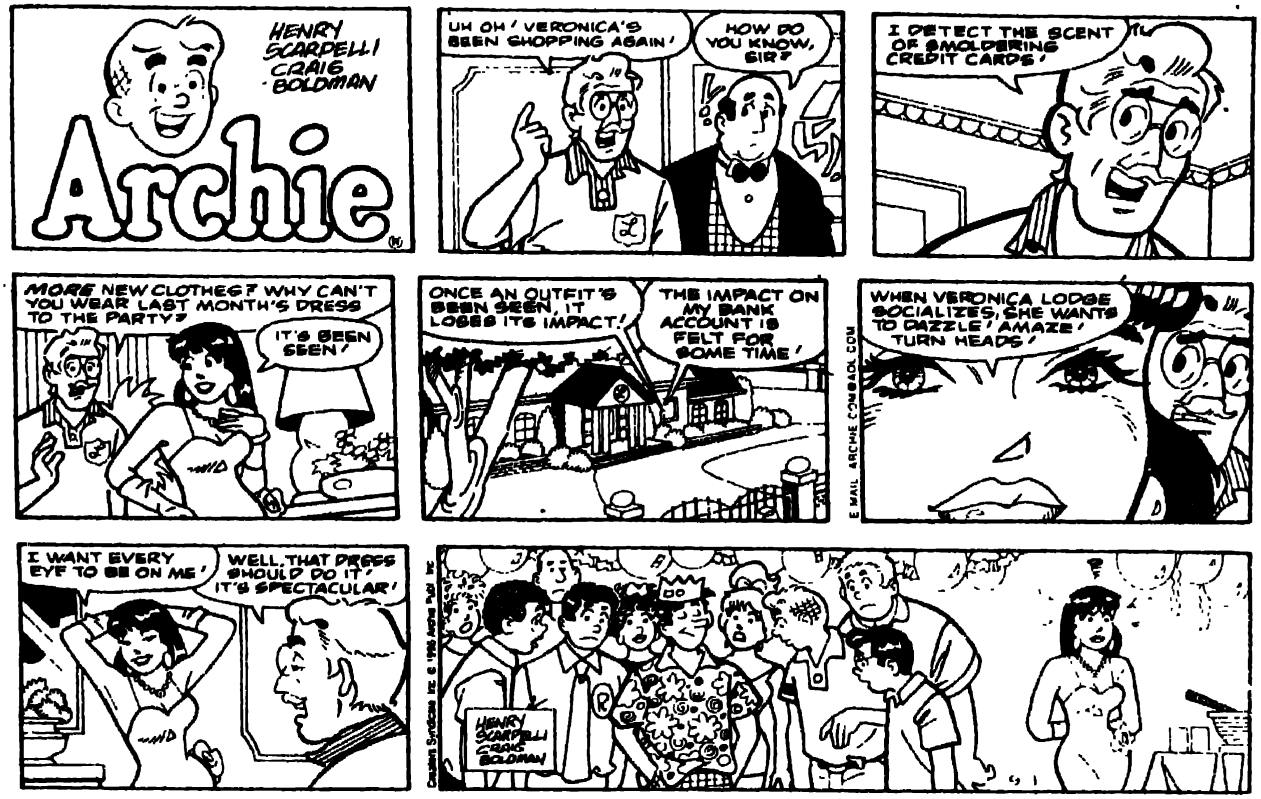
Nidhi admits that she loves racing and recalls an incident when she was speeding around a corner on her way to work and almost crashed into another Indian woman speeding from the opposite direction. "We both swore at each other and it was fun!" she laughs. She says she is more careful these days after reading ads about children dying in accidents and feels that is why women make better drivers than men. "They simply are more careful and caring," she says.

Her husband, K.N. Dalmia, testifies to her abilities as a driver saying when he shifted to London after having lived in Delhi all his life, it was Nidhi who taught him to tackle London roads. "I would say, even today that she is a better driver than I am," he says.

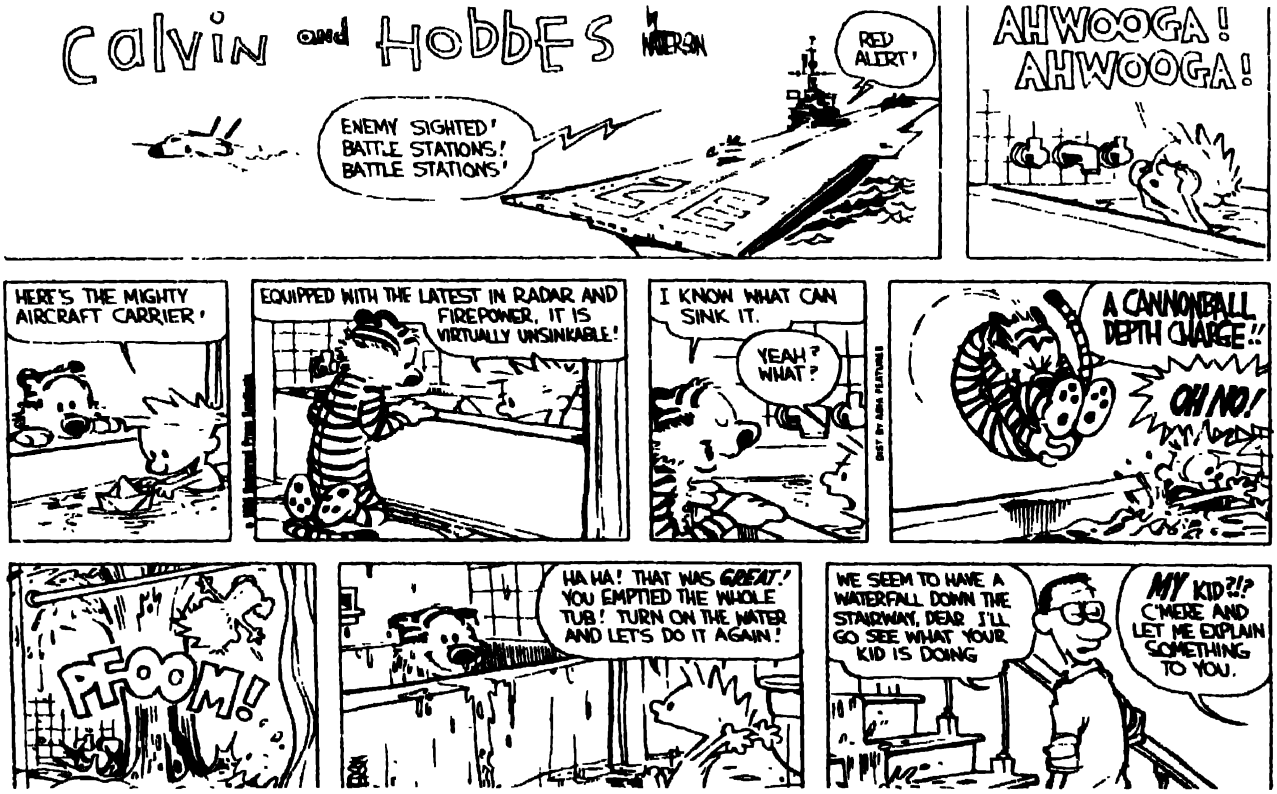
And the male passion for fast cars seems to have rubbed off on our women too. Sutapa dreams of speeding around in a sports car while even the mild Mrs Chauhan would love to sit behind the wheel of a Mercedes. Nidhi's favourite cars are the Audi, the Volkswagon, the Peugeot and the Toyota and she would love to own one of each someday.

For our women in Britain, life is certainly moving into top gear.■

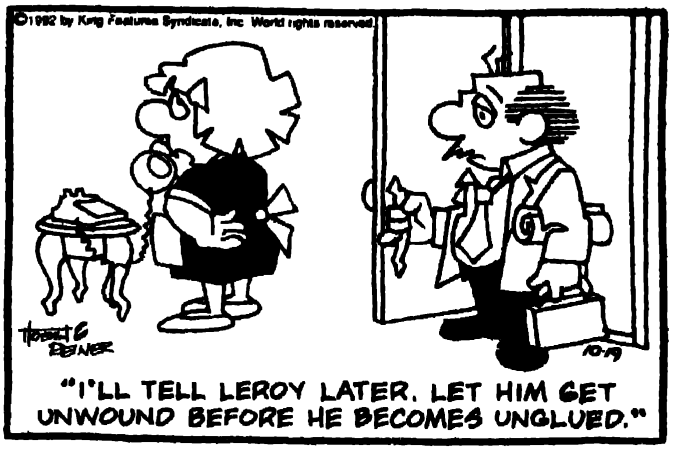
ARCHIE

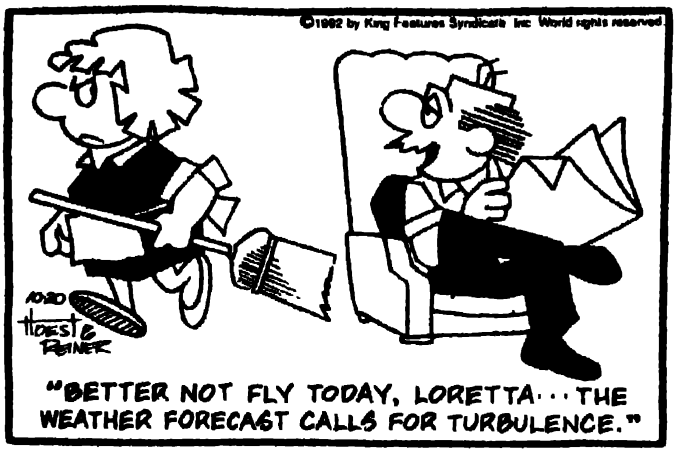


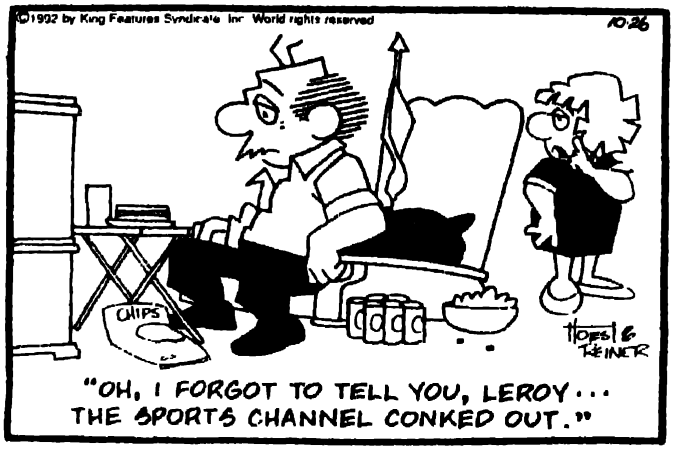
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

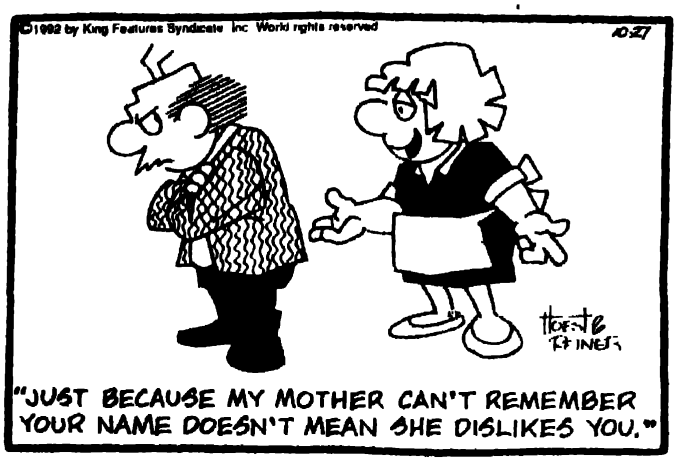


THE LOCKHORNS

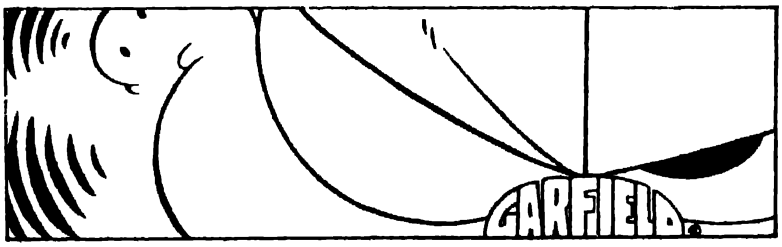


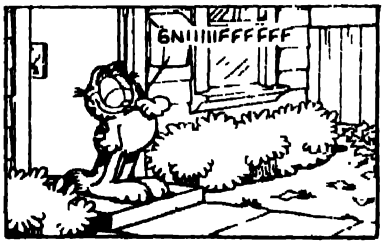




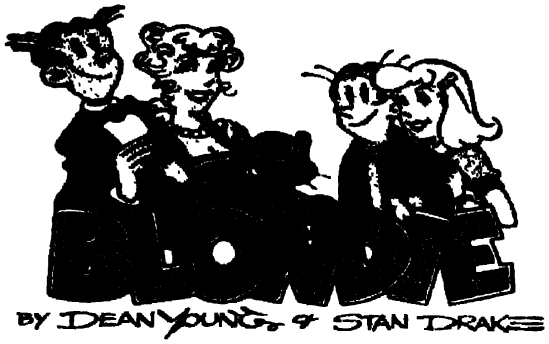


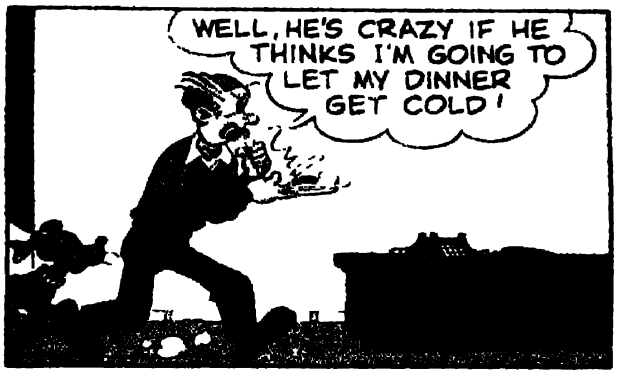
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

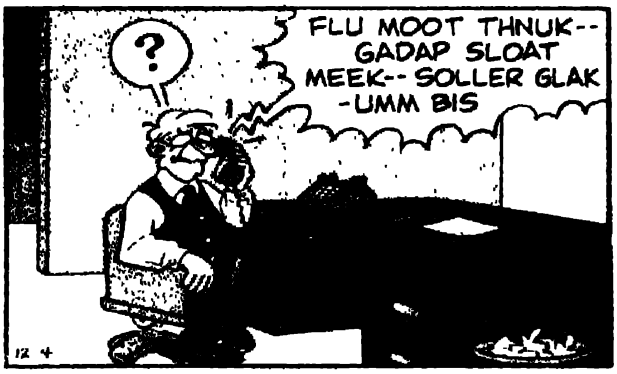




THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP







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Continued from page 8

to love her. So, don't even try to provoke her by recounting what Susmita Sen has been saying about her. Rai will just smile sweetly and refuse to comment. Don't ask her about her affair with Ranjeev Mulchandani. She will deflect all queries with a 'we are just good friends' defence. But she'll do this with such good grace, that you will never be able to take offence. That's because Aishwarya is that rare specimen: a beauty who is as good as she looks. And the rest of us can do little more than gawpe in admiration.

F I L M S

Kajol

She's pretty, talented, and has a mind of her own. But more than that, what makes Kajol stand out among the bevy of beauties that comprise the film world is her absolute disregard of convention, both in her personal and professional life.

Madhu Sapre

She can't be bothered with plucking her eyebrows or bleaching her upper lip. She doesn't care if she's seen wearing spectacles in public. She cuddles up to her boyfriend, Ajay Devgan, unabashedly on the sets. She thinks nothing of taking off on vacation with him. And she is never accompanied by mummy—yesteryear actress Tanuja—while shooting.

But while Kajol doesn't have the makings of an old-fashioned star in the Madhubala mould, she more than makes up with her high-voltage performances in such hits as *Dilwale Dulhaniye Le Jayenge*. And what makes this all the more admirable is the fact that she is the exact opposite of the character she plays in this movie: the quiet, docile Simran, who does whatever her parents want her to.

If [Kita] Singh's story teaches us anything, it is that dreams can be translated into reality, as long as you have the vision to back them up

Ritu Ber

Finally she is what she is because she is unpredictable and passionate; perhaps it's the Bengali in her.

Rekha

Who would have thought that the fat, dark teenager who was launched in *Sawan Bhadon* back in the 1960s would metamorphose into the ageless swan of the 1990s?

All right, Rekha is no spring chicken (she must be in her late forties, though age is such a racket in the film industry), but there is now a timeless quality to her. Hema Malini has retired to lonely domesticity, Mumtaz looks nothing like the impishheroine of old, Sharmila is more Begum than beauty, and even such later entrants as Zeenat Aman are past it.

But Rekha keeps going. This year, she has posed for *Harper's Bazaar* (pictures by

Rina Dhaka

Mary Ellen Mark) along with girls young enough to be her daughters (Susmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai) and given a major hit all of her own, *Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi*.

Those who predicted that she would go bananas, claimed that she was unstable or argued that she would age badly have been silenced by her longevity.

This is a woman who thrives on being alone and serves as an example to all industry women.

Manisha Koirala

The thinking man's Madhuri Dixit. Those who remember her when she first came to Bombay, accompanied by a pushy mother and ensconced in Sanjay Dalmia's guest house, cannot reconcile the slender child who acted in Subhash Ghai's *Saudagar* with the accomplished,

Kajol

bosomy actress of such hits as *Bombay* and *Hindustani*.

The secret of Manisha's success is that unlike Madhuri, who will never accept a proposal unless it's a surefire, commercial venture, she has never been scared of taking risks.

Sometimes the gambles have paid off and sometimes they haven't.

She took Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* even though the whole world told her that nobody would accept a Nepali beauty as a South Indian Muslim in an art film. Somehow, she carried it off. She accepted a role in Kamalahasan's *Hindustani* even though the pundits said that Urmila had the better song. Now that the film is a hit, it is Manisha not Urmila who has benefitted.

Even those gambles that have backfired have not hurt. *Khamoshi* will be remembered for two things: its terrible box-office performance and Nana Patekar's even worse on-screen perfor-

Aishwarya Rai

mance. But nobody blames Manisha for the flop. In fact, they say that she did her best despite the dismal screenplay.

This is a woman who is not afraid to drink or to love, a woman of the 1990s

TELEVISION

Salma Sultan

With her trademark rose (stuck discreetly behind one ear) she hasbeen a permanent fixture on our television screens for as long as there has been a Doordarshan. So much so, that her gently-smilingfeatures have become completely identified with the Hindi news bulletin on the national network

And Salma is perfectly aware of the place that she occupies in the national consciousness, hence her violent reaction to the news that the mandarins at

Ritu Beri has gone from being a lesser-known B-division designer to becoming the person most eligible for inheriting Rohit Khosla's mantle, as the leader of India's fashion world. That's partly because Ritu doesn't restrict herself to fashion alone

Rekha

She [Manisha Koirala] took Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* even though the whole world told her that nobody would accept a Nepali beauty as a South Indian Muslim in an art film. Somehow, she carried it off

Mandi House were planning to terminate her services.

But if those faceless bureaucrats do get their way, Indian television will soon lose one of its most recognisable faces. And one that both inspired trust and was easy on the eyes

And that would be a real pity

Neena Gupta

Which one is the real Neena Gupta? The superbitch of 1980s' television serials? The art film actress of Shyam Benegal's *Trikaal*? The disastrous talk show hostess of recent memory? The vulgar bosom-thrusting dancer of *Choli ke pechchey?*

It is a tribute to Neena Gupta's versatility that we accept her in so many different roles. We accept her talent and we accept her right to lead an unconventional private life: she has shown no embarrassment over the love child with West Indian cricketer, Vivian Richards.

She is not young any longer The looks are beginning to go And the voice sometimes reminds you of somebody scratching his nails across a blackboard

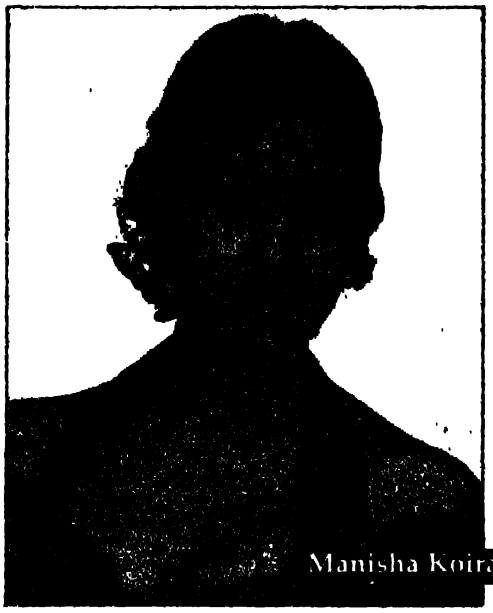
But nothing stops Neena She's even done a music album, and as her looks have faded she has found roles that are more in keeping with her altered appearance.

At the end of the day, one of the great survivors of our times

Karuna Samtani

If you've never heard of Karuna Samtani, do not despair That is probably how it should be. She is one of those backroom wizards who decides what will appear on our television screens without ever imposing her own personality on us

Neena Gupta



Manisha Koirala

It was Karuna who Subhash Chandra put in charge of the fledgling El TV channel. Despite the competition from Big Brother Zee TV and from the mega-buck backed Doordarshan network, she managed to create a viable channel on a tiny budget --so tiny that wags named it El Cheapo TV

Now, she's gone as far as she can in Subhash Chandra's set-up

She is head of programming for Zee TV itself, a crucial job considering the competition from new quarters. Home TV and Sony.

Rumours that differences with newly-appointed Zee network head, VG Jindal, would push her into accepting a senior post withrival Sony have been disproved.

But she is a hot property in the world of Indian television. And she knows it.

THE ARTS

Mallika Sarabhai

She's come a long way from the days in which the Bombay film industry would dismiss her as a Parveen Babi look-alike who missed the bus Some people expected the daughter of Vikram and Mrinalini Sarabhai, and an accomplished classical dancer in her own right, to give films a miss and to go on to something more serious.

But Mallika made her point. She shifted to Gujarati cinema, where she and Kiran Kumar became a *dhokla* version of Amitabh and Rekha, both on and off the screen. (Don't be surprised She has interesting tastes. Pritish Nandy is an ex-beau.)

She was rescued from *dhokla*dom by Peter Brook, who cast her as Draupadi in his version of the Mahabharat, an expe-

rience that appears to have become central to Mallika's life, both professionally and personally.

These days, she runs a publishing house, Mapin, named after her and sometime husband, Bipin, and does the odd bit of television, though last month Home TV cancelled her eponymous programme, *On Air With Mallika*.

No matter. She'll find something else to do.

Lata Mangeshkar

Everyone makes much of the Mangeshkar Monopoly, and how Lata—with some help from her sister, Asha Bhonsle— never let any other playback singers make it in the Bombay film industry But no amount of carping can detract from the fact that Lata has ruled supreme in Bollywood recording studios for around five decades. And she couldn't have done that by manipulation alone; she had to have had the kind of voice that launches a thousand best-selling albums.

But while her singing talent is beyond dispute, what makes Lata remarkable is her ability to command respect Whether it is the orchestra leader or the highest-paid music director in film land, they all treat Mangeshkar with due deference. And this, in an industry that has a long and hoary tradition of treating single women with scant respect.

Lata, however, remains an exception to that rule And in an era when singers rely on scanty costumes and sexy gyrations to remain on top, Mangeshkar's dulcet tones are enough to keep her at the top of the heap.

Lata Mangeshkar

Arpana Caur

Arpana Caur

With her large, luminous eyes, and the slightly frightened expression that lurks in them most of the time, Caur is a little difficult to figure out. For one of India's leading painters, she is remarkably unassuming, and doesn't make too much of her indisputable talent.

And talent she certainly has in large measure. Whether it is a series on Hiroshima or just ordinary portraiture, Caur's artistic eye imparts the paintings with an ethereal quality that is easy to identify as her own But praise her work, and she looks mildly surprised, almost as if she can't quite believe that anyone would find anything of consequence in her work.

But don't be taken in by that modesty. Arpana may not be a relentless self-promoter like M F Husain, but she is an artist. And in the end, that is all that matters. ■

Mallika Sarabhai

FIRST PERSON

***SHANTANU MUKHERJEE**, the younger member of the brother-sister duo of Shaan n adds the spirited dimension to their numbers. He strongly feels against the constant comparison between them and the Nazia-Zoheb team and prefers to be trendsetters instead. Having already released their own album* Naujawan *under music director Biddu, he plans to make it big in the world of pop music.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

To be in peace with myself and in harmony with everyone and everything around me.

What is your greatest fear?

Age and disease.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

My Dad was a strong influence for me.

What do you dislike most in others?

To be petty and get upset over trivial things. Also being presumptuous.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

My mind is often preoccupied and ill-focussed when it shouldn't be.

What is your most precious possession?

My voice and of course, my Mummy.

What objects do you always carry?

There is no object that I am very possessive about. Maybe, my watch.

What makes you most depressed?

Nothing. If anything, not for

do you dislike most on your appearance?

Probably my skin (No racial

What is your favourite word?

Cool (Most used, maybe).

What is your favourite journey?

A journey is important.

What is your favourite dream?

Too erotic to mention.

What is your nightmare?

I am generally lost in some ruins in my dreams.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

No one or nothing completely rules my heart. There is room for a lot of

ple. Sister and

share a large portion.

What is your source of sustenance?

to

childhood ambitions.

On what occasions do you lie?

I often lie my way out of tight spots.

hat is your greatest regret?

Losing my Dad very early in life.

What has been your happiest

What is your source of sustenance?

My tendency of holding on to

ambitions

moment?

When my team (the Green House) won on sports day in school after 11 years under my

team to your

ies?

movies.

How do you relax?

I listen to music or play a game of carom or pool.

What do you

Nothing in pa

How would you

I'd like to be a

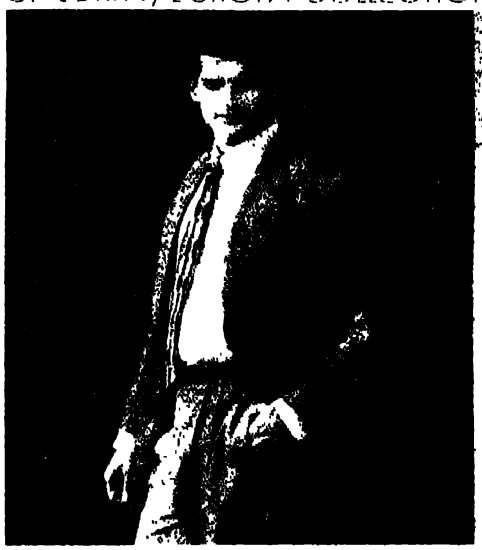
Friend.

How would you like to die?

Like a hero.

RAYMOND PRESENTS SUITING FABRICS, FOR ALL STYLES AND OCCASIONS CORONATION,

CELEBRITY, EUROPA COLLECTION, ELEGANZA, CEREMONIA, PENTA CLASSIC. GO ON



THERE'S MORE THAN ONE THAT SUITS YOU

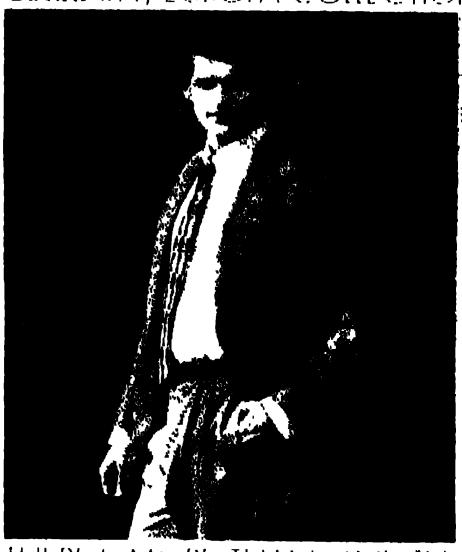
THE STUNNING RANGE OF ALL WOOL, WOOLRICH AND POLY WOOL BLENDS.

Raymond

SINCE 192

RAYMOND PRESENTS SUITING FABRICS, FOR ALL STYLES AND OCCASIONS CORONATION,

CELEBRITY, EUROPA COLLECTION, ELEGANZA, CEREMONIA, PENTA CLASSIC GO ON



THERE'S MORE THAN ONE THAT SUITS YOU

Raymond

ie Telegraph

10 NOVEMBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Her Master's Voice

■ Mayawati's meteoric rise from a very humble background to political prominence, speaks volumes of her guts and determination ('Maha Maya', September 15). Mayawati let nothing come in her way of education. She would have been an IAS officer had fate not intervened and changed her interest to politics in the shape of Kanshi Ram. She has much to thank her guru for shaping her political career. She would have made a good chief minister.
M.S. Quraishy,
Calcutta

■ Very few women politicians have been able to make a mark for themselves in the male dominated arena of politics. Even Indira Gandhi had mentioned many times during her speeches abroad that she was fighting for a place in an exclusive male world.
In such a situation, Mayawati's rise deserves appreciation. Once the Bill on women's reservation is passed in Parliament, women like Mayawati will be able to play a more constructive role.
Prahlad Agarwal,
Nadia

Mayawati: Eyes set on chief ministership

■ Indian politics needs some strong and committed women politicians. Women parliamentarians are generally favoured with some light departments like child welfare or family planning. We have never had a woman defence or finance minister. May be the arrival of more strong-willed politicians like Mayawati will alter the imbalance.
Suparna Banik,
Calcutta

■ Uttar Pradesh is beginning to reflect Indian women's age-old quest for attaining equality with men. Mayawati has gone down in history as the first woman chief minister. This speaks well of the state's progress in freeing itself from gender biases. The state also has had its first woman Governor: Sarojini Naidu.
Ramesh Saha,
Rampurhat (W.B.)

■ What Mayawati lacks is an individual image. Her political career totally hinges on Kanshi Ram, her fortune-maker. Her projection as a champion of the *shoshit samaj* is a tactic to bring the Dalits under her spell. Otherwise, apart from rhetoric, what has she done for the Dalits?

She is also given to compromising. She compromised on her *Manuwadi* politics when she joined hands with the BJP. She should first be a true leader of the masses and then long for the *kursi*.
Md Rizwan,
Jamshedpur

■ As is its wont, the media tries to stir up a gossip linking Mayawati's name with that of Kanshi Ram's. We should judge her for her political achievements and failures. After all to succeed one needs a godfather. In the film industry without a godfather you are nowhere. In politics, too, one needs a mentor.
Swati Verma,
Dhanbad

INSIDE

Neena

PAGE 12

IT WAS the TV serial *Hum Log* that made him a celebrity. Manohar Shyam Joshi can take the credit for having brought Western soap operas to India with a distinct *desi* touch.

PAGE 4

KAMALAHASAN PLAYS *maami*.

Manohar Shyam Joshi

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FILM

MAAMI MIA

Kamalahasan gets in touch with his feminine side in his new movie, Avvai Shanmukhi. ***Sudha G. Tilak*** *reports*

Inspired by *Mrs Doubtfire*: Kamalahasan as *maami* flanked by two co-actresses in *Avvai Shanmukhi*

He's done it again Kamalahasan has come up with another surprise—something that he seems to do with amazing regularity. In fact, the only thing predictable about the actor-producer-director these days is his unpredictability

The success of *Indian* in Tamil, Telugu and *Hindustani* in Hindi has probably egged Kamal on to try a new look on celluloid. After all, the main USP of *Indian* (or *Hindustani*, if you will) was Kamalahasan in the role of a 70-plus man, wrinkles, crinkles, and all-- accomplished with the help of some expert make-up

Sailing on this new box-office trick, Kamalahasan's next film slated for a Diwali release is a scream all right A take-off on *Mrs Doubtfire*, *Avvai Shanmukhi* has Kamalahasan in the unrecognisable garb of a Tamil Brahmin *maami* (any elderlyBrahmin lady goes by the name of *maami* in Tamil Nadu).

But wait a minute· this is not the drag look that every Hindi film hero worth his biceps and chest hair sports in some movie or the other. You know the kind we mean, don't you? Govinda in skirt and ponytails, playing hockey; Aamir Khan shaking a nylon-clad leg; Amitabh Bachchan getting into ghagara-choli for *Mere angane mein*; and even Naseeruddin Shah squeezing into a swimsuit along with Aditya Panscholi.

In these films, everyone is in on the secret, including the audience. But for some reason that is impossible to fathom, only the poor, dim-witted heroine fails to recognise our man— despite his all-too-familiar voice, gestures and features.

Kamalahasan, of course, believes in doing things differently. And in *Avvai Shanmukhi*, he has done just that, giving Robin Williams, of *Mrs Doubtfire* fame, a run for his money

As *maami*, Kamal is a portly 75 kilos, with a smooth complexion, rosy, chubby cheeks, and with corals glinting in his ears and on his neck. The feminine grace and gestures weren't hard to come by; Hasan's years as a Bharatnatyam dancer helped him in getting his act right. And as for the voice, Kamal managed to change it enough so that he didn't need a dubbing artiste to fill in.

As a result, the actor is absolutely convincing as *maami*. And if you don't believe us, just take a look at

the picture featured on these pages.

Perhaps it is to move away from the hackneyed drag look that a new stream of film makers like Amol Palekar and Kalpana Lajmi are making that look at transvestism with a serious bent of mind. Palekar's *Daarya* and Lajmi's *Darmiyaan* are both films that are trying to take away the absurdity inherent in the way in which Indian films deal with transvestism and eunuchs.

The West, of course, has done it before. It started with the big hit of *Tootsie* with Dustin Hoffman popularising the drag look to the more recent *Priscilla, the Queen of the Desert* which examines the world of the transvestite.

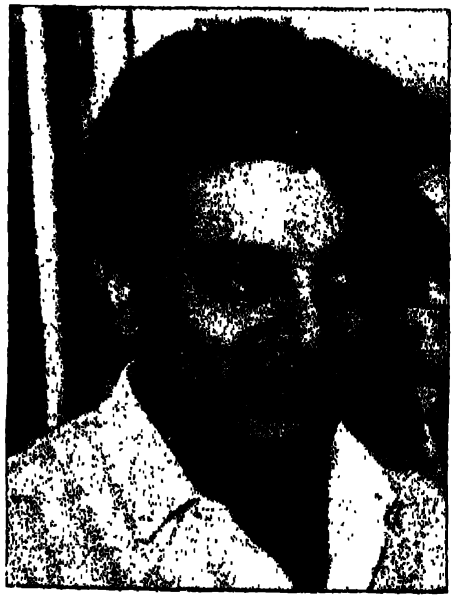
In *Avvai Shanmukhi*, Kamal has tried to emulate these examples. And the result is a movie that has the makings of a commercial success, and yet has a strong message

Playing the role of a Brahmin cook, Kamalahasan had visitors to the sets fooled alright. Since one sequence required a feast with a dozen *maamis* to keep Kamal company, director Ravi Kumar decided nothing but the authentic look will do A dozen real *maamis* were roped in for the scene.

A Durga who had walked into the sets looking for "her favourite hero" was disappointed at not finding him there. Until she espied a *maami* seated in a chair calling out directions in a male voice.

Kamal, tongue firmly in cheek, recalled, "Well, I had some lady artiste whispering absently to me: 'Check your slipping *pallav*,

The real Kamalahasan sans make-up



Sporting another look: Kamalahasan applying make-up for *Nayakaan*

woman' " Nothing could have pleased the actor more. at last he had achieved the authenticity he was looking for.

The new look to out-do Robin Williams at his own game needed work all right. Kamal went to the US to meet Michael Westmore, the *Star Trek* make-up whiz who helped Kamal with prosthetic make-up in *Indian*. Tshis time he had to use a single rubber prosthetic piece to fashion his cheeks, rounded jowls and saggy neck.

Having imported the piece from the US, Hasan had to be very careful indeed while working with it, as it was made for one-time use. It ended up costing Kamalahasan nearly Rs 10,000 each time he turned into *maami* but the results seem to have been worth it.

As were the travails of sitting wearing a nine-yards Tamil sari and learning to walk, run along, and also give chase on a mobike in it. He also had to make do with sipping juices and liquids during the shooting since chewing and yawning or 'using' his face would endanger the look, and there was every chance that his 'face' would go out of shape.

Having decided on the drag effect, Kamal even daubed on feminine perfume instead of an aftershave. This after trying to cream or shave the fuzz on his chest, arms and legs.

Perhaps because it is intended to shock and impress, the movie was shot amidst much privacy. Nosey scribes were shown the door and hangers-on were not encouraged. Two song sequences of the film have been shown to a select tribe of mediapersons, but much of the thrill is meant for viewing on the big screen.

Not that everyone is applauding this effort Kamal's detractors have been saying that the actor has been borrowing heavily from Hollywood for all his films of late. And that his recent successes have all been Western-inspired Indian editions. *Sadi-Leelavathi* is the Indianised version of *She Devil, Magalir Mattum* was a take-off on *Nine to Five* currently being filmed as *Ladies Only* in Hindi with Randhir Kapoor playing the lecherous boss. Closer home, *Kurudhi Punal* was a remake of Govind Nihalani's acclaimed *Drohkal*. And now *Avvai Shanmukhi* is inspired by *Mrs Doubtfire*.

Borrow he may, and try the headiest tricks in the box-office book to make an impression on the audience, but there is no stopping Kamalahasan. He has discovered his own personal mantra for making successful movies, and if it owes something to Hollywood, who cares?

Clearly the audiences don't —and in the end, that's all that matters. ■

VIEWPOINT

FEMINISTS OR FEMINAZIS?

In their zeal to stop the Miss World contest, by force if necessary, our women's organisations have exposed their ugliest face yet, says ***Seema Goswami***

I always believed that the whole point about women's liberation was just that liberation. That shorn of all its bra-burning cliches, the movement sought to win freedom for all women, no matter where they lived, what colour they were, and whether they wore skirts, sarongs, saris, or well, swimsuits.

It has taken the current controversy raging over the Miss World contest, scheduled to be held in Bangalore on the 23rd of November, to show me how naive this belief was. It now turns out that the 'freedom' that all our feminists have been fighting so hard for is restricted to a chosen few

So, if you wear a salwar-kameez and sport a bindi on your forehead, then you're entitled to the protection of the feminist umbrella. But the moment you slip into a bikini — or even a mini-skirt — and try out the latest shade from Revlon lipsticks, then you're on your own

As long as you're agitating against dowry deaths (a very worthy cause in itself) on the streets of Delhi, the feminists will applaud you. But try and earn an honest living by walking the ramp during fashion shows, and you will have the wrath of this PC (Politically Correct) Brigade descend on your well-coiffed head

And going by the current brouhaha raging in the press, beauty contests come a close second to amniocentisis in the Feminist Book of Evil

The argument, as I understand it, is that beauty contests commodify women by placing a premium on personal appearance. They also reinforce stereotypical (read Western) standards of beauty:every contestant is at least five feet seven inches tall; is reed thin; etc., etc And that making the participants parade the stage in swimsuits while men the world over ogle at them is demeaning not only to the girls in question but to womankind itself.

I have no doubt that the feminist lobby believes implicitly in this position, and wants to stop the Miss World contest only to save those hapless beauty queens from a fate worse than death: dishonour. And I would have no problem if they sat these ladies down, and over their broccoli and Bisleri (or whatever it is that they eat) initiated a dialogue that convinced them to withdraw from the event to support the cause of the Sisterhood.

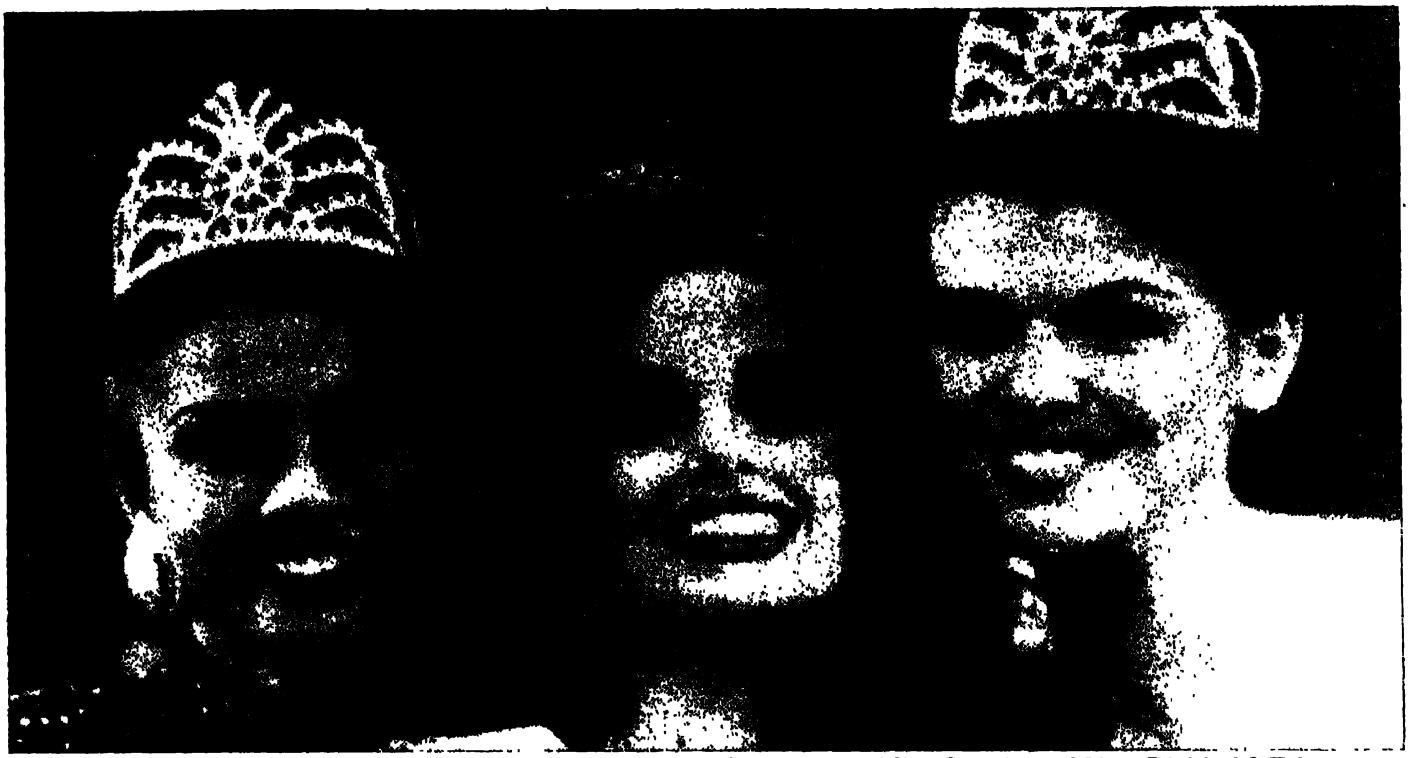
But the feminists don't do that. Instead, secure in the conviction that their's is the only valid point of view, they lecture us on how our culture is being destroyed by foreign cosmetic companies, and by those women who prefer to dress in Levi's jeans rather than ethnicwear from Gurjari.

If any man dared to dictate to us as to how we should dress, all of us would be up in arms. If any male suggested that women who wore revealing clothes were 'asking for it', we would be crying 'male chauvinist pig' until we were hoarse.

And yet, when our feminist sisters argue that swimsuits are perfidious influences, and that any glimpse of female flesh will lead to the collapse of Indian civilisation, we don't raise our voices in protest. We don't ask them to take a flying jump from their moral high ground, and let us make informed choices about how we want to live our lives. Because surely that's what freedom is all about: the freedom to make choices, even if they are ones that our mothers don't necessarily agree with.

We may have got over our 'Daddy knows best' hang-up, but we still seem to believe in some corner of our hearts that Mummy still does know better than us. And every time we act on that premise, or remain silent when we should have stood up to be counted, we encourage people—irrespective of their gender

Miss World 1994, Aishwarya Rai (India) flanked by the two runners-up



Miss World 1995, Jacqueline Marcano from Venezuela (centre) poses with Miss Croatia and Miss Trinidad & Tobago

— to treat us like little children who have to be told how to live, eat, behave, and dress. (And if we don't fall in line, well then, they'll just have to burn that stadium down, won't they?)

Consider how strongly we react to every edict of the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan which infringes women's rights: whether it relates to the closing down of schools for girl children; the enforcement of an Islamic dress code for females; and the decision to exclude women from the workplace.

And then, think for a moment: is what our feminist friends are doing any different from the actions of the Taliban? They may be on opposite ends of the political spectrum, but their essential position is not very dissimilar.

The Taliban wants women to remain at home so that their modesty may be preserved; the feminist lobby wants them to stay off the catwalk. The Taliban believes that the Islamic fabric of their country will be destroyed if women abandon the chador; the feminists are convinced that Indian culture will be desecrated if girls are allowed to parade in swimsuits in beauty contests. The Taliban is suspicious of education when it comes to the female sex; the feminists don't trust women to have learnt enough from their lessons to make their own life choices.

Ultimately, both believe they know best; both are unwilling to entertain a world view other than their own; both want to dictate to women. When push comes to shove, both reveal themselves as militant movements with a fanatic edge. The Taliban may be a fundamentalist organisation, but our feminists have also been exposed as feminazis.

The Taliban believes that the Islamic fabric of their country will be destroyed if women abandon the chador; the feminists are convinced that Indian culture will be desecrated if girls are allowed to parade in swimsuits in beauty contests

The old 1960s' term for feminism was 'women's liberation', sometimes shortened to women's lib. It is no accident that this term has fallen out of favour. What the feminists are asking for has nothing to do with liberation. It has to do with a theology that may be more politically correct than the Taliban's, but is no less restrictive.

That, alas, is how a section of the women's movement has gone: from women's libbers to feminists to feminazis.

It is one thing to be rigid, unforgiving and narrow-minded—as the opponents to Miss World are—quite another to use force to seek to impose your views on others.

The Taliban parallel also holds when it comes to the methods adopted by some of the contest's critics. The ABCL office in Bangalore has been bombed, the Godrej showroom ransacked and more is to follow. One organisation has threatened to burn down or demolish the stadium where the contest is being held. And given that the protestors now include the lunatic fringe of the BJP, perhaps we should take the demolition fear a little more seriously (the warning signal will be when they start calling the stadium a 'circular structure').

These methods are those traditionally used by the enemies of the freedom, be they the Taliban, the Bajrang Dal, or the Nazis. The ready recourse to violence emphasises the essence of the so-called 'feminist case': the women participants are not just unworthy of deciding whether to join the contest or not, but they are also unworthy of any consideration as regards their safety.

Human life is merely a trifle in the eyes of the wild-eyed feminazis. The end matches the means ■

EXTRACT

A Pukka BACKGROUND

An extract from ***Qurratulain Hyder's*** *book of short stories*

Fasal Masih is a poor, khaki-clad sweeper with a beatific smile. He works for an ill-tempered Englishwoman who lives on Mussoorie's Vincent Hill. Every evening, at sun down, he brings a fair, blue-eyed child to the Library Bazaar to "eat the air", as he puts it. He places the child on his shoulder and stands under a lamp post, watching the ebb and flow of holiday-makers. Standing motionless under a lamp post he can remind you of the Hindi couplet, *khara kabira der se, mange sab ki khair*: Kabir has long been praying for everybody, for friends and foes alike in the marketplace of the world.

In Csarist Russia people like Fazal Masih were known as Holy Fools. Muslims call them *majzoob*—absorbed in God. Perhaps Fazal Masih is not a mystic, merely a sweeper with a very low IQ. And he seems to dote on the little girl who looks like Shirley Temple. She is so pretty that the passers-by often stroll over to the lamp post to regain their breath and baby-talk to her. She is a quiet, well-behaved, well dressed baby and looks like a high-born Missy Baba. Mussoorie is full of prosperous English and Scottish families.

But you can't know much about Goldilocks because Fazal Masih never speaks. He keeps gazing at the distant mists as though he is trying to find his answers there. Once, out of idle curiosity, a passer-by had asked him, "Which Saheb's daughter is she, Jamadar?" to which he had retorted, "She is my own niece, Babuji. You just let us be..."

The unexpected reply has amazed the newcomer from the plains, but some of the local cooks and bearers, *ayahs* and coolies know that little Catherine Bolton is Martha Masih's daughter and that her father was an English Tommy. No matter, such things sometimes happened.

Martha is Fazal Masih's attractive sister. In Urdu, squirrels are fondly called Katto. Because of her playful agility Martha is also known as "Katto Gilheri". Like her brother, she works for Miss Celia Richmond. her parents had been baptised by Miss Richmond's missionary father. Miss Richmond runs a second-grade "Europeans Only" guest house called Richmond Inn, frequented by Poor Whites and fair-skinned Anglo-Indians. No dark Eurasian can aspire to be Miss Richmond's guest.

Now it came to pass that towards the end of the Second World War, an English Tommy called Arthur Bolton was billeted in Richmond's Inn. And he turned out to be a bit odd. Instead of King and Country he liked to hold forth on Truth and Conscience and Mr Gandhi. He befriended the Holy Fool, Fasal Masih, and spoke to him in the native lingo. Like other British soldiers he had been taught Roman Urdu but he also liked to hear North Indian folk songs which Katto Gilheri sang rather well. Arthur Bolton was a drummer in a regimental band. He would have liked to be a famous musician but like many other artistes the lack of opportunities had kept him unknown and poor. So, instead of staying at the Savoy he had to make do with crochety old Miss Richmond's genteel hostel. Arthur went hiking in the sun-hazed mountains and with Fazal Masih he watched the dawn mists. He certainly was a very peculiar sort of Cockney.

Before returning to Meerut Cantonment Arthur Bolton told his friends at the Inn that they may never hear from him. "Even if I survive the war I may not write. I hate writing letters," he said candidly. However, he did send thank you notes, postmarked Meerut, to Miss Richmond and her two servants,

Extracted from The Street Singers of Lukhnow and Other Stories by Qurratulain Hyder Published by Sterling Paperbacks Price Rs 85

before leaving for the European Front.

When Martha Masih, alias Katto gave birth to a blonde who resembled Arthur Bolton, Miss Celia Richmond was not amused. She was not shocked either. She knew that Martha was not a layabout. She had erred and may God forgive her. Secretly Miss Richmond was happy. The cherubic infant had suddenly lit up Miss Richmond's lonely and dismal life. She felt that now she had someone to live for. She was also an incorrigible romantic and a snob. She invented a *pucca* background for the waif: "My first cousin Col. Arthur Bolton," she told her Poor White guests, "has been reported missing on the Western Front." "Poor Arthur," she would add singing, "he was quite a charmer, you know. And so handsome. He had married an Irish peer's daughter just before coming out to India. Shortly after he left for the Front poor Cathleen Bridget died in childbirth. At the Military Hospital, you know, in Peshawar. Fortunately, Arthur had given my name and address to the authrities as his next-of-kin in India. The Red Cross sent the little orphan to me –"

Even while getting her baptised Miss Richmond had quite recklessly given the parents' names as "the late Col. Arthur Bolton and Cathleen Bolton" "So help me God," she had said to herself crossing her fingers.

Catherine Bolton was a toddler when India became free. Mussoorie's English population suddenly vanished. Miss Richmond stayed on. She didn't want to wash dishes in an inhospitable England. But being English and practical she removed the 'Europeans Only' board from her gate. The guest house began to flourish. Wealthy citizens of independent India found a certain snob-value in staying at the quaint old inn... "Ye olde England type, you know, still run by a charming English lady," they wrote home on their picture postcards.

Catherine Bolton was nicknamed "Chhoti Katto" by the few locals who knew the secret. She was growing lovelier by the day.

Rev. John Sigmore, the kindly English parson who had baptised Catherine in 1946, had migrated to Australia the following year. He had continued to correspond with Miss Richmond. On Catherine's fifteenth birthday he wrote: "I am worried about the dear child. What is her future in India? Would you like her to become a cabaret dancer or a fashion model or marry a heathen? Bring her over to Australia before it's too late..."

Miss Richmond pondered over the matter. What indeed was to become of this exquisite Eurasian girl? Was she to join the ranks of telephone operators, office secretaries or, God forbid, cabaret dancers? Tongues had already started wagging about Catherine Bolton's exuberant vitality.

The Hindi teacher in Catherine's school happened to be a local rogue. One frosty evening he tried to kiss her and was fiercely rebuffed. He called her a tart and a "cheap mongrel" Catherine rushed home in tears and told her Aunt Celia.

That freezing December evening Miss Richmond made up her mind. She spent a restless night dreading the unknown tomorrows that were to dawn in the Australian outback. But go away she must for the sake of dear Catherine. She will tell them. She summoned them to her room in the morning and steeled herself to make the grim announcement. Catherine sat by the fireside sorting out Elvis Presley records. The moment the servants came in Miss Richmond dropped the bombshell "Martha..." (she reserved the *ayah*'s Christian name for important occasions), "we are going away to *Vilayet*. Katy Baba and I. Do not worry. I'll give both of you excellent chits."

Both Katto and her brother were dumbfounded. They gaped at the bird-like Miss Saheb. Miss Richmond knitted away furiously. Katto broke down. After some moments she wiped her tears and said defiantly, "Miss Saheb. Katy is my own flesh and blood. I shan't let her go. How

can you ..how...?"

"Shut up!" Miss Richmond snapped in her high-pitched voice. "You are forgetting your place, Katto. Kindly remember who you are. Besides, what proof do you have that Catherine Baba is your daughter?"

Katto was horrified. The sharp-tongued Miss Saheb had never been so callous. The poor *ayah* began to sob heartbroken by now

There was too much hysteria in the gloomy, Victorian bedroom Catherine got up and went out. The very existence of her mother and uncle had begun to embarrass her since her last birthday when Miss Richmond had shrewdly told her the truth "Col Bolton, Cathleen Bolton and her father, the Irish lord, are entirely fictitious But remember, some truths are not worth bandying about. You must keep your real parentage a dark secret."

Catherine instinctively knew the rules for the struggle for survival She had followed Aunt Celia's advice.

After she left the room, Miss Richmond said more reasonably, "Think coolly, Katto What would happen to Catherine Baba after I die? Suppose more people get to know that she is your child? Who would marry an untouchable woman's daughter—even if she looks like a European? Tell me, eh? Besides the natives have scant respect for cross-breeds. What will she do for a living? Would you like to see her take off her clothes, one by one, and dance naked in a hotel? God forbid!" she added shuddering "Or would you marry her off to the head jamadar of the municipality?"

Poor Katto had no answer for that.

Miss Richmond sold the guest house to a Sindhi businessman. She was still there when he took possession. He replaced Jesus and Mary with Shankar-Parvati and Guru Nanak in the lounge: 'Richmond Inn' gave way to 'The New Himalaya Vegetarian Hotel' at the gate. So the day arrived when the emigrants' train pulled out of Dehra Dun railway station Katto and her brother were left standing on an empty platform. Fazal Masih rubbed his eyes and resumed staring at the gathering mists ..

Miss Celia Richmond alighted at Sydney airport and was thrilled. At last she had arrived in a White country. (She was born in Gorakhpur and had spent only six months in England.) She waited for someone to pick up her luggage. When nobody took any notice of her, Catherine brought a trolley and asked her to help. As Miss Richmond began pushing the luggage cart, suddenly she felt that the end had come.

Rev. Jon Sigmore was waiting in the airport verandah. He drove them home Miss Richmond had already transferred her assets from India. The clergyman had bought her a modest flat and a grocery shop in his suburban parish. Soon Miss Richmond found herself behind a counter selling vegetables. She had become part of Sydney's working class

Catherine joined a school and began dating She came home late Miss Richmond was of missionary stock and old-fashioned. "Aunt" and "neice" began to quarrel An uprooted, middle-class English spinster and a rootless Anglo-Indian teenager made a sad and lonely pair indeed.

Miss Richmond died after a couple of years. Life in exile had killed her. Catherine was not yet twenty-one when her godfather and guardian, Rev. Sigmore, died too. As a woman of means Catherine Bolton attracted crooks and hangers on. She began to live in style, in keeping with her fictitious "upperclass British" background. One of her boyfriends was a bookie. Through him she lost most of her legacy at the races.She had to sell her flat and shop to pay the debts. She desperately wanted to become an actress. There was no film industry in Australia. "The shortest cut to London's show business is through the nightclubs," a boyfriend told her. She learned cabaret dancing and got a job in a shady joint. She needed the money.

Years went by. As 'Catriona the Sizzling Stripper' Catherine Bolton eventually landed up in the Hongkong-Singapore-Kualalumpur nightclub circuit. She could never behave like a hardened mullatto. The imaginary Col. Bolton always told her to live with a certain dignity. She remembered her doting mother and

uncle and her affectionate Aunt Celia and had bouts of depression and self-pity.

Life as a taxi-dancer and night-club hostess humbled and saddened her. At stag parties she entertained corrupt political leaders and businessmen of what was now being called the 'Third World'. Which was her own world? she wondered, flitting from hotel to hotel, dealing with lecherous men of all nationalities.

In every hotel room she found the same massive Bible on the bedside table. How much had the Bible helped the world, she wondered.

In Jakarta, met a Dutch a sufi—thick-set, blond and magnetic. He had come to Jakarta to study Indonesian sufism, he told her. He was a "Dutch sensitive" and explained to her all about ESP and Islamic mysticism. "Your father is still alive," he declared one evening. "And he is a remarkable man."

"Where is he? What does he do?" she asked eagerly.

"Can't tell you more. I can only see that he is alive: and I can also sense that he is a great man."

"Great man?" she repeated excitedly.

So perhaps, he was really a colonel and may now have become a general in the British Army. The idea that he was still around somewhere suddenly made her feel less insecure. The Dutchman's bulky presence was quite reassuring too.

Pretty soon she found herself in a mosque An Indonesian 'Sheikh' converted her to Islam and married her to Mohammad Mueen Koot of Amsterdam. She saw her new name on the nikaah register and felt good: Halimawati binte Col. Arthur Bolton.

Mr M. Koot was a strict Muslim. He forbade her to dance semi-naked in floor shows. And since his money order had not arrived from Amsterdam, she had to pay his hotel bills too. Once again she ran through most of her savings.

A month passed. One sunny morning Catherine Koot woke up to discover that the Dutch "sufi" had vanished—along with her jewellery and cash. An empty plastic cup lay on the bedside Bible which suddenly reminded her: Only last evening her learned husband quoted an American author. It was something to the effect that you may roam the earth but a day comes when you realise that the world is full of Holiday Inns and plastic cups, and that you must eventually return home. .

Catherine Koot, too, managed to return to Sydney. She was aging fast and could only become a bus conductor.

Never give up hope: is the basic rule for the struggle for survival. Catherine Koot handled the bus tickets and wondered—Maybe at the next bus stop the Prince Charming...

Raja Sir Narendranath Bajpai's ancestor was a poor Brahmin astrologer who had once pleased Emperor Jehangir with his predictions and received a *jagir* in the Jamuna Valley. The prsent Raja Saheb lived in his modern mansion in New Delhi and ran an export business. His son and heir, formerly Yuvraj Shailendranathjee (now plain Mr S.N. Bajpai), had come out on a business tour of Japan, Southeast Asia and Australia. The Prince was not frightfully intelligent and Australia was the first White country he had ever visited. Therefore, he had gone gaw-gaw.

One Sunday morning the Rajkumar decided to see the India-Australia Test match, studied the route map and boarded a stadium-bound bus.

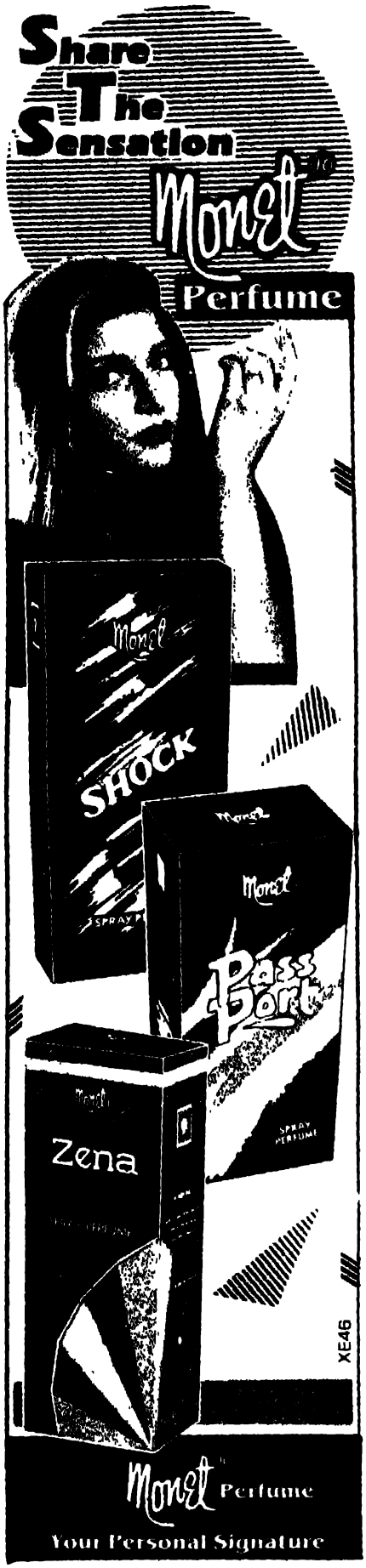
The coach was full of good-lookers—Lebanese, Greeks, Italians. Moon-faced Australians. But the bus conductor simply dazed him.

He blinked. She smiled politely and ambled on. The smile encouraged him. He remembered the Indian maxim about women—*Hansi to phasi*. If she smiles, it means that she's gawe. He took the same bus at the same time every day till he succeeded in introducing himself as Prince Shailendra of India.

She had met a lot of young princes in her school in Mussoorie. As a former nightclub hostess she could also distinguish between a real prince and a fake. She accepted his dinner invitation.

Our Rajas and Nawabs used to keep at least one European woman (often a Cockney barmaid) in their harems. Catherine Bolton had an impeccable background. Father British colonel. Maternal grandfather Irish peer.

As a young widower Prince Shailendra was fancy-free. He proposed to Catherine . The following week she found herself in a Hindu ashram in Sydney. In Jakarta an Indonesian sheikh had turned her into Halimawati. Down Under the South Indian swami called her Akshandsowbhagyavati Rajyalakshmi Shailaja Devijee. On the asram's marriage register she signed her new name: Shailaja Devi, daughter of Col. & Mrs Arthur Bolton. ■



COVER STORY

SERIAL KILLER

***Geeta Sharma** meets Manohar Shyam Joshi, the man who brought the soap opera to India with* Hum Log *and* Buniyaad

IT IS WITH A RUEFUL LOOK on his face that he says, "I have been faceless as a journalist and foolish as a scriptwriter." The lament is hard to digest, coming from a person credited with having given India its own genre of the *desi* soap opera with such serials as *Hum Log, Buniyaad* and *Humraahi.*

But 64-year-old Manohar Shyam Joshi is serious. He feels frustrated, he says, that he never used his position as editor of a leading magazine, *Saptahik Hindustan,* to "make a mark" by mingling with ministers, going on jaunts and flaunting himself in his magazine. Worse still, after the runaway success of *Hum Log,* instead of going into production, he kept accepting scripting assignments while the others minted money.

But there is consolation yet. There is, for instance, his identity as a 'highbrow' Hindi writer with novels such as *Kuru Kuru Swaha, Kasap, Haria Hercules ki Hairani, Humzad* and *Ta Ta Professor* to his credit. And he has no hesitation about admitting that his television writing was nothing more than trash, which he did only to keep the home fires burning. His real creativity was restricted to his novels.

And yet, sitting in his spartan south Delhi DDA flat, where his lecturer wife, with *maang* liberally smeared with *sindur,* graciously serves you tea, Joshi doesn't come across as an embittered man. And as he holds forth in his easy, charming style it is easy to visualise him as the author of that spell-binding soap, *Hum Log,* India's longest-running television serial that told the story of an Indian lower middle-class joint family, in an urban setting. Or even as the writer of *Buniyaad,* the saga that traced

the history of a Punjabi family before and after Partition and had the entire country hooked.

Then followed a string of smaller successes — *Mungeri Lal Ke Haseen Sapne*, another tale of the middle-class dreams related through the endearing persona of Raghubir Yadav; *Kakaji Kahin*, a powerful tongue-in-cheek critique of Indian politics delivered with just the right punch by Om Puri; *Humraahi*, another middle-class saga, *Zameen Asmaan* ...the list is endless.

Modest as he is, Joshi says there is nothing great about his scripting. It only means following certain tricks and formulas of the trade. There is, he says, an audio-visual imagination that some people possess that helps them to remember and narrate incidents down to the most minute detail, be it the women's gossip in *mohallas* or a

Kiran Joneja in *Buniyaad*: A runaway hit from Josh

Joshi with his lecturer wife: Happy partnership

Neeraj

family fued. Then you need the knack to give your own imaginative touch to stereotypical characters in the stereotypical situations that typify all soaps.

Take for instance Baseshar Ram of *Hum Log*, the archetypal bad father who drinks and mouths obscenities. But then, he also has certain characteristics that set him apart — his penchant for singing Saigal songs and his grandiose dreamsthat make him a lovable character and give him an extra dimension.

For *Hum Log*, Joshi recalls, he took a lot of the middle-class touches from the gossip sessions that he had clandestinely heard and stored away in his mind during his stint as a journalist, when he worked night shifts and was in his middle-class surroundings during the day-time gossip hours.

However, for the 104-episode *Buniyaad* for Ramesh Sippy, Joshi had to put in a lot more research and read all the possible books available to get the facts and dates about that period right. He also had to speak to a whole lot of Punjabis from the capital, who had lived through the Partition, to get the right kind of reminiscences to base his stories on.

Ironically, while the whole nation stayed tuned in episode after episode, to witness the unfolding fate of Lajoji, Masterji and their clan, Joshi had his first bitter experience with the Mandi House mandarins.

As the serial's episodes about the Partition began airing, the authorities started to hack portions and stubbornly refused to telecast any scenes which showed the resentment of the traditional Delhiwallas for the Punjabi refugees. The serial was, in fact, abruptly wound up with the last episode skipping a few decades and showing the family in the 1990 s.

Now, however, it is time for Joshi to wipe out the bitter memories as *Buniyaad* is all set to be revived by Star Plus, on which it will be telecast at prime time.

Joshi says that he had never intended to become a writer. He had set out from his home in Ajmer, where his educationist-musicologist father was a school principal, for Lucknow, to study science and become a scientist. This, against the wishes of his family, which thought he would do well as an engineer. Throughout his university days, he read a lot of popular science and even got a Rs 50 prize as Scientist

Manohar Shyam Joshi: Giving *videshi* soap a *desi* touch

of Tomorrow, for a write-up on 'The Romance of the Electrons'!

At the same time, he was bitten by the communist bug. Though he never became a card-carrying member of the party, the fact that he hung around with the comrades and was a sympathiser, provided enough reason for a police dossier to be maintained on him. The dossier haunted him throughout his career, but also provided him the spark to become a writer.

Sitting with the comrades in a *dhaba* one day, a friend of his casually commented that he should be a writer because he "spoke in short stories". The comment was enough to inspire Joshi to hone his skills as a writer.

But despite his success in Hindi literature and Hindi entertainment, Joshi claims that he was never the

***Humraahi*: Himani Shivpuri and Nirupama Verma**

"Hindi speaking type" thanks to his upbringing in a family that hailed from Almora and that was both feudal and anglicised at the same time. "My Hindi was atrocious and I was notorious for my spelling mistakes," he says, with a laugh.

But once his short stories started bringing in enough to supplement his pocket money, Joshi decided to take his writing a little more seriously and began searching for a guru to guide him. He found one in noted Hindi writer, Amrit Lal Nagar, who tought Joshi the basic rules.

The first was a crash course to improve his Hindi, the second was to learn the basics of *Khari Boli* and the third was never to shy away from using a dictionary or a thesaurus. Above all, he taught Joshi the art of listening to people talking in various dialects and reproducing them in his writings.

Soon, he landed in Delhi, armed with a letter of recommendation for Feroze Gandhi who was managing the Indian Express group and Durga Das of the Hindustand Times group. "Being the braggart I was, I told them both I could write on anything and everything. And both were equally unimpressed by my claim," says Joshi So he ended up writing sundry articles on sports and assorted subjects.

Then followed short stints as a journalist with All India Radio, through his second guru, Vastyayan Agyeya, and a lucky opening --his police dossier notwithstanding -- in the Central Information Service, that took him to Bombay In between, there were innumerable instances, when

OLLY AT AHMEDABAD Sonarupa Apartments, C G Road • BANGALORE Commercial Street • CALCUTTA Rawdon Street • CALICUT Arafa Complex, Cherooty Road
Kasi Arcade Basement, Pondy Bazaar • COCHIN M.G Road • COIMBATORE D B. Road • DELHI Ajmal Khan Road, Karol Bagh; Opp. Priya Cinema, Vasant Vihar, Greater
South Extension II • HYDERABAD Somajiguda • INDORE The Heritage, M.G Road • MANGALORE Balmatta Main Road • MUMBAI Hill Road (Near Bandra Police
Road • NAGPUR Poonam Chambers, Byramji Town • SECUNDERABAD Park Lane • SURAT Samarth Sarfu Pane Point

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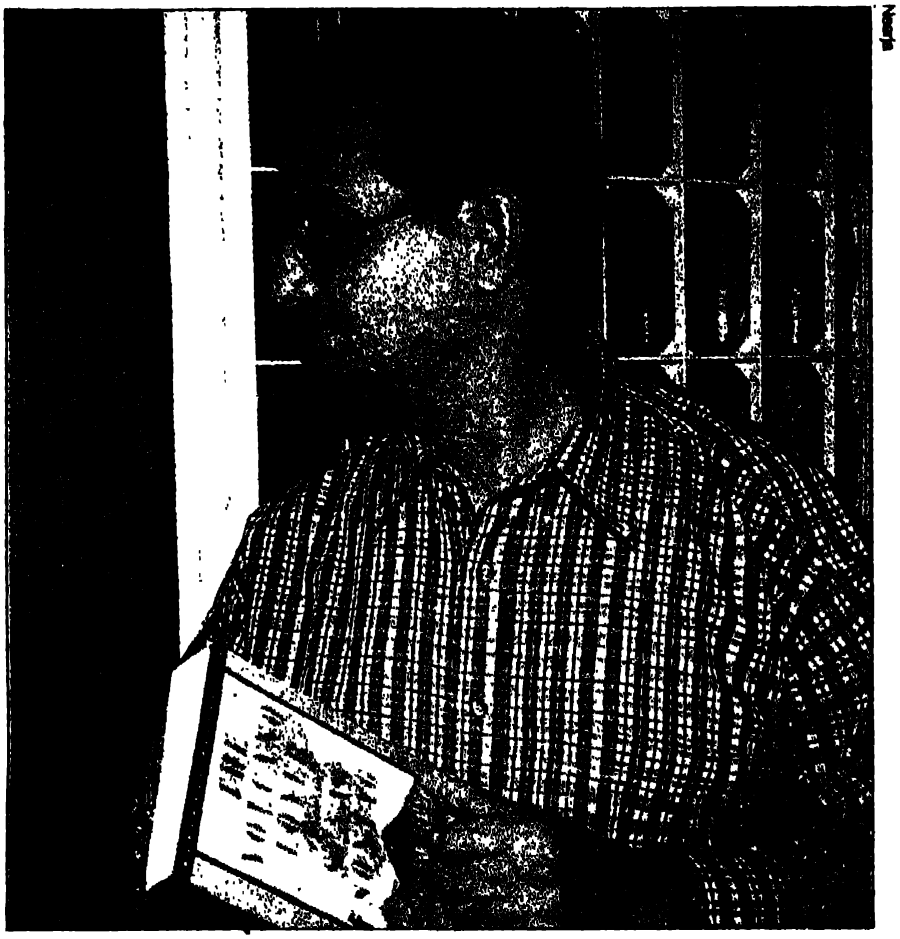
Joshi wrote under pseudonyms (he has lost count how many he wrote under).

One of the more outstanding instances was when he decided to fill in the two-year boycott of *Dharamyug* editor Dharamveer Bharati, and wrote week after week on sundry topics. But the lid blew off when Joshi, writing for the magazine under the pen name of Kurumanshi, wrote all the articles of the special issue brought out on the Chinese aggression on India in 1962, one week ahead of its sister publication, *Illustrated Weekly*. The fact that the entire issue had articles by one person, proved to be the last straw and an explanation was sought by the management about the goings-on!

Joshi, who was very much attached to his mother and wanted to look after her, his father having died early, then moved to Delhi, to take up a job as a journalist in *Dinman*, since his guru, Vatsyayan, had joined as editor. From *Dinman*, he got his break as editor of *Saptahik Hindustan* launched by the Hindustan Times group And he remained here for 17 years, maintaining a very low profile.

The lucky break for him in television came in 1983 when S.S. Gill, the then secretary, information and



A still from a Joshi comedy, *Kakaji Kahin*, which had Om Puri in the lead

broadcasting, sought his services for devising a soap opera to get home the message of population control. "There had been endless delegations before that which had been on countless trips to Mexico, from where the inspiration for the soap came, to study the technique and style. But nothing had come through. Finally, it was Gill and I who sat down and decided on *Hum Log*," Joshi recalls. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Soaps, sagas and serials have come a long way since *Hum Log*. And Joshi does not hide his dismay at the current fare being dished out on the innumerable channels. "Every other serial these days ends with either a 'bitch' or 'bastard' or both. Our *desi* soap is becoming *videshi* very fast. No one is stopping to think of the need for socially relevant wholesome entertainment," he laments.

Joshi attributes this change to the needs of the market, where the up-market yuppie-values-driven advertisers and sponsors decide the trends and the selling techniques, which are based on the *Santa Barbara* and *The Bold And The Beautiful* model and not on the *desi Hum Log* variety. "To me, such fare is not so much 'up-market' as '*upasanskriti*' (alien culture)," he quips.

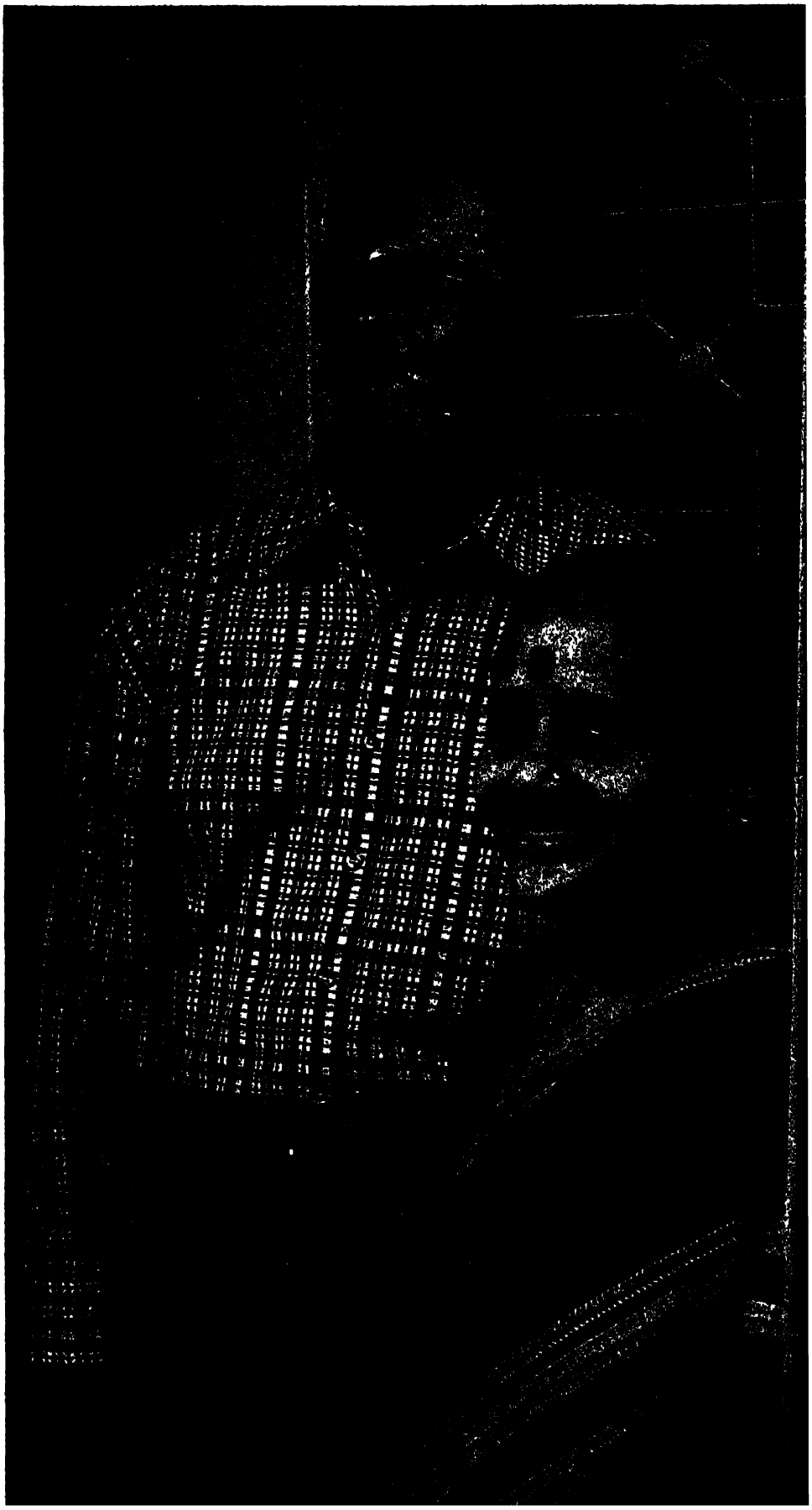
For the man crowned with the Onida Pinnacle Award for lifetime achievement and the Uptron Award for best serial (for *Buniyaad* and *Humraahi*), there is nothing new to watch or look forward to on television now. "There is a sameness pervading all channels," he says.

Joshi attributes this dismal picture to the dearth of good writers and lack of a clear policy about the idea of entertainment. "I wish I could train some of our young ones in writing. There was a time when I had hoped to start evening classes here, but my shuttling life between Bombay and Delhi has left me with little scope for that."

The only saving grace, says Joshi, is that the audience is proving to be discerning enough. For, despite the trash being shown on the various channels, viewers have shown a preference for such serials as *Mahabharat, Chandrakanta, Krishna* and the like, which showcase traditional values.

Having, apparently, foreseen the inevitable downslide in television software, Joshi had tried his luck with films too. His first two projects, with Ramesh Sippy, *Bhrashtachar* and

Neerja



A still from the serial, *Zameen Asmaan*

Zameen, proved to be either flops or nonstarters. He has also done the dubbing scripts for *Drohkal*, and Kamalahasan's *Appu Raja* and is working with him on the Hindi counterparts of his Tamil films.

Nonetheless, Joshi still sounds enthusiastic about his television proposals. Two of them — one based on a novel by Bhairappa, called *Ullanghan*, on the untouchables, and the other on the Bhaval Sanyasi case of Bengal where a man, given up for dead came back but was not accepted by his wife and family, even after winning court battles to prove his identity — are yet to take off. Also in the pipeline is a *Buniyaad* type saga that would trace the travails of a family from east Bengal to India.

None of Joshi's three sons, two of them pursuing computer studies and biotechnology in the US and the third, a chef at a Delhi Hotel, seem to have inherited their father's writing skills. But Joshi does not add that to his list of laments. In fact he says, both he and his wife, a lecturer in Delhi's Lady Shri Ram College, are happy that their children are pursuing areas of interest they chose for themselves.

And as far as he and his wife are concerned, Joshi says before his wife can get a word in edgeways that their's is a "happy division of labour"

And what is that precisely? Joshi has an explanation ready. "Well, the fact that the male of the species never lifts a finger for the household chores!" he says, in his most matter-of-fact voice.

Trust Joshi to live up to the archetypal middle-class male image he has so brilliantly created for the small screen. After all, you know what they say about art imitating reality! ■

INNEREYE

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

This is an important week for you as insurance, investments, joint-finances are definitely on the cards. You should be careful about your expenditures as they will mount though money does pour in. This is also a phase when socialising and romance give you pleasure, so make the most of it.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

November will be marriage time, and also the phase when there is love, collaboration and partnerships on the cards. Journey and ceremony will take the spotlight, and it could be about yourself, or friends or relatives. But your active participation in such social gatherings is definitely foretold.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

There is a lot waiting to be completed. This is a good time for self-assessment. Do finish off pending work. You should also think of new ways of doing a project or handling a job that is assigned to you. Learn to know people for what they are. Health needs safeguarding. A break from the past is indicated.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The focus will be on money, socialising and friends all of which are well positioned. Children and grandchildren give joy. Your creative juices will flow freely and take you near the top of your chosen profession. That seems encouraging for the future also. Take home disturbances lightly.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

There are two predominant trends this week. The first includes journey and an intense need to go ahead. The second centres round renovation, decoration, alteration, buying and selling, leasing and financing. A home away from home is also in the cards. Collaborations will be on the anvil.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Get off to a headstart as you will need energy and enthusiasm to get things done, start a venture, go in for a major enterprise or assignment. Rest assured that the chances of success are exceptionally bright, a near certainty. The new moon sharpens your intellect and hones it to a fine edge.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

A flurry of activity and money and family at the end of it is the forecast for Librans. It is time for developing new skills and taking a study course. Venus helps you to be charismatic and diplomatic. It should make life comfortable for you. Visits, conferences and meets could lead to contacts and contracts.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha claims you come into your own, make rapid headway and romance, marriage, new job, business possibilities loom large. Journey will result in sweet satisfaction. Secret and open deals and negotiations are very probable. The best part is, others will help you and success should come easily.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

For you also, secret deals and negotiations are indicated and gains could be made. Week getaways should be tried out this week. Also important phone calls and fax should be made because they could well turn the tide in your favour. Expenses really sky-rocket. Be willing to listen before you finally decide.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Game, set, match, Capricorn! Your creativity and organisational ability will be simply superb. A partner or a friend or a lover or a mate has an unusually brilliant suggestion to make. Take it up. New beginnings are favoured because of a slice of luck and extra energy. Your confidence should do the rest.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

There will be opportunities to make money, revive old contacts and cultivate new ones. And this trio should put you in the driver's seat latest by next February. But it all starts now. Try to avoid any fad-like regimen for health or even personal progress or professional success.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

A job offer, a temperamental friend, a bit of loving and laughing make it a really rich week. Do look forward to visitors and travel. Your thinking will be brilliant to the point of being innovative, and therefore, the right time to try out new ideas, delve into the thinktank and come up with something new.

BIRTHDAYS

N
nites and better housing and other property-related matters, be it shop, office and vehicle.

November 11: Moon Mercury conjunction [illegible] lect, promotes and favours travel. Bargains and trade-offs should work out.

November 12: Moon conjunct Pluto giving you [illegible] extra bit of energy and devilry you need for victory. The focus will be on finances, family and travel.

November 13: Moon sextile Venus means, love, beauty comforts and money. The quartet should make you happy.

Work opportunities will be manifold or something you do could lead to earnings.

November 14: Moon trine Mars square Saturn means both the good and bad will apply to you. Health and financial deals need careful watching.

November 15: Mercury trine Saturn means good going because Mercury leads to quick results and Saturn signifies.

November 16: Mercury conjunction Pluto is excellent for making money and those dealing in electronics, property, land and assets have it made.

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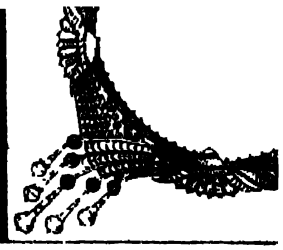

IME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
IC 741	0750	1, 3, 5, 6	IC 742	1015	5
D5-609	0600	4 5 7	IC 742	1205	1 4, 7
IC-743	0940	2	IC 744	1205	2
IC-743	1300	1 3, 4, 5 6 7	IC-744	1520	1 3 4 5 6 7
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC 715	1620	1 5 7	IC-716	2150	1 5, 7
PF-301	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1555	2 4, 5
			PF 302	1635	1, 3, 6
IC 721	0935	1 3, 5 7	IC-722	1205	1 3, 5, 7
D2 181	1330	1 3 5	D2-181	1600	1 3 5
IC-771	0600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IC 773	1825	3 5 7	IC-774	1740	3 5, 7
D5 402	0700	4 6	D5-401	1230	1 5
IC-544	1230	1 2 4, 5	IC-543	1125	1 2 4 5
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	2000	2 4 6
IC 263	0700	daily	M9-303	0820	daily
9W-902	0845	daily	9W-901	0810	daily
M9-304	0850	daily	AI-682	0925	1
IC-402	1715	daily	IC-655	0955	4 7
IC-856	1830	4, 7	IC 401	0855	daily
M9-302	1905	daily	M9 301	1900	daily
9W 912	1950	daily	9W 911	1915	daily
			IC 764	2210	daily
D2 182	1225	2, 4, 6 7	IC 702	1620	1 3 5, 7
IC 701	1240	1 3, 5, 7	D2 182	1625	2 4, 6, 7
IC-257	1145	2 4 6 7	IC 257	1550	2, 4 6 7
PF 301/305	0645	2 4, 5	PF 306/302	1555	2 4 5
IC-703	0750	1 4 7	IC 704	1200	1, 4 7
D5-601	0650	1 2 3 6	IC-735	1310	daily
PF 301	0830	1 3, 5	9W 612	1310	daily
IC 279	1000	daily	PF 302	1500	daily
9W 611	1020	daily	IC 714	1530	3 7
IC 713	1600	3 7	D5-602	2000	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	IC 776	1905	3 5 7
IC 777	1700	3 5 7	IC 770	2000	2 4 6
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	9W 512	2150	daily
IC 255	0600	1 4 5	IC 256	1250	1 4 5
IC 213	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
IC 713	1100	3 7	IC 714	1530	3 7
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1, 2 4
IC 715	1620	1 5 7	IC 716	2150	1 5 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
M9 304/119	0850	2, 4	M9-128/301	1900	1, 2, 3 4, 5, 6
IC-257	1145	2, 4, 6, 7	IC 257	1550	2 4, 6 7
9W 621	1010	3 5	9W-622	1320	3 5
PF-301/303	0645	1, 3 6	PF-304/302	1635	1 3, 6
IC-812	1530	1, 3, 5	IC-811	1915	1, 3, 5
D5-407	0700	4, 6	IC-965	0815	daily
IC-966	0905	daily	IC-543	1125	1 2 4 5
IC 544	1230	1, 2 4 5	D2 171	1155	daily
D2-172	1640	1, 3 5	D5-401	1230	3, 5
D2-174	1705	2 4 6 7	IC 766	2220	daily
IC 765	1720	daily			
			IC-675	0820	daily
9W 202	0715	daily	D2 101	0850	daily
IC-676	0730	daily	9W 201	0935	daily
D2-102	0920	daily			
IC 725	0950	2, 4, 6	IC 726	1615	2 4 6
IC-715	1620	1 5 7	IC 716	2150	1 5 7
AI-309	1930	6	AI 305	1730	5
9W 212	2000	daily	IC-274	1850	daily
IC 273	1945	daily	9W 211	1925	daily
D2-104	2005	daily	D2 103	1935	daily
IC-769	1615	2 4, 6	IC 770	2000	2 4 6
IC-725	0950	2 4 6	IC-726	1615	2 4 6
D2-406	1330	3 5	D5-406	1835	3 5
IC-812	1530	1, 3 5	IC 811	1915	1 3 5
IC-285	0530	1 3, 5	IC 286	1100	2, 4 6
IC-725	0950	2 4 6	IC-726	1615	2 4 6
IC 253	0800	3 6 7	IC 254	1040	3 6, 7
IC 255	0800	1, 4, 5	IC-256	1250	1, 4, 5
IC 213	1140	2, 6	IC 213	1540	2, 6
D5-406	1330	3, 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
D5 402	0700	4, 6	IC 543	1125	1, 2, 4, 5
IC-544	1230	1 2, 4, 5	D5-401	1230	3, 5

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 184	0705	4
KL 876	0325	7	KL-875	0130	7
KB 105	0855	2	KB-106	1020	7
KB-105	1755	4	KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0800	2 5	TG 313	1240	1 3 6
			IC-732	1410	2, 5
IC-855	1105	4, 7	IC-856	1730	4, 7
TG 314	1355	1, 3, 6			
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
RO 076	2130	5, 7	RO-075	1100	5, 7
IC-225	1130	3, 7	IC-226	1350	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG 091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC-723	1300	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	IC 724	1520	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
Q7-061	1430	6	Q7-060	1330	6
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	7
IC-747	1315	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	IC-748	1645	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
BA-142	2115	3, 7	BA-143	1515	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
SU-538	2100	4	SU-537	0930	4
KB 106	1105	2	KB 105	0810	2
KB 106	132[illegible]	5	KB 105	1710	4
BI 108	0630	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	2, 5	SQ-416	2030	2, 5
LZ-504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	18[illegible]	6
IC-227	1530	4, [illegible]	IC 228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19 15	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6-45	2312
3005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	7-55	3006
3003	20 00	**Bombay Mail** via Allahabad	13-00	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya-Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2303	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tues Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16 15	2304
2301	16 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	13 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun, Arr Wed & Sat	12 50	2306
2307	21 30	**Jodhpur Express**	4 40	2308
2019	6-05	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21-10	2020
3073	23-00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11 35	3074
3045	22 00	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep Tues Wed & Sat Arr Tues Fri & Sat	12 25	3046
5049	23 00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11-35	5050
5047	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun, Mon Wed & Fri	4-30	5048
3009	20-30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	9-30	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 15	3008
3039	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5-15	3040
3049	13 20	**Amritsar Express**	15 30	3050
3019	21-00	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16 05	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5659	17-35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6-30	5660
3317	6 10	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8-45	3036
3231	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3232
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
3017	5-45	**Rampurhat Express**	21-45	3018
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs, Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7-55	1160
1171	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed, Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 35	1172
3327	14-30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 30	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri Arr Tues	7-55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13-40	**Tista-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20 15	**Delhi Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20 35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Kalliar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-20	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18-25	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5185	12 10	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4-25	5086

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 15	**Madras Mail**	6-55	6004
8002	19 20	**Bombay Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	12 25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 30	2859
2021	6-00	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21-00	2022
8034	20-30	**Ahmadabad Express**	5-40	8033
8030	16-45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	13 00	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	17 20	2842
7003	7-50	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19 40	7004
6511	22 35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13 45	6512
8013	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8011	6-50	**Japat (Sambalpur) Express**	21-35	8012
8005	20 40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21 35	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 20	8016
8007	22 00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-30	8008
8401	13 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 40	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	10 15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 20	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12-05	8018
8079	23 30	**Tirupati Express**	4 15	8080
1030	15 45	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep Sunday Arr Friday	5 15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16 10	2421
2422	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10 45	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	23 15	
-	14 10	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13-15	6321
	14 10	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13-45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	
6324	22-35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep & Arr Tuesday	13 45	6323
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	22 15	
-	14-10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13 45	6519

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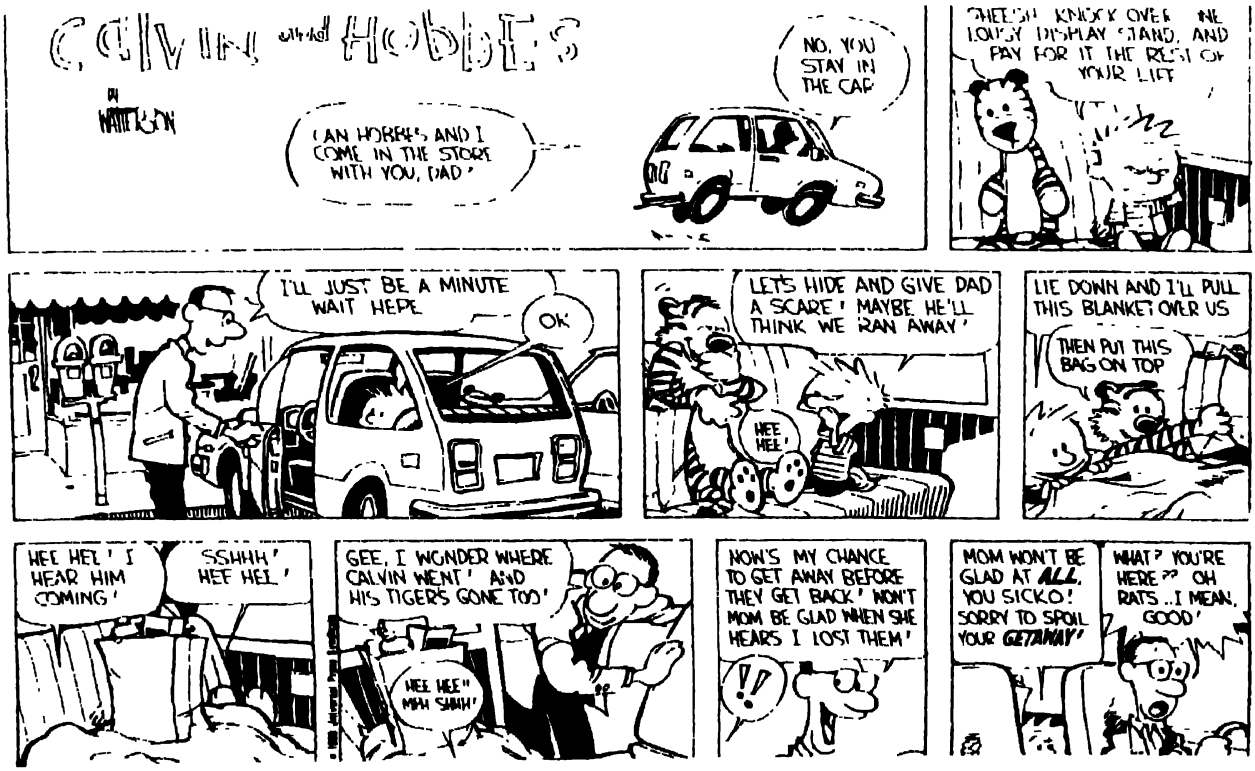
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

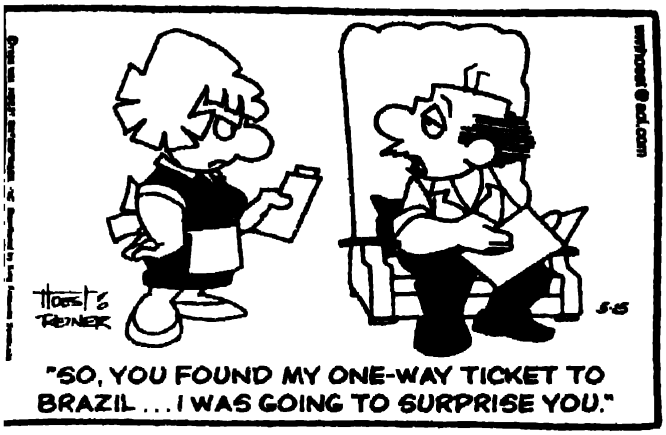
COMICS

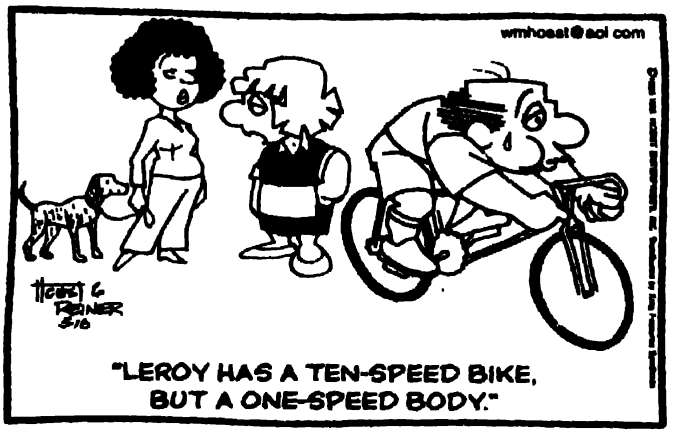
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

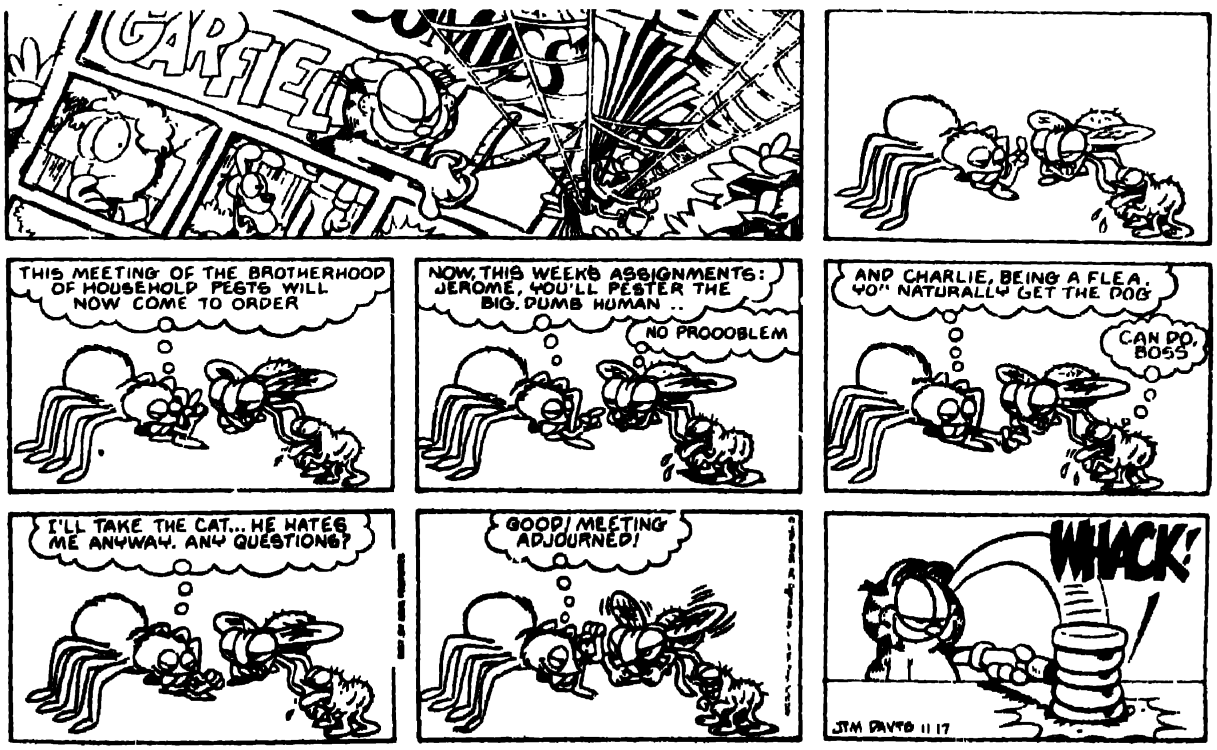


THE LOCKHORNS

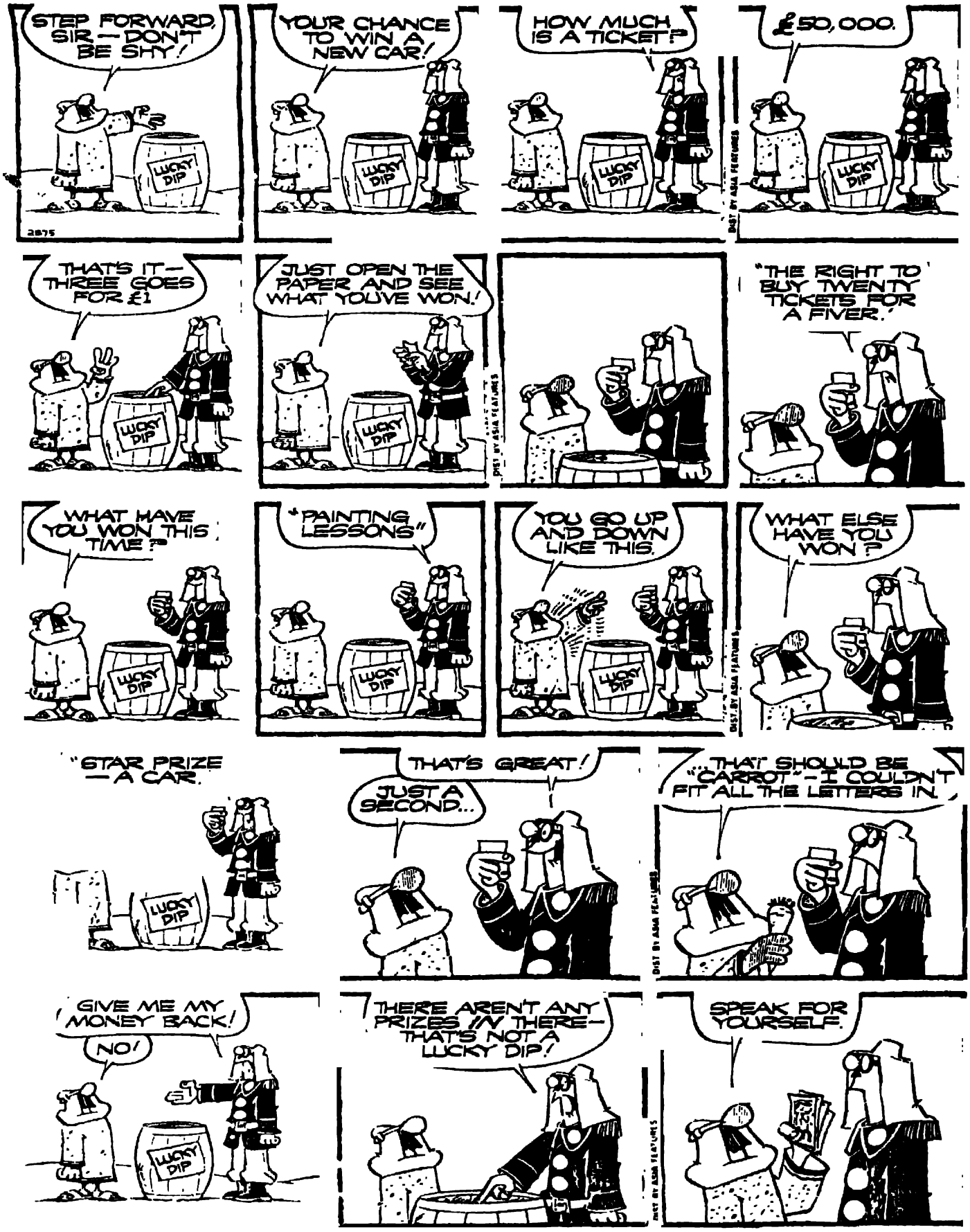


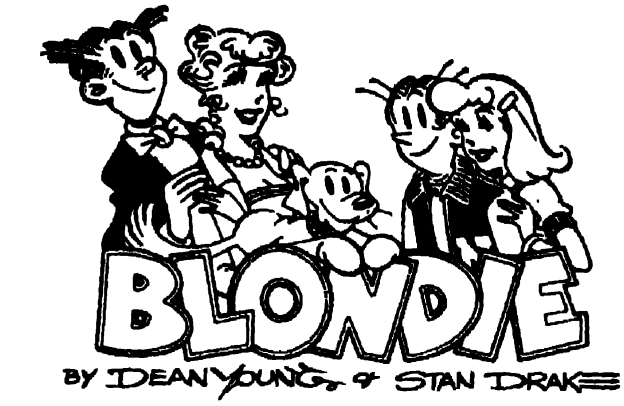


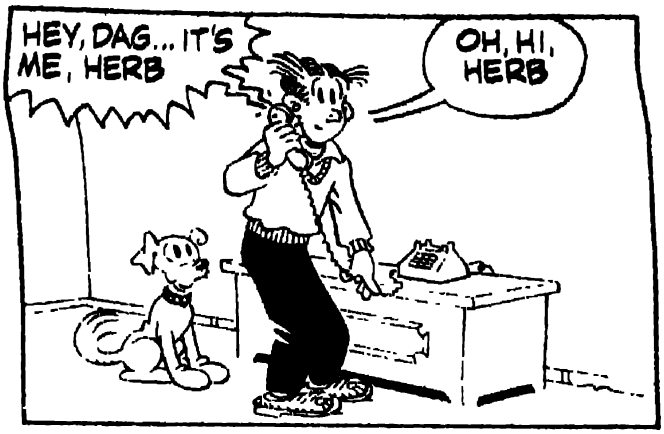
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

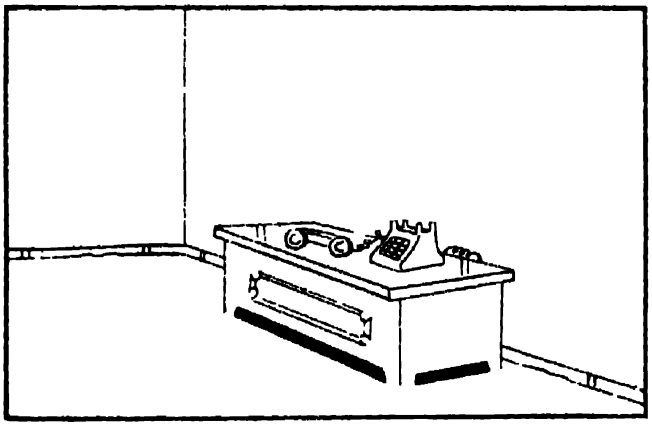


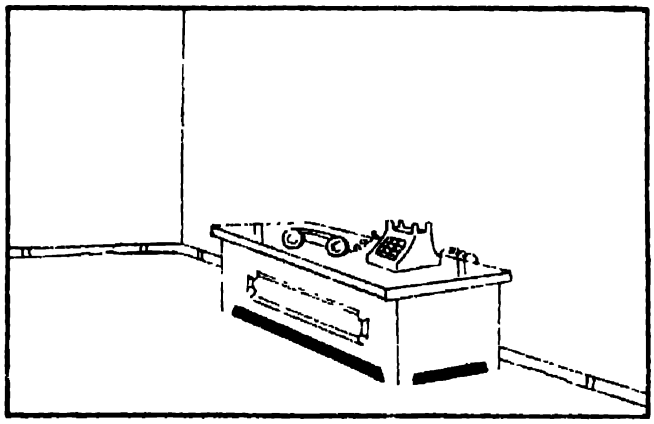

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

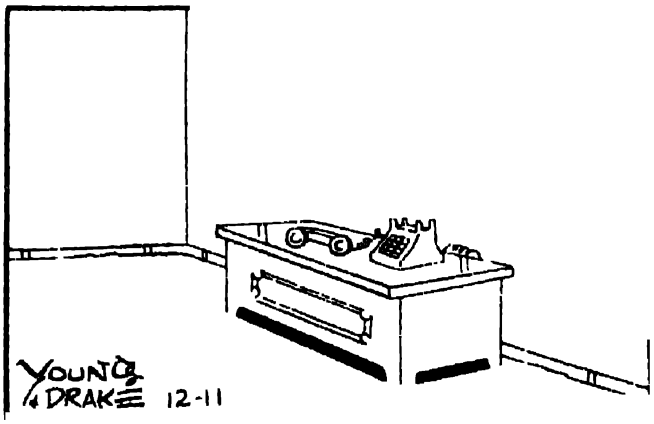

HEY, DAG... IT'S ME, HERB
OH, HI, HERB

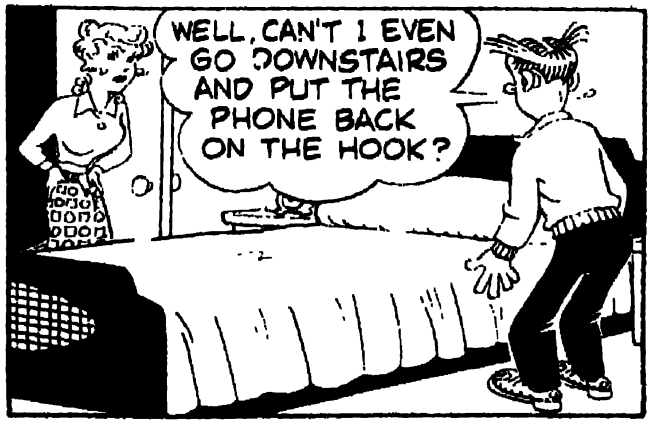
NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT THE BOYS ARE GETTING UP AN ALL-NIGHT STAG PARTY OVER AT FREDDIE'S...CAN YOU MAKE IT ?
I DON'T THINK SO... FRIDAY'S OUR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

WELL, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW UNLESS YOU GO ASK
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT... HOLD ON, I'LL GO SEE






YOUNG & DRAKE 12-11


WELL, CAN'T I EVEN GO DOWNSTAIRS AND PUT THE PHONE BACK ON THE HOOK?

THE GOLD RUSH

***Samita Bhatia** details the advantages of branded jewellery*

At the Enchanté factory off the Delhi-Jaipur highway, you'll see some very high-tech Italian machines and lots—as in LOTS—of gold dust. It flies off a few hundred feet off the gold chain that passes through precision-transforming machines that give gold a superior finish and glitter.

Meanwhile, skilled hands in various other rooms operate computerised induction melting furnaces producing the perfect wire which is then bent, twisted and braided into some 43 designs The use of the Italian-style end clasps allow the chain to be finished in keeping with international quality standards.

Branded jewellery is fast making inroads into the country's show-windows If Tanishq from Titan is catching people's fancy, Enchanté is the other brand that's making its presence felt. The la.ter is an example of niche marketing at its best, what with the brand restricting itself to the manufacture of gold chains and bracelets to begin with, for those in the age group of 25-35.

But why this emphasis on chains? Well, the company estimated that of the total Rs 24,000 crore sales of gold in a year, 40 per cent was accounted for by the sale of chains!

There are many who question the need for branded jewellery. But then, how many people walk out of a jewellery store without any misgivings: about the purity of the metal; at the manufacturing charges; and whether they should get the piece evaluated by another jeweller instead of implicitly trusting their 'family jeweller'?

That's where brands like Enchanté have an advantage. Buy yourself an Enchanté chain and walk out of the shop with a pre-sealed package. The pre-packed chain comes with a certificate of guarantee with the purity of gold stamped indelibly on the chain, while the weight and the manufacturing charges are printed on the package. No haggling here over the craftman's bill!

Commenting on his brand of jewellery, Chand Mehra, director, Enchanté Jewellery, who has set up shop along with his brother Vinay Mehra says, "The finish of the product is of international standards and backed by our corporate guarantee. If the product is found defective within one year from the date of purchase, the company will replace or repair the product free of cost for the buyer."

Enchanté has another first to its credit. The company has compiled a detailed study entitled '*How to Buy a Perfect Gold Chain*'. This rule of thumb could naturally apply to any other gold ornament you buy.

Mehra, like G.S. Pillai, manager (north) of World Gold Council, too, believes that branding must make a headway into the Indian jewellery market. According to World Gold Council estimates, Indian consumers have been cheated out of an estimated US $1.5 billion this year by Indian jewellers through undercarating. Branding, which is synonymous with quality, will ensure that the malpractice of undercarating peters out.

Undercarating—lowering the percentage of pure gold in the ornament by replacing it with less expensive alloys such as silver and copper—is common, and has flourished in the absence of controls.

Says Mehra, "Many retailers go for it for competitive reasons, to offer the product to the consumer at a cheaper price. At other times when the consumer is not willing to pay them manufacturing charges to their satisfaction, they indulge in undercarating to make up for the price."

And it doesn't end there. Often the retailer wants the manufacturer to supply the product on credit, and to recover the interest costs, the purity of the gold is lowered by the manufacturer. "Essentially undercarating creates a built-in margin for all players in the fray—the manufacturing sub-contractor, the manufacturer, the bulk wholesaler, the wholesaler and finally the retailer," adds Mehra.

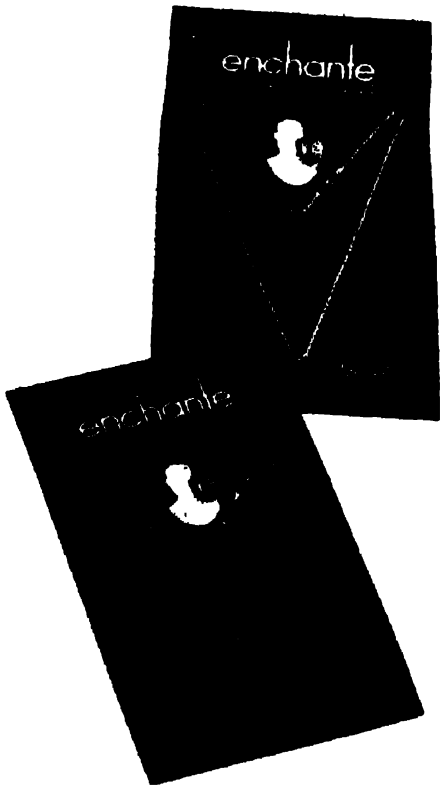
The guide published by Enchanté tells you in no uncertain terms that it is very important to know which manufacturer has in fact produced the gold chain you are about to buy. While most retailers will dutifully inform the customer that they sell their own machine-made chains, "it is a fact that 99.99 per cent don't have their chain manufacturing

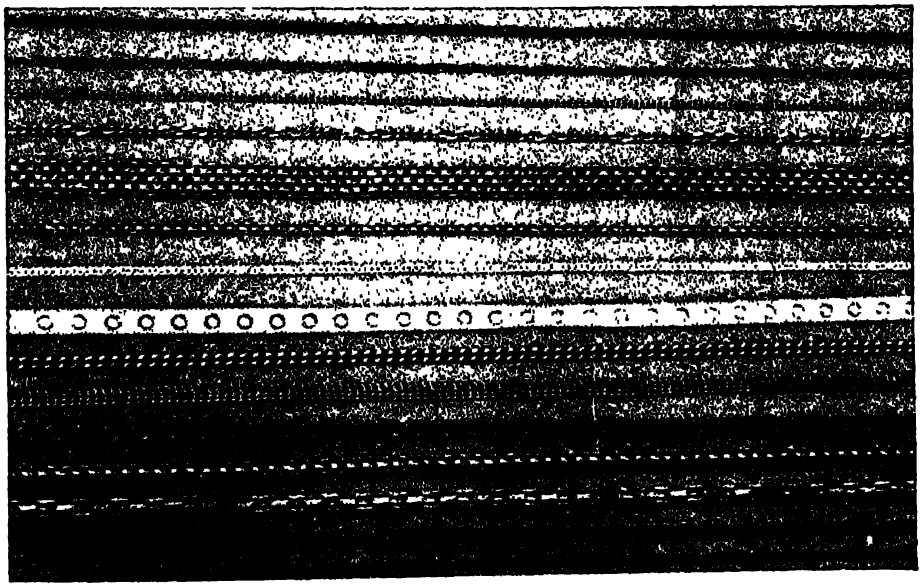
facility and that they are sourcing their chains through manufacturers, bulk wholesalers and wholesalers," the book asserts.

Retailers are thus unable to control quality as they lack infrastructure, and in a scenario where lack of standards rule the roost in the absence of a hallmarking system, unscrupulous jewellers profit by selling undercaratage goods.

Explains Mehra, "It is a fact that the Indian jewellery industry is using very primitive technologies as a legacy of the Gold Control Act and that our jewellery is not globally competitive. Besides, the Indian consumer too is being provided with very poor quality products."

Adhering to international quality standards, the 22-carat chains from Enchanté range from lightweight to heavy, weighing from 2 gm to 52 gm. The chains start at Rs 2,000 and can get as expensive as Rs 50,000 or 60,000 while the bracelets at the lower end can cost as little as Rs





1,000. The designs are a mix of the new-fangled and the traditional.

Enchanté has a totally integrated chain manufacturing facility set up on the outskirts of Delhi at a huge cost of Rs 20 crore. The first of its kind in Asia, and one of seven throughout the world, the plant is equipped with high-tech Italian machines on which the company has sole rights in India.

While hand crafting has no substitute, Mehra clarifies that his brand is not competing with this segment of jewellery. "They are two machine-made pieces do have some advantages over hand-crafted ones." The hand crafted process may indeed yield infinite designs, but it is virtually impossible to ensure perfection of other quality factors that include purity, tensile strength, shine, finish, polish, colour and guarantee.

In the machine-crafted process on the other hand, the number of designs that can be created are limited depending on the number of machines at the manufacturer's disposal but the results are perfect and the quality too is far superior than hand-made patterns.

Explains Mehra, "However, the machines, tools and R&D obviously don't come cheap, which is a major deterrent in the production of machine-made jewellery."

As the number of machines involved in each process of crafting a chain—wire making, basic chain making, chain transformation, diamond cutting, end piece and hook, finishing, polishing and plating— is substantial, the cost of setting up an integrated system is very steep.

Currently, most manufacturers have machines to craft just one or two segments in the total manufacturing process relying heavily on sub-contractors to fill the gaps in the production for the complete product. Thus the quality of the product cannot be controlled or guaranteed as there are far too many people involved in the manufacturing process.

James Morse, director, technical operations, Enchanté, says, "In hand-crafted jewellery pieces the interest of the wholesalers and retailers are paramount—as the product is being produced for them and as per the fineness specified by them. Thus the same design doing the rounds in various jewellery stores could be of varying levels of purity, as undercarating is liberally indulged in. Enchanté jewellery on the other hand holds the interest of the consumer as paramount. We manufacture the jewellery and bring it to the consumer directly eliminating the intermediaries."

As India's integration with global markets increases, the Indian consumers' exposure to international quality products will correspondingly increase and the time is not far when every consumer will demand quality. With the economy opening up, the future, says Mehra, could well lie in foreign companies setting up jewellery manufacturing facilities in the country to cater to the demand for quality jewellery.

Alternatively, foreign companies may start importing jewellery to meet this demand for quality. Indian companies will have to counter this by setting up their own state-of-the-art jewellery manufacturing units perhaps in collaboration with foreign technology suppliers to give the consumer a quality product.

Next from Enchanté will be cuff links, tie pins and pendants for men while diversification will come by way of 'Shubham,' a range of silver jewellery. Another enchanting range to take your pick from. ■

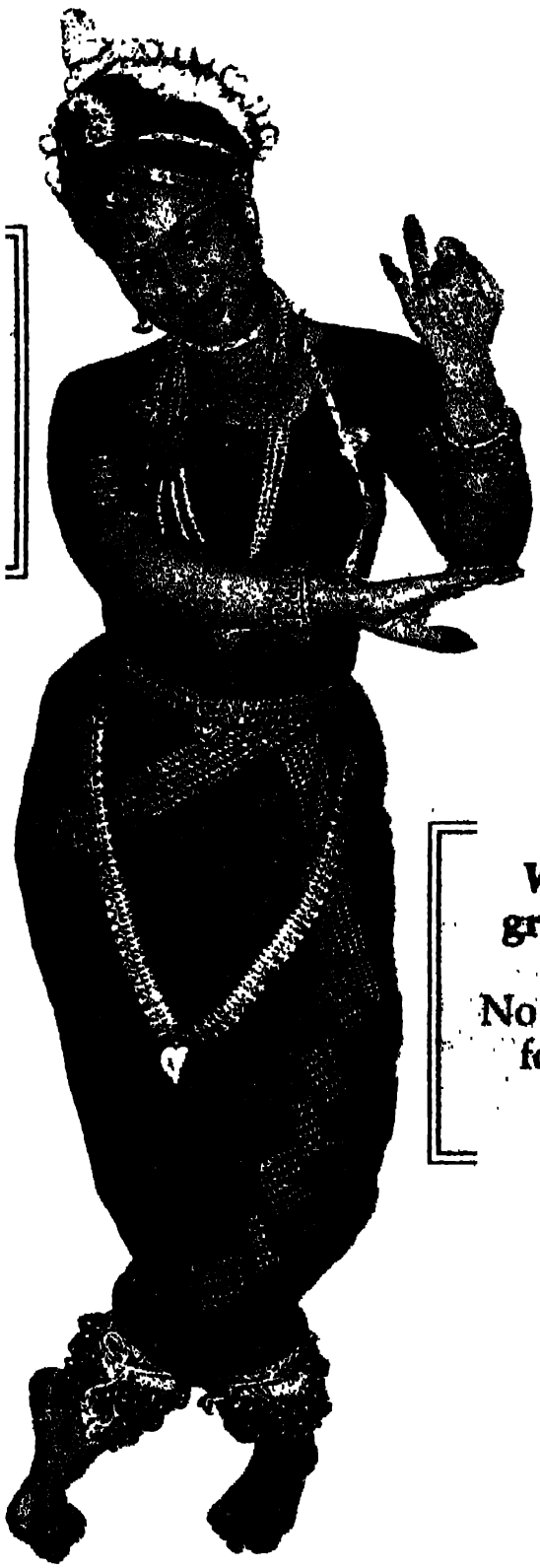
ALOKANANDA ROY *has had an illustrious career in the classical dance forms, specially Odissi. She has danced practically everywhere in India and toured all over U.K., USA, Europe, Japan and Singapore. She runs her own dancing school, Chandanaloke, besides choreographing a number of dance dramas, ballets and solo recitals. Exquisitely beautiful, she had at one time participated in the Miss India contest.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To live and work with self respect, dignity and love. In addition, possessing a fit mind and body as long as I live.
What is your greatest fear?
To lose faith in myself.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My children.
What do you dislike most in others?
Disrespect for the underprivileged
What do you dislike most in yourself?
Hypersensitivity and impatience.
What is your most precious possession?
My willpower.
What objects do you always carry?
My smile.
What makes you most depressed?
Insensitive attitude towards child labour.
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Familiarity breeds contempt. I'm so familiar with myself that I find fault with almost everything.
What is your favourite word?
Tomorrow is another day.
What is your favourite journey?
To the land of dance, music, beauty, laughter and happiness.
What is your favourite dream?
A cultural centre for the handicapped and Prerana, a home for old people, destitute women and orphans, living as families.
What is your nightmare?
The thought that for some reason beyond my control I may have to give up dancing.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My children.
What is your source of sustenance?
The tremendous support of my children, friends and family.
On what occasions do you lie?
I don't tell lies, but at times I avoid telling the truth.

What is your greatest regret?
No regrets—I live for today and tomorrow.
What has been your happiest moment?
The day I became a grandmother.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Any great achievement by any person in any field.
How do you relax?
Chatting with friends over the phone.
What do you envy most in others?
Patience.
How would you like to be remembered?
As a good human being.
How would you like to die?
I don't even want to think about dying right now.

What is your favourite journey?

To the land of dance, music, beauty, laughter and happiness



What is your greatest regret?

No regrets—I live for today and tomorrow

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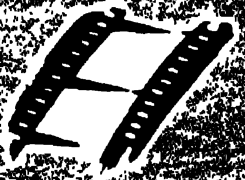

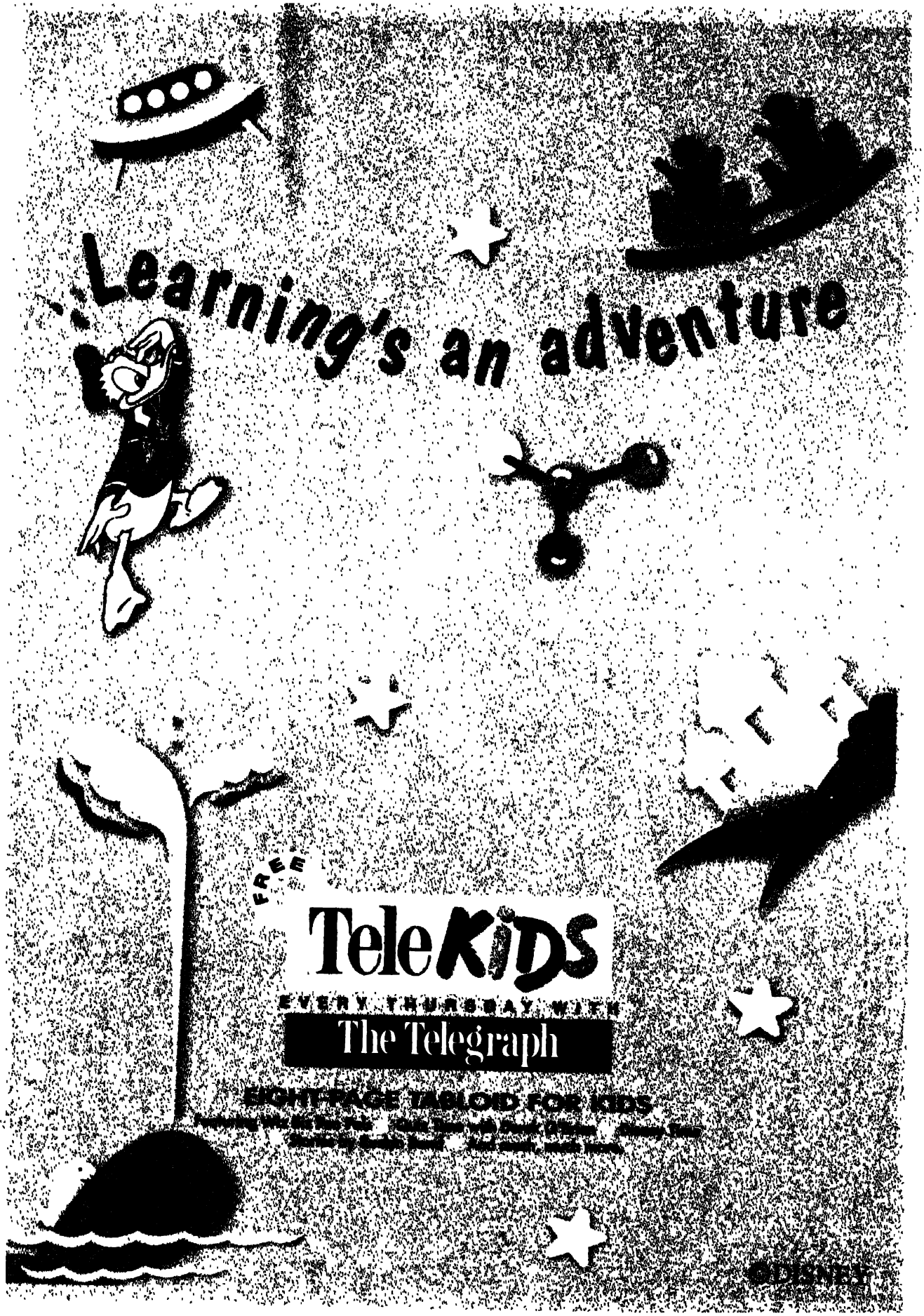
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17 NOVEMBER 1996

POST MORTEM

Woman of Substance

■ The beautiful swimmer, Nafisa Ali Sodhi, has really grown up ('Water Baby Grows Up', September 22). Not in years because she is just 39, but mentally. She has truly honoured the crown she won in the Seventies for Miss India by actually being concerned about social causes.

It's a tradition with beauty queens to mouth platitudes like looking after the poor and working for the uplift of society at beauty pageants.

Nafisa has seriously taken up social work lending her ear to the problems of slum dwellers and trying to improve their living standards. This is praiseworthy for a celebrity who lives in the lap of luxury in her Delhi home.

Nafisa is a kind of person who loves the home more than anything else and cherishes the importance of family life and bond.

For one who is so loving and craves for love, it is natural that she would like to share it with others — the less fortunate ones.
Arindam Chowdhury,
Calcutta

Nafisa Ali Sodhi in the Seventies: Beauty plus brains

■ Thank you for the cover story on the Calcutta beauty, Nafisa Ali. I cannot think of another woman who is so many things — swimmer, Miss India, equestrian, amateur jockey, actress, model and TV hostess — moulded into one.

For an overtly sensitive person like her social work cannot be a fad. She must be honestly feeling for the people.
Nirmalendu Chakraborty,
Cooch Behar

■ India produces so many Miss Indias but few of them make an impression on the public mind. Nafisa Ali and Sushmita Sen are two of those rare personalities. Nafisa radiates warmth and grace unparalleled in her area of excellence. And Sushmita exudes intelligence and wit which can sweep even her severest critic off his/her feet. To be born beautiful is a gift. But to shape yourself into a beautiful person with the right mixes of compassion, love, anger, patience and tolerance is a greater achievement.
Md Tanweer,
Calcutta

■ Nafisa Ali is one of the finest products of women's lib in India. But she has never been a rebel. On the contrary, she has used her femininity to the best advantage. Married to Pickles Sodhi, she has not lost her identity but has managed to craft for herself an individual image of a wife, mother, daughter, model, actress, TV personality, beauty queen and now a charity worker.
K. Suraj,
Hooghly

■ We don't mind the water baby growing up. But our pshyche is yet not ready to accept a greying Nafisa. We still cherish the picture of that young swimmer: fresh and unspoilt. Let it be that way.
Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

INSIDE

Keeping fit

PAGE 4

EXERCISING HAS nothing to do with being fat or thin. No matter what your weight, working out will benefit you.

PAGE 28

MEET S.T. VENKI, the special effects man who is the current craze in India's movieland.

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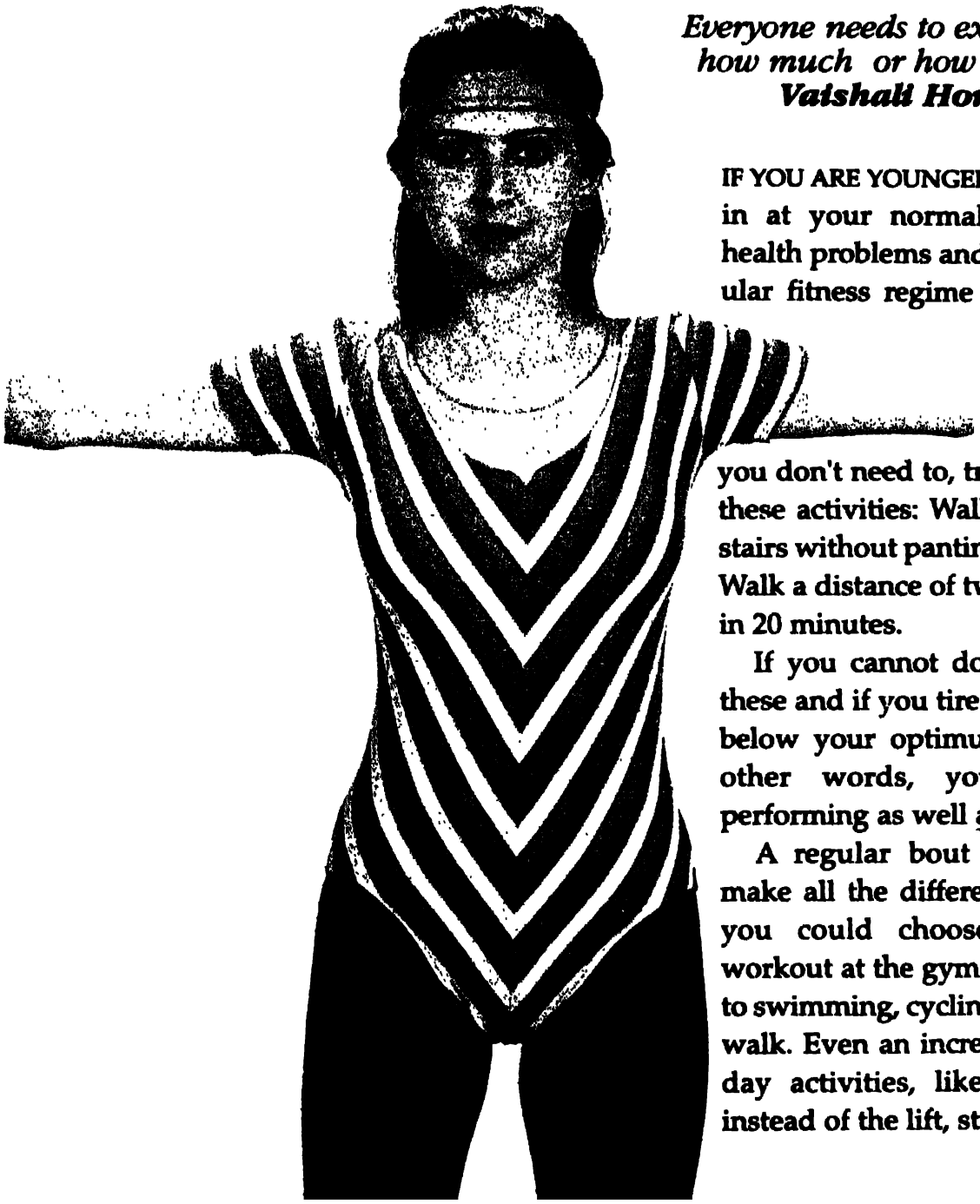
Cover: Vivek Das

LET'S GET PHYSICAL!

Everyone needs to exercise; no matter how much or how little they weigh. ***Vaishali Honawar*** *examines the options*



IF YOU ARE YOUNGER THAN 60, WEIGH in at your normal weight, have no health problems and don't follow a regular fitness regime because you think you don't need to, try doing any one of these activities: Walk up two flights of stairs without panting. Inflate a balloon. Walk a distance of two kilometres within 20 minutes.

If you cannot do any one or all of these and if you tire easily, you are well below your optimum fitness level. In other words, your body is not performing as well as it should.

A regular bout of exercise could make all the difference, however. And you could choose from a proper workout at the gym to an aerobics class to swimming, cycling, jogging or a brisk walk. Even an increase in your day-to-day activities, like taking the stairs instead of the lift, stretching at the desk

and walking during lunch hours can help.

But first of all, you need to banish the belief that it is only those with weight problems who need to exercise.

To illustrate this point we tested two persons — one male, one female — at the Piramal Sports and Fitness Centre to find out how fit they really were. Both were close to their ideal weights and had no health problems, but the tests showed them to be way below their desired fitness levels (see boxes).

Lack of exercise can have several adverse effects on the body which may not be immediately visible. It can increase the amount of fat in the body, bring down lung power and flexibility, cause stiffness, increase the risk of injuries, increase blood pressure and, in extreme cases, cause obesity.

A balanced, regular workout can keep diseases at bay

FIT OR FAT

Uma Golwalkar thought she would only be asked to shed a few kilos after her fitness test; but she was in for a surprise

With Uma Golwalkar, 23, it was more a spirit of adventure than an interest in fitness that made her agree to go through the rigorous, two-hour fitness test at the Piramal Sports and Fitness Centre in Bombay.

Uma works as a marketing executive with a publishing house and has a fairly busy lifestyle, though she admits she could make time for a fitness routine if she pushed herself a wee bit. "But then I'm just too lazy," she laughs.

She lives alone in the city and has an irregular diet. Breakfast is usually *rotis* and *subzi* and dinner is the same, with lunch at work being anything from a sandwich grabbed in a hurry to a greasy *biryani*. She admits to having a sweet tooth which she indulges with chocolate.

Uma is in perfect health and believed all she would be told after the fitness test was that she needed to knock off a few kilos. Surprise, surprise.

The test carried out at the Piramal Sports Medicine Centre showed her to be well under her optimum fitness level with a higher content of fat than normal and extremely poor stamina and aerobic capacity. In an older person this could mean bad news for the heart, though Uma is too young to worry about that.

After the preliminary pulse and heart rate tests, Uma was tested for her body composition — the most important parameter in fitness. Says Anar Shah, manager at Piramal Sports Centre, "The body composition is what really tells you how fit you are, more than your weight or any other parameter."

The test, carried out on bioelectrical equipment, shows the percentage of water and fat present in the body. Lean tissue or muscle tissue is 71 to 75 per cent water while fat tissue is 14 to 22 per cent water. In Uma's case, 47 per cent of her body weight comprised water — just a little under the average of 50 to 60 per cent.

The percentage of fat in her body was 34 per cent — much above the average of 20 to 26 per cent for a female her age. Uma's aerobic score of 130, determined through a step test where she was made to step up and down a 12-inch-high stool, was rated as very poor and her cardio-respiratory function or lung capacity was found to be below average. Her total body fitness level was rated as poor.

Various muscle groups in her body were tested for performance and while Uma's abdominal muscles and leg muscles seemed to do just fine, her muscle power was only 50 per cent while her upper body strength was zero!

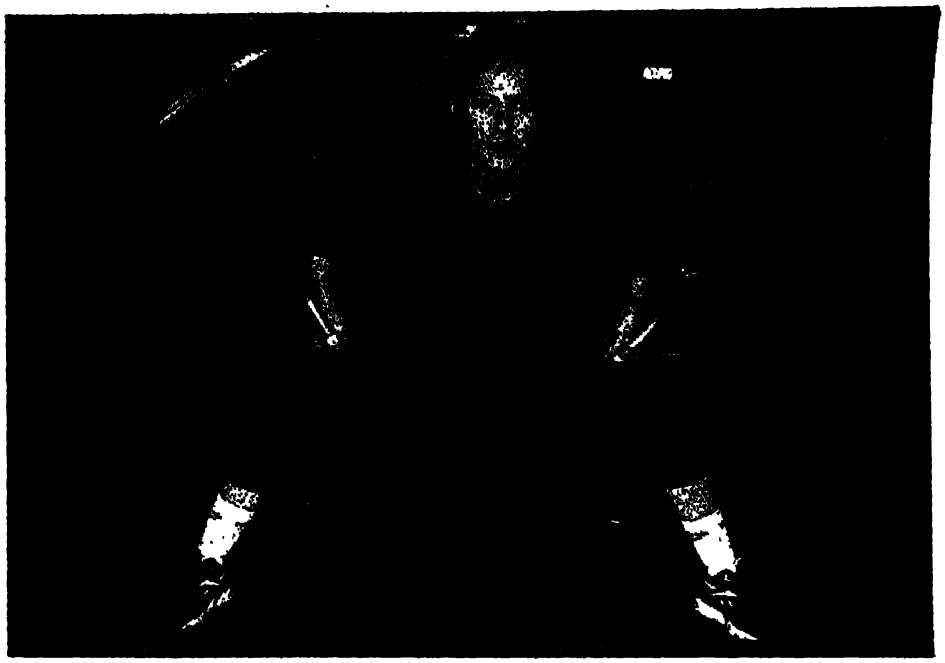
Shah pointed out that most women do tend to have weak upper bodies. Weight training can help this but Shah felt there was no immediate need for Uma to concentrate on that part at the moment. Uma, 167.5 cms tall, and weighing 66 kgs was told to knock off seven to nine kgs.

To lose this in three months' time, i.e. 91 days, she would have to follow a sustained dietary/exercise programme designed to help her lose 0.7 kgs per week. The exercise programme Shah designed for Uma does not

Of course, one cannnot say that everyone who doesn't work out is unfit. But, as Dr Kinjal Suratwala, consulting physician at the Piramal Sports and Fitness Centre says, "He/she will certainly be missing out on that extra bit of health and vitality that a good fitness regime can give. The fact that Indians lead a very sedentary lifestyle contributes to our lack of fitness. You'd find Westerners on holiday walking a lot or even working out at a gym, but our people tend to take it easy all the time."

Civilisation has further slowed us down, says Anar Shah, manager of the Piramal Sports and Fitness Centre. Though man's body was meant for movement, most jobs today can be accomplished without one having to push one's body too hard. In the cities, problems like pollution and stress further affect one's fitness level.

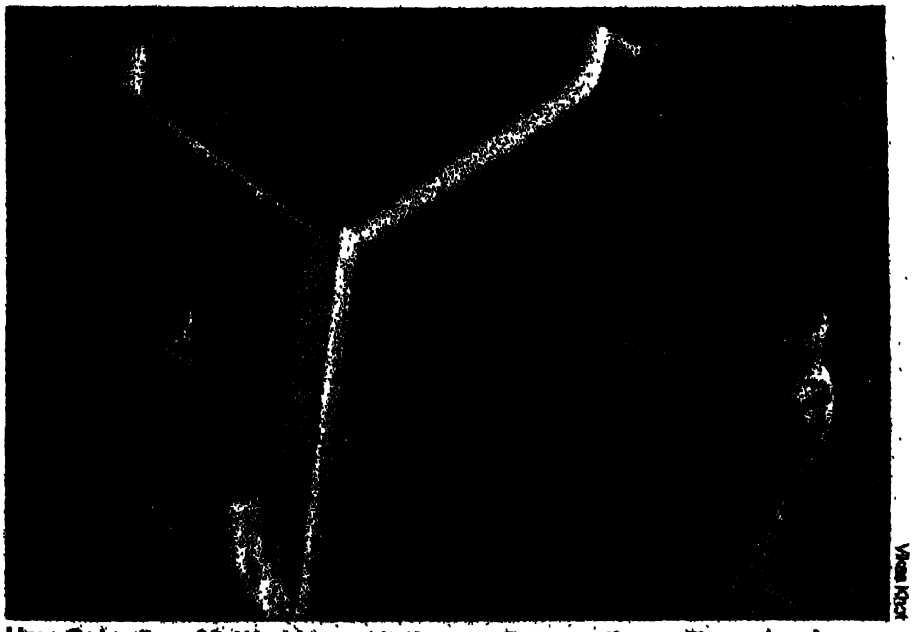
"Our grandparents and parents



Shaping up at the gym

require her to go to the gym. It includes 20 minutes of exercise thrice a week, most of it aerobic activity such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling or swimming.

To improve her flexibility and lung power, Uma was



Vikas Khot

Uma Golwalkar, 23: Working out in the gym for an optimum fitness level

recommended stretching and deep-breathing exercises for five minutes each. Strength training to develop her muscles could be optional at this point.

Uma's basal metabolism was calculated to be 1480 kcal a day and to lose weight at a consistent and safe level she was asked to maintain a daily dietary intake of 1300 kcal going to a maximum of 1500 kcal a day.

The bad news for Uma was that sweets were out as were fatty foods. A large intake of fluids was recommended, specially water. At the end of the day an enlightened Uma vowed to make time every day to accommodate the fitness schedule into her day though she did not think she could still push herself to go through a regular workout at the gym.

would have climbed the stairs to their homes, we take the lift; they walked down to the store to buy groceries, we order it on phone; they did a great deal of the housework themselves, we employ a range of modern gadgets for our smallest chores," says Sh

As she points out, the maidservant working in your house might be far more fit than you are simply because she does much more physical labour!

The most common mistake people make is assuming that if they weigh normal, their bodies are fit. But when it comes to fitness, weight is no parameter to go by. The determining factor here is the ratio of fat to muscle in your body and even an underweight person could have more fat in his/her body than muscle! And excess fat can place a great strain on the heart.

A regular, balanced workout, by increasing your aerobic capacity, can strengthen your heart. It can also slow down the onset of several diseases, increase your stamina, reduce stress, improve digestion, push up the efficiency of your brain by as much as 15 per cent and reverse the ageing process to some extent

Says Shah, "If you were to start a fitness programme today, your body will be younger next year though chronologically you'll be older!"

Also, ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity are all directly linked to your level of fitness and a regular workout can keep these at bay. It could also slow down the onset of degenerative diseases such as arthritis and

MUSCLE POWER

Nandan Patil scored well on this count; but he had his own problems, nonetheless

Nandan Patil, 35, runs a store in Bombay but leads a lifestyle that is far from sedentary He trains in the martial arts and plays football or cricket every morning "depending on the season."

Nandan doesn't smoke or drink and is very diet-conscious He avoids too many fatty foods and sweets and eats meat just once a week. Not surprising then, he is only slightly overweight — "almost negligibly so," says Anar Shah And his fitness level, though far below ideal, was not as low as Uma's

The tests Nandan went through were the same as those for Uma After the pulse and heart-rate tests came the body composition test which showed him to have 22 per cent fat tissue — only three per cent higher than the average of 13 to 19 per cent for a man his age Nandan had just the right amount of water tissue — i e 59 per cent of his body weight

While his martial arts training helped Nandan get an average score on the overall fitness test, his aerobic capacity gauged through the step test was only 120 and was rated as very poor The best way to check your aerobic capacity is to test your pulse rate before and after an aerobic workout

If your pulse rate after the workout is very high as compared to your resting pulse rate, it means you are unfit as your heart has to work that much harder to pump blood when you strain yourself for the workout.

"Nandan's case illustrates the importance of an overall workout for the body," says Shah "His training in the martial arts has helped develop his muscles but not done much for his cardiovascular system and lungs, as his poor score in the aerobic capacity test illustrates"

In the muscle-strength tests Nandan scored 100 per cent on most counts, again thanks to his training in the martial arts His flexibility too was rated as fairly good Nandan's weight was found to be 62.2 kgs — just two to four kgs over his ideal weight — and he was advised to exercise thrice a week.

The exercise regime designed for Nandan by Shah included 20 minutes of aerobic activity and stretching at least thrice a week. "As he's already into the martial arts, he doesn't really need separate strength training," says Shah. She also advised Nandan to do a few breathing exercises every day to improve his lung power.

Nandan's basal metabolism was calculated at 1529 kcal and to lose the excess weight at a consistent level he was advised a daily intake ranging from 1354 kcal to 1608 kcal. Shah advised Nandan to continue to stay off too much sugar and fatty food

For Nandan himself, the fitness test was an exciting and educative venture "While I have been to a gym before, I have always found the emphasis to be more on the physical than the scientific aspect of fitness," he said "Out here the approach is far more scientific and hence much more credible"

And will he follow his new exercise regime diligently? "Yes, of course."

Vikas Khot

Nandan Patil, 35: He scored average in the fitness test while the aerobic capacity test rated him poor

WAYS OF LOSING WEIGHT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

EXERCISE	TIME IN MINUTES								
	10	20	30	40	50	60	80	90	120
	CALORIES CONSUMED								
Walking (15-17 min/mile)	50	100	149	199	249	299	398	448	597
Jogging (10-12 min/mile)	102	204	306	408	610	612	816	918	1224
Running (9 min/mile)	120	240	360	480	600	720	960	1080	1441
Swimming (breast stroke)	101	202	302	403	504	605	806	907	1209
Cycling (2.4 mph)	62	124	187	249	311	373	498	560	746
Squash	132	264	396	527	659	791	1055	1187	1582
Basketball	86	172	258	343	429	515	687	773	1030
Football	82	164	246	328	411	493	657	739	985
Soccer	83	167	250	333	417	500	667	750	1000
Volleyball	31	62	93	124	156	187	249	280	373
Badminton	60	121	181	241	302	362	483	543	724
Tennis (continuous)	68	136	203	271	339	407	542	610	814
Table tennis	42	85	127	169	211	254	338	381	508
Golf (carrying bag)	53	106	159	211	264	317	423	476	634
Judo	121	243	364	485	606	728	970	1092	1455
Gymnastics	41	82	123	164	205	246	328	369	493
Aerobics (continuous)	106	211	317	423	529	634	846	952	1269

Telegraph Infographic/ Sabir Ghosh

osteoporosis and reduce or limit the damage they cause to the body

If all these reasons aren't enough to get you started, remember fitness can be a great narcissistic pursuit. There's always that tiny paunch that needs to be ironed out or that little bit of flab on the hips or thighs that needs to be worked on. Plus, after a good workout, your skin will glow, your hair will shine and your body will have a wonderfully firm and trim look. And you needn't worry about losing more weight than you have to because muscle weighs more than fat and a regular, balanced workout increases the proportion of muscle in the body.

Regularity is, however, the most important part of any fitness regime. Working out in fits and bursts will simply not do. "Total commitment is very important," says Shah "To develop a body that will work well for you, you have to work very hard yourself."

The benefits of a workout last 48 hours and not exercising for long periods of time can send you right back to square one. So it is important to work out at least thrice a week, for 20 minutes at a stretch.

This workout should ideally combine a warm-up to prepare your body for the exercise, followed by an aerobic workout that could be anything from jogging to cycling to a brisk walk. Then would come stretching exercises to improve the flexibility of your muscles and undo any damage that the brisk aerobic workout might have caused. And last but most important would be a few cooling-down exercises to bring your pulse rate back to normal.

Breathing exercises, done for three to five minutes a day, can work wonders for your lungs and heart. In case you are interested in strength-training to build up your muscle power, you should go in for a monitored workout at the gym.

Remember, fitness is different things to different people and you have to choose what is right for you

Watching your diet can also help. No matter how much you weigh, cutting down on salt, sugar, red meat and fat, drinking plenty of water and consuming more complex carbohydrates can work wonders for the body. Diet and fitness go hand-in-hand and one cannot work without the other. But don't expect overnight results.

You will have plenty to smile about if you stick to your routine for some time, as Maithili Salvi, 28, found out. When Maithili joined the gym, she was only four kgs over her ideal weight. "Everyone else I met in the gym was fat and wanted to know what I was doing there!" she laughs. But Maithili was determined to whittle down an obstinate paunch and today, a year later, has reaped several benefits apart from an enviably flat stomach.

"I have become more nutrition-conscious and my stamina is up several times from what it used to be," she says. "The paunch has disappeared and best of all, I have this wonderful muscle tone." No need to ask if she's planning to carry on with her one-hour-thrice-a-week routine.

Unfortunately, not many others think like she does. Rovena D'Souza, chief aerobics instructor at Talwalkar's gymnasium, says, "Most people drop out of fitness programmes once their targets have been achieved. The concept of maintaining oneself and keeping up a level of fitness just doesn't seem to enter most Indian minds."

But on the positive side, she adds, fitness is beginning to attract more and more followers today, and not just the overweight kind. "Most people in our aerobics class are probably just a couple of kgs overweight and are there because they want a shapelier body or more stamina," she says.

Stamina is certainly the greatest gift that a good fitness regime can give you. From the overweight to the underweight, anyone who takes up a fitness programme swears that exercise helps curb tiredness, keeping one fresh right to the end of the day.

And the best news is, exercise is good at any age. Shah feels that a regular exercise programme should be started as early as possible, in childhood itself, and points out that it is between the ages of 25 and 35 years that one has to be most watchful "because this is the most degenerative phase in one's life span."

But even if you're well past that stage, there's still a great deal you can gain from a programme suited to your age and body. Remember, it is never too late to start ■

A WHIFF OF HEAVEN

You can sample it for free at La Parfumerie, the Bombay outlet that helps you choose the right scent for you. ***Vaishali Honawar*** *reports*

Choosing the perfume that smells just right on you could be the most difficult job on earth. And the limited — almost non-existent — choice one has in India can make the search all the more exasperating.

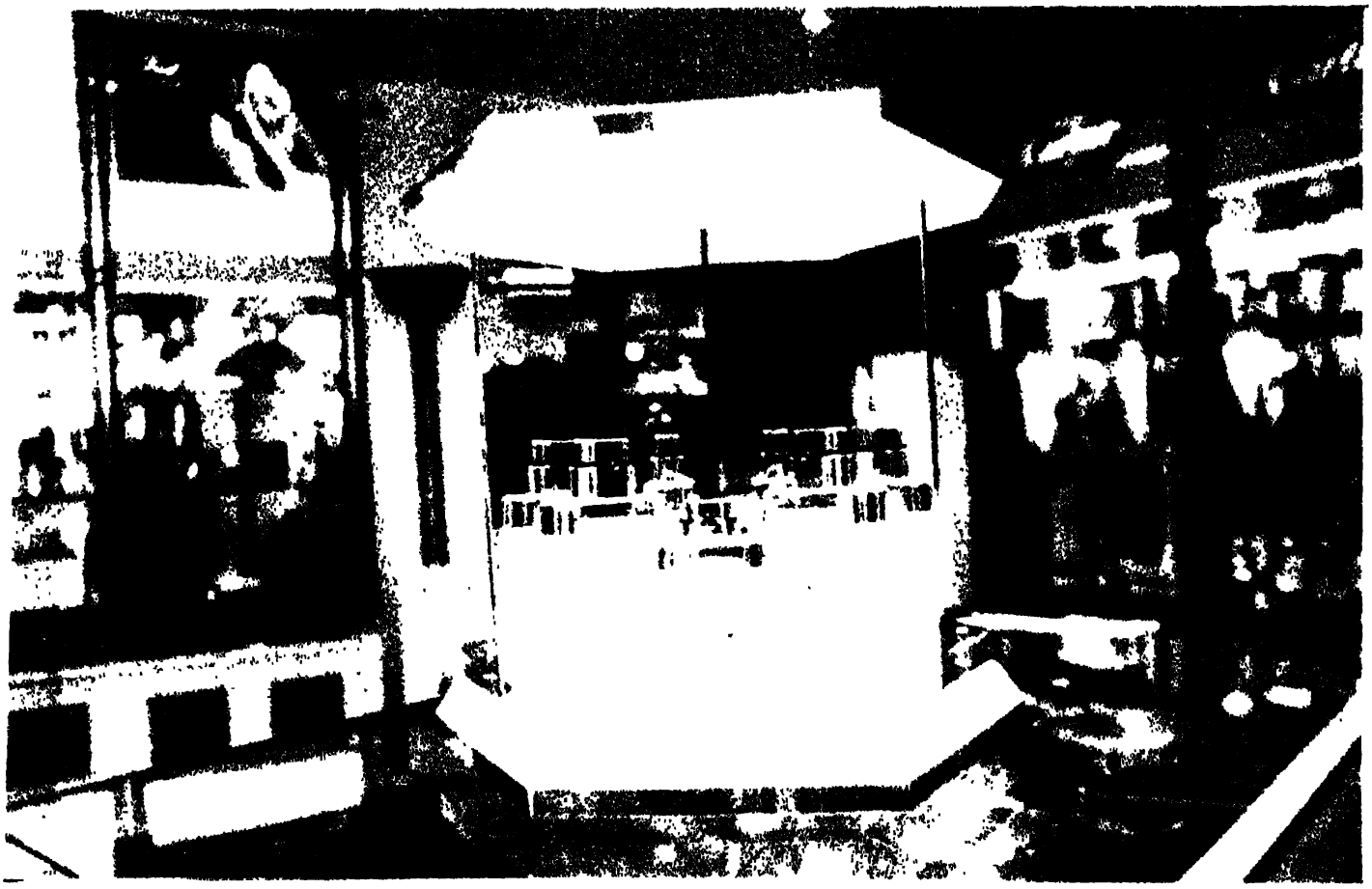
But those days could well be gone forever now, thanks to La Parfumerie, a unique store in Bombay where one can sample — free of charge — 30 different perfumes from France. Here, you might come across the scent you always dreamed of but never really could find.

Unfortunately, though, you cannot buy the perfume here — only discover it. But as Behroze Sabatier, one of the brains behind this venture points out, the next time you go abroad you will know exactly what to pick up for yourself. Or if you know someone who lives abroad, you could ask them to bring you the perfume when they visit India.

La Parfumerie was set up by Sabatier, her husband Michel Sabatier and Ashok Kurien to make the Indian consumer familiar with a wide range of international perfumes. For the first few years the store will be run as a no-profit venture with Sabatier saying that they will not sell any perfumes "as one cannot import perfumes into India". Whatever they earn will go towards creating other, similar outlets in major cities of the country.

"In Europe one can walk into a shop

You can sample all these French perfumes at La Parfumerie without having to pay



Behroze Sabatier of La Parfumerie

selling perfume and try out all those available before making a choice. We felt that India too needed a place where one could sample different international fragrances," says Behroze

And there is a fairly wide range to sample at La Parfumerie. Perfumes from Oscar de la Renta, Yves Saint Laurent. Cartier,.Salvador Dali, Van Cleef & Arpels and such scents as Jacomo are among the brands one can try out here.

In the coming months Sabatier plans to include five more brands, including a Spanish one, and umpteen more perfumes. She even plans to introduce skincare products by Ingrid Millet.

For the brands displayed here, this is a unique promotional exercise. Each brand pays for its showcase and supplies La Parfumerie with samples of its perfumes and beautifully crafted blotters on which one can try out the scents.

"All the brands have been very happy with the response to La Parfumerie. In fact, Yves Saint Laurent sent down a perfume expert some time back to train us." says Sabatier. Earlier this month, the chairman of Salvador Dali came to

Bombay to introduce to La Parfumerie the latest unisex fragrance from Dali, called Dalimix

For Sabatier herself, the project is a labour of love. "The world of perfumes is magical: and every perfume has to be a dream," she says. She finds it a challenge then to help every person, male or female, who walks into the store to choose the perfect fragrance The staff at La Parfumerie is fully trained to help visitors choose the perfume that suits them most.

There is a visitors' book where visitors are asked to enter their comments A mailing list is maintained and every time a new fragrance is introduced that might be what a particular visitor was looking for, he/she is sent a sample of it.

"Often I find that men sample all the male perfumes we have but settle for a female one as they find it more suitable," says Sabatier, pointing out that perfume is a very strong pointer to one's personality "A perfume can tell you a lot of things about the person wearing it, she says. Conversely, it can also create an image for the person wearing it

And if you thought that it was only the rich and the beautiful who indulged in luxuries such as perfume, Sabatier has a surprise for you "It is usually people belonging to the middle-classes and the working classes, and a lot of students who walk in here," she says "And it's quite amazing to find how knowledgeable some of the customers are about the various perfumes which are not even available here!"

But whether you are one of those or not, if you're in search of a whiff of heaven you might want to visit La Parfumerie ■

EXTRACT

The Dawn of CREATION

The neurotic is the one who hides his dreams from himself, the average man is the one who hides his dreams from others, the artist is the one who feels compelled to make his dreams publi

—Otto Rank

An extract from ***Ranjana Harish's*** *attempt to document the female tradition of autobiography writing in India*

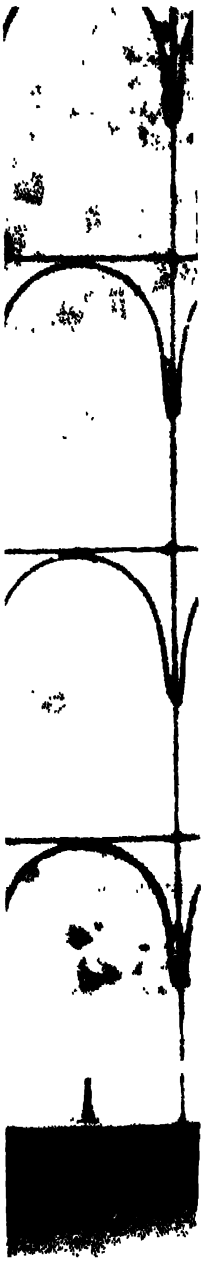
Extracted from *The Female Footprints* ***By Ranjana Harish Published by Sterling Publishers Private Limited Price Rs250***

'An autobiography is generally taken to be the gospel truth set in glittering words of gold .an artefact of self-praise The basic truth is writer's own need,' so writes Amrita Pritam in her autobiography What was her need then? Why did she write her autobiography when whatever happened in her life had already found its way into her creative writing? In her 'Prologue' she answers this question by saying, ''I thought I might write a few lines—something to complete the account book of my life and at the end, seal it with a revenue stamp as it were " When she had talked to Khushwant Singh of her plan to write an autobiography she recollects, he had said jokingly, ''What is there to your life . ? Just an incident or two . you could use the back of a revenue stamp to write it " He had perhaps chosen a revenue stamp for it as it is the smallest one in size. Yes, right, thought Amrita, if she could not write her story on the back of a revenue stamp, she could, atleast seal the truthful account of her life with a revenue stamp, a revenue stamp which signifies the truthfulness of the document.

The only daughter of Raj Bibi and Kartar Singh, Amrita was taught to be truthful, fearless and honest right from her young years Both her parents, who were teachers by profession, had lived an honest life, honest to the extent of being criticised by their community Raj Bibi was married when quite young to a soldier who was reported missing before Raj Bibi could set up a home with the man. The lonely woman had taken up a job to support herself and had lived a widow's life. Nand Sadhu had already renounced ancestral property and worldly life and had become a 'sadhu' when he happened to meet Raj Bibi in the temple of her village. When he realised that he had developed some special feelings for Raj Bibi and that she too had the same type of feeling for him he behaved honestly. Shedding off the hypocratic social norms, Nand Sadhu discarded his saffron clothes and became Kartar Singh In the midst of severe criticism and strong opposition the couple got married

After 10 years of their marriage a daughter was born to Raj Bibi They called her Amrita The father, who was a poet himself, wanted to see his daughter grow into an honest fearless poet. He taught her to respect the written word and was rather strict with her so far as discipline was concerned No loose page was ever to be found on the floor of their house If by chance there were some such page, the child was to treat it with respect, pick it and place it properly. Putting one's foot on any printed paper was out of the question in that household. Amrita gives the credit for her love and respect for words to her father, who sowed such thoughts in her mind when she was a little child.

A striking trait of Amrita's personality had been her truly secular outlook even in her personal relationships Though a daughter of deeply religious Sikh parents she never had a narrow, intolerant attitude to her fellow men. The roots of this attribute of her personality, she thinks, lay in her father's outlook. As a child she had witnessed her father protesting against her grandmother's discriminatory treatment to his Muslim friends. There were three tumblers specially kept apart to be used while serving but-



termilk to his Muslim friends. Little Amrita formed a team with her father to fight against such discrimination by the old woman. ``The three tumblers became a `cause' for me, and we put up a fight with grandmother. I was adamant. I would not drink from any other tumbler but one of those,'' recalls Amrita. Finally her revolt succeeded and ``thereafter, not a single utensil was labelled `Hindu' or `Muslim'" How strange that after many years of the death of all the three elderly people in her life, her mother, father and grandmother, the men who entered her life were all to hail from the same faith for which the old woman had branded utensils and against which little Amrita had put up a strong protest! All the three men in her life —Sahir, Sajjad and Imroz — were Muslims.

Her father wanted to see the girl grow into a poet. He taught her rhythm and rhyme and all the basics of poetry and encouraged her to be imaginative. Little did he know, then, that the child wa much more imaginative, than what he thought her to be. At night the father insisted that the girl say her prayer aloud, not skipping a single word of it, before going to bed He explained to the child that saying prayer would build a strong fort around her, allowing no entry, in the comfort of which she could sleep safe and sound But the little one had her own problem. If she built a strong fort around her how could her playmate, Ranjan, come in her dreams to play with her? She decided to skip some words, thus leaving some holes f Ranjan to enter the fort. But the father was equally smart, he did allow her to skip a single word, a if she did, he made her say the whole prayer all over again. Realising that there was no getti away with such a prank the imag native child had a new plan. Wh not call Ranjan in before saying prayer and building the fort? Aft forty years of these childish pran Amrita tells us that the trick she invented as a child worked well throughout her life.Around her many forts were built and demol ished, but she had always manag whatever she would to get earne Within the fort there always had been a few genuine friends to co fort and protect her

When Amrita was 11 her mot died. She was a religious girl wh prayed to God with her heart to

her mother's life; still her mothe died .This experience turned the child into a non-believer. She rec how bitterly she had cried on he mothe-'s death and had hidden dried up *chappatis* made by her t them bit by bit as long as she co

``Like a thief, came my sixte year, my sixteenth year has been Lord Indira's work, invading the purity of my childhood...life tool a different meaning. It was the beginning of the uneven road of with all its ups and downs," thu recalls Amrita of her entry into a lescence. She started pouring he mysterious longings on the pap But she would destroy every sin poem as she knew well that her father would not like to see her gious daughter turning romanti But how long could she control adolescent stirrings? She fell in with her favourite poet, Sahir Ludhianvi She was so madly in with the man that in 1957, when got the Sahitya Akademi Award posed for the press, she went on scribbling Sahir's name absentm edly It was only after the pressn departure that she realised what blunder she had committed; wit great anxiety she waited for the day's newspaper making her he secret public. Thank God, the ca eramen were not so detail-orient in their photography. She heave sigh of relief.

But the poet's secret can nev remain a secret; it flows into his creative writing most spontane In addition, Amrita was one wh didn't care to be secretive, she

Amrita Pritam: Trying to complete the `account book' of her life

believed in being honest to the core. Though Sahir could not accept her offering of love in the way she desired, they did remain good friends. She did teach herself smoking to feel his presence by using the butts of his cigarettes in the ashtray. She longed to have a child by him and did not hesitate in admitting her longing to her friends who often expressed surprise, about how her own son looked like Sahir. Once when Rajinder Singh Bedi asked her whether Sahir was the father of her son, she had the guts to tell him that the story was "correct imaginatively, incorrect factually." Even when her son confronted her with the question she told him how she too wished he were Sahir's son, she told him about her infatuation with Sahir frankly. Her pen doesn't hesitate in telling us that she had a nervous breakdown when she read about Sahir's affair with some other woman. Her love was wasted over a man who did not really appreciate it.

About this time came Sajjad in her life. By then, she had a daughter and a son. He too was a married man and had a son. Their relationship was intense and poetic. After her moving to Dehradun from Pakistan the political barriers made

Sahir Ludhianvi: Adored by Amrita

their meetings and correspondence almost impossible for many years. Yet, whenever he got a chance he would write to her.

Imroz, six years junior to her, brought an emotional security to her life. He brought the woman within her, who was lost under the layers of writerhood, to the forefront. Amrita Pritam recalls that only three times did the woman within her, whom she had taught to accept the secondary role, assert herself over the writer. One of those three times was when Imroz had dipped his brush into the red paint and dabbed a mask on her forehead, while working over his canvas; at that moment the writer within her had moved aside and had honoured the woman to have her rightful place.

Amrita looks on herself primarily as a writer, an honest, truthful writer, and not as a woman. No feminine reserve or conflict could be traced in her autobiography. There is no shying away from the realities of life, specially her love-life, or guilt for having lived unconservatively. Unlike many women autobiographers she avoids the talk of her married life almost altogether. Only once does she mention her husband and tells us that he had eczema, while parting from him in 1964 she told him that now his eczema would be cured and to everybody's surprise her words came true. Her children and their partners also do not occupy much space in her narrative. She informs us of their lives only as much as it is necessary. No feminine doting over the family matters is found in her autobiography which reminds one of the autobiographers like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1986) and Shoilabala Das (1956), who too, like Amrita Pritam, stand apart from the mainstream of women's autobiography in this respect.

One noticeable fact about Amrita's autobiography is that despite her open-minded, unorthodox outlook towards love and life, and her guiltless description of personal relationships outside the orbit of marriage, she doesn't shed off the typical feminine hesitation to talk about herself as a body. Sex does not figure in her works. Her 'truth addict' pen expresses her body's experiences delicately, suggestively and poetically—sometimes through her dreams, which form a fascinating part of her narrative, while other times with poetic images. Her pen has its own way of handling the truth, a way, much feminine and poetic. Her pen must keep her com-

Amrita Pritam receiving the Jnanpith Award

pany even on her last journey, this is Amrita's last wish.

Defining an autobiographer's role Amrita writes, "The writer of the autobiography invites the reader to his house beyond the threshold of normal constraint. And compromise with the truth is an insult . not to the invited, but to the one extending the invitation." In fitness to her views on an autobiographer's role she tells her readers, her honoured guests, the unadulterated truth of her life, and giving a title like *The Revenue Stamp* to her narrative, seals off the proceeds from her dreams with a mark of authenticity.

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EXCERPTS FROM: *THE REVENUE STAMP* BY AMRITA PRITAM

RESURRECTING TIME 1960

This is the saddest year like a torn page from the calendar of my life. Having taken a decision, my mind had kept over the threshold, yet tremblingly I did not know which way to go.

I had just about stretched my hand to pick up the phone to put a trunk-call through to Sahir, when I was flabbergasted at finding myself glaring at a page in *Blitz*. It blared forth the news—supported by a picture of his and his newly found friend. My hand stood suspended in the air inches away from that dial;

from the then President, Zail Singh

my mental state corresponded to that of Oscar Wilde's.

I determined to commit suicide. After a time that evil mood passed away, and I made up my mind to live, but to wear gloom as a king wears purple, never to smile again, to turn whatever house I entered into a house of mourning, to make my friends walk slowly in sadness with me..

Some people advised me to forget all this. It was ruinous advice. It would mean--the beauty of the sun and moon, the music of daybreak and the silence of great nights, the rain falling through the leaves, or the dew creeping over the grass and making it silver--would all be tainted for me. to deny one's experience is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life. It is no less than a denial of the soul.

It was still vacillating in my friendship for Imroz. My saddest verse belongs to this year. I vividly recall a weird dream I had. I was sitting in a moving train. Opposite me was an aged man with flashing, piercing eyes. I kept turning over the pages of my book as he began to talk:

"Have you ever seen a black rose?"

"A black rose? I don't think I have!"

"A path from the next wayside station leads to a small village. I know of a rose garden there with a few red roses, a few white...but the rest of the vast field is full of deep black ones..."

"Really!"

"Do I appear reliable enough to you, or do I not?"

"Have I said anything that makes you ask that question?"

"Would you like to see that rose garden with your own eyes?"

"I was wondering whether I could ..."

"There is a myth about it..."

"And that is...?"

"Should you make up your mind, I'd rather relate the story there itself."

"Sure."

We got down at the next station. Picking our way along a fairly long half-beaten track, we discovered to our dismay that no transport was available. But eventually, we got to the place we had set out for. Such winsome beauties I had never before imagined could exist anywhere in the world. There was a bright red patch; there was also a milky-white one, but what melted the sight was acre upon acre of deep black blooms melting into the horizon.

"And now the story..."

"A fair lady, so at least goes the legend, was pure of heart and...as pure of soul....One day, he whom she loved, decked her hair with a damask rose, and she wrote and sang sweet and soft airs

"The course of true love did not run smooth, and the lady spent the rest of her life thinking about what makes things go wrong. And verse after verse she wrote from the depths of her broken heart

"Only those who have felt deep pain can understand the sufferings of others. Merging herself in that general suffering, she continued to write of depths unfathomed."

"And then what happened?"

"She died.. and was buried here. And then as if by magic, three roses—one red, one white, and one black—came forth from her grave!"

"Strange. ..Incredible!"

" The bushes kept getting bigger and bigger. Not a soul was around to bud or prune them. .no one to water them. Yet they kept growing till the rose garden you see, took shape.. "

"Oh!And what have people to say to that?"

"They say the red blooms shot up from the love-poems; the black ones from those of pain, and the ones she wrote out of compassion for all, were milky-white..."

A shiver went right through me. I brought myself to ask: "And will you not tell me your name?"

"My name? Er...well, call me if you must...Time."

"Time! How's that? How can you be digging out of me the story of my own life?"

Time's smile and my own shiver then woke me up from my sleep...

And I wrote: "When you cannot fill the goblet of night with the nectar of life: when you cannot taste the honey life offers you, you cannot call it tragedy.

"Tragedy is, when the silver plating peels off and the contents of the bowl turn poisonous and penetrate into your imagination.

"Tragedy isn't, when fate cannot read the address of the one you love, and so your life's letter goes undelivered.

"Tragedy is, when you write your life's letter to your love and you yourself go and lose his address.

"Tragedy isn't when social and the other ties strew the long road of your life with thorns and nettles, and your feet bleed sorely.

"Tragedy is when with sorely bleeding feet you stand where no pathway opens before you.

"And tragedy isn't when you keep covering the shivering cold form of your love with ragged verse."

Towards the end of that year, I underwent treatment at the psychiatrist's ...really to get to know myself. I read the standard books on psychology. At the instance of the psychiatrist, I put down on paper, to the extent I could, all my dreams...some of which I still remember.

I stand on the top of a tower, all by myself, talking to the pen I have in hand, "Will you always be with me? Always?"

Suddenly, someone clutches my hand.

"You're an illusion. Let go of my hand!" Sternly I command and breaking myself free, flee down the stair

No matter how fast I speed, the stairway goes on and on. Down and farther down I go, gasping for breath . yet I dare not stop, or I will be swooped on from behind.

Finally, I reach the landing ..and there spreads before me a fantastic garden. with a whole sea of thronging crowd!Was it a fair-ground right round the base of the tower? There was a spectacle of some kind at one end: at another, a match

Suddenly, out of nowhere I spot an old bicycle of mine. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS — DOM

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
AHMEDABAD					
AIZAWL					
BAGDOGRA					
BANGALORE					
BHUBANESWAR					
DELHI					
DIBRUGARH					
DIMAPUR					
GUWAHATI					
HYDERABAD					
IMPHAL					
JAIPUR					
JAMMU					
JORHAT					
LILABARI					
LUCKNOW					
MADRAS					
MUMBAI					
NAGPUR					
PATNA					
PORT BLAIR					
RANCHI					
SILCHAR					
TEZPUR					
VARANASI					
VISHAKHAPATNAM					

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
AMSTERDAM					
BANGKOK					
BUCHAREST					
CHITTAGONG					

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG 697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG 091	0810	4, 5
BG 092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG 091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC 723	1300	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	IC-724	1520	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
BG-094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG 093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	1
BG 096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1430	6	Q7 060	1330	6
[illegible]					
BI 107	2100	6	BI 108	0720	7
[illegible]					
IC 747	1105	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	IC 748	1645	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
[illegible]					
BA-142	1315	3, 7	BA-143	1515	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
SU 538	2100	4	SU 537	0930	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1100	[illegible]	KB 105	0810	2
KB-106	1325	5	KB 105	1710	4
[illegible]					
BI 106	0530	[illegible]	BI 107	2000	6
SQ 417	1445	2, 5	SQ 416	1230	2, 5
[illegible]					
LZ 501	1550	1	LZ 503	1650	1
[illegible]					
AI 306	1910	[illegible]	AI-305	1[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
IC 227	1540	4, 7	IC 228	1965	4, 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** ModiLuft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi-Kalka Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible]		
		Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Poorva (New Delhi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible]		
		Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
		[illegible]		
[illegible]		Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jodhpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati Saraighat Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gorakhpur Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Doon Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Udyan Abha Toofan Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi Janata Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Amritsar Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kathgodam Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mithila (Raxaul) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kamrup (Guwahati) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Black Diamond Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coalfield Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Asansol Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Danapur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jamalpur Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Santiniketan Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Rampurhat Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Gwalior) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shipra (Indore) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. Wed. Sat. & Sun. Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express Dep. [illegible] Arr. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Teesta-Torsa Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Darjeeling Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Delhi Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kanchanjunga [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gour Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kaifiat Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Jammu-Tawi Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Mughal Sarai Express via SBC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. & Arr. [illegible]		

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	Madras Mail	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bombay Mail via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Gitanjali (Bombay) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. & Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ahmedabad Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Kurla Express via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Coromandel (Madras) Express via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bangalore Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible]		
		Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tata Steel Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ispat (Sambalpur) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Sambalpur-Rayagada Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Ranchi Hatia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Puri Express via Cuttack	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	East Coast (Hyderabad) Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Purulia Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible] Saturday		
		Arr. [illegible] Sunday		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Tirupati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		Dep. [illegible] Arr. [illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		
	[illegible]	Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express via [illegible] & Howrah	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express via Howrah & [illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Trivandrum Weekly Express Dep. & Arr. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Cochin Harbour Terminus Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		
[illegible]	[illegible]	Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express [illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		
	[illegible]	Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express via [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		

ENQUIRIES. For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised), Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: Star Sons

The most famous of them all was: Raj Kapoor, even though we don't really think of him as one any longer But this first-born son of Prithviraj Kapoor was the first show-biz kid to follow in his father's footsteps—the fact that he then went on to eclipse his father's fame is neither here nor there

Next in line: Were Raj Kapoor's own sons Randhir, Rishi and Rajiv, all of whom tried their luck in the movies with varying degrees of success. Randhir, or Dabboo as he was popularly known as, couldn't really cut it as a leading man, though he played the comedian to perfection. And even his directorial career had its ups and downs Rajiv , or Chimpoo, had much the same experience, with his maiden release as director *Prem Granth*, failing to make an impact at the box-office.

The only one who did his father proud was Rishi, or Chintu, who has been playing the romantic hero for well over two decades now. He's getting to be a bit past it of late—what with the ever-expanding girth and double chin—but knowing Rishi, it won't be long before he re-invents himself and gets a fresh lease of life in the movie business

Rishi Kapoor: Did his father proud

Sunjay Dutt: Had a bona fide hit with his first release, *Rocky*

So, was it just the Kapoors, then: No way There were several others who believed in keeping it all within the family. Dev Anand, for instance, tried launching his son, Suneil, in the movies—only to come a cropper. Sunil Dutt, however, had better luck with son Sunjay, who had a bona fide hit in his first release *Rocky*, as did Rajendra 'Jubilee' Kumar's son, Kumar Gaurav in *Love Story*. But while Sunju went on to better and bigger things, Gaurav, better-known as Bunty, remained a one-film wonder.

Also in the queue: Were the Deols, as in father Dharmendra and sons Sunny and Bobby—good Punjabi names for two good Punjabi *puttars* Sunny was launched in a lavish home production, *Betaab*, which starred several horses and Amrita Singh. The film was a hit, and Sunny was home and dry as an action hero. Since then, however, his career has floundered a little, though he still manages to command a good price.

Bobby, the younger sibling, wasn't quite so lucky. His debut vehicle, *Barsaat*, co-starring Twinkle Khanna (daughter of Dimple Kapadia, who has been romantically involved with Sunny Deol for years now—but, let's not digress), didn't make the sort of impression it should have at the box-office And Bobby, who has since got

Kumar Gaurav: A one-film wonder

Bobby Deol: Hoping for a hit in his forthcoming films

Sunny Deol: Still manages to command a good price

married to Tanya, the daughter of a Bombay industrialist, is hoping that his forthcoming films—in one of them he's starring opposite Aishwarya Rai—will do the trick for him.

In the same boat is: Puru Raj Kumar, whose first movie, *Bal Brahmachari*, sank without a trace. Puru, however, is even worse off than Bobby. The younger Deol, at least, can count on Daddy to salvage his flagging career, but Puru's father, the famed Raj Kumar, died a few weeks before *Bal Brahmachari* was released. So, Puru has to rely on his own ability to get ahead; and his father's contacts, assuming that the eccentric Raj Kumar had any worth speaking of.

So, who's next?: Vinod Khanna's son, Akshaye, who is being launched in a home production called, appropriately enough, *Himalaya Putra*. He is already being touted as The Next Big Thing, and has been signed on by Parmeshwar Godrej for the Cinthol ad campaign. Whether this kind of hype will help Akshaye or harm him—by increasing people's expectations of him—remains to be seen.

But, wait a minute!: Didn't Vinod Khanna have two sons? Yes, he did, but the other, Rahul, has turned his back on the Hindi film industry, opting instead to veejay for MTV Asia. And that's a pity, because he looks more the Hindi film hero than brother Akshaye does.

Saif Ali Khan: Looks like Sharmila

The gender bender is: Saif Ali Khan, whose link to the film industry is not his father, Nawab Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, but his mom, Sharmila Tagore, who was an actress of repute in her day. Saif, who looks uncannily like Sharmila, right down to the dimples in his cheeks, has had mixed luck in the movies. While his performance in such films as *Main Khiladi Tu Anari* has been appreciated, he hasn't really made it to the top bracket as yet. He's still seen as a second lead, but that could change in time.

Also in the wings is: Fardeen, Feroz Khan's son, who was introduced to filmland at a lavish party hosted by his father. His launch is being master-minded by his Dad, and we only hope—for Fardeen's sake—that Feroz does a better job of promoting his son, than he did managing his own career.

Breaking the stereotype are: Such heroes as Ajay Devgan. His father, for instance, was not a top-ranking star, but a stunt master, who went on to become the industry's best-known director of action sequences.

Drawing on his vast experience, Veeru Devgan launched his son in *Phool Aur Kaante*, an action thriller, and Ajay was well on his way to becoming a star in his own right.

So, is it just sons who get the treatment: Not really. There are plenty of star daughters who have been launched by their proud daddys. But that, as they say, is another story. ■

'JACKSON IS THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD!'

Celebrities recount their most vivid impression of the pop singer in Mumbai

Michael Jackson's visit to Mumbai, which sent the city into a tizzy for three days, is now *History*. But people are still recounting the moments, the hype, the weekend when everyone was talking the same language. If you got into a rickshaw, went to a *pan-bidi* stall, stopped at a street vendor, overheard a group of elderly men on a bench in the park, the familiar name of the pop star would crop up sooner or later. It was this universal appeal that turned on the magic. Here are some celebrity views.

Javed Jaffrey: The performance aside, which was brilliant, what I loved was the variations he did on *I love you*.

Milind Soman: What impressed me (apart from the show itself, of course) was the fact that when the cause is close enough to an organisation's heart, anything can be done well. That's sad, but true. With a crowd of 40,000 people, we got into the stadium in five minutes flat. Whereas, when I went for the cricket match, I was almost reduced to a chutney!

Pritish Nandy: I'm a great Jackson fan. I feel he puts out a great act, it's unique and he will survive for quite a while yet. No, I didn't go to the show because I don't care for concerts. And four hours of waiting would have been too much for me. If you ask me about the political angle, I think this will do for Thackeray and the Shiv Sena what Jayalalitha's foster sons

Vikas Khot

marriage did for her and Sashikala!

Chunky Pandey: Oh, I went berserk! I've seen so many shows, but this tops everything. Everything about it, specially his arrival, how they built up the anxiety, the way he came in, the whole aura of the show. He's the eighth wonder of the world. Actually, I took to him and his music only after seeing him on stage, not before that. And yes, I'll definitely go again, if I get the tickets free!

Baba Sehgal: He is a living legend, but the best part is the sound and stage effects. Being a very good performer, the setting is equally important. What I found missing here was that unlike in his concerts in America, where he talks to the audience, strikes up a real vibe with them, here he just said, "I love you, India", it was rather like a duty performed.

Nadeem (of Nadeem Shravan): It was the most spectacular show one could have seen— it was like an action/emotion movie, one was zapped! I loved the emotional part of the show — he knows how to do them. For example, when the videos of his family were run on the screen; and he went down on his knees and cried. The Thackerays have done a great feat.

Bappi Lahiri: I met him personally. That was fantastic. He appreciated my gold chain, and I have given him some of my CDs, like *Habiba*. He is a well-balanced person, a little shy; he loves children. Seeing his show is a lifetime achievement, he is the best showman after Elvis. I might be able to sing well but I can't dance. And likewise we have many dancers here, but they cannot sing. He knows how to capture people's hearts — remember the scene where the battle tank comes on stage and the little girl stops the soldier with flowers; and then there was the Indian and American flags coming together. I was almost crying, it was so beautiful. By the way, I am going to America to meet him. I have some work with him, and when I come back I hope to give you good news!

Anna Singh: He's the best performer in the world, so incredible, and the only one who knows how to market his music the best. Actually I never had taken to his music, but after the concert I look at it with different eyes. I relate to it differently now.

Anupam Kher: One thing I noticed at the party for Michael Jackson was that after I shook his hand, a lot of people wanted to shake my hand! He is someone who is known even in the small towns and villages— people may not be able to pronounce his name correctly but they know about him.

Uday Benegal: I've never been a huge fan of his. I wanted to see a Michael Jackson show. I went, and I wasn't disappointed. He is still a force to reckon with because he hasn't forgotten the art of music; take his more recent song, *Stranger in Moscow*. It was a great experience and that's entertainment!

Reported by
Anita George

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 April 20

Ganesha says a home away from home, plenty of commuting and correspondence and again loans and funds dominate the week. The final outcome of monetary dealings and family values will depend upon your tact, ingenuity and diplomacy Insurance and taxes also take up much of your time

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Socialising will do you plenty of good For one, it will burnish your image. For another, it could get you a bridegroom/bride if that be your target Yes, hard work and new goals are sure to be your lot A lot of loose ends to be tied Surprising as it may sound go chopping to make a fast buck

Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Ganesha says time to expand your mental horizons by reading watching films travelling, taking study courses, boning up on general knowledge facts computer data and so on Meeting others halfway will produce excellent results and you can do it Cultural interests are focalised You must pay for your pleasures

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Romance and finance could well walk hand in hand for Cancerians Your creativity will not only be recognised but handsomely rewarded Film producers, poets, astrologers, writers, teachers, entrepreneurs should strike it lucky There's a fine accent on domestic issues Also on children

Leo
July 21 — August 21

The focus is once again on the two frontiers of property and relationships Check accounting procedures, bank balance, expiration dates of car licenses, lease of property and so on Do learn to highlight diversity and keep your plans flexible because that is what you are going to need You will be complimented

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Information previously hidden comes to light In any case, this is an exceptionally newsy week. Yes, there are job opportunities for the disgruntled as well as the highly talented You will be active in social service welfare organisations, helping others and that seems great Plans for children are highlighted

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Relationships that went off track can be restored this week and that's important for you Define terms and goals with absolute clarity as much will depend later on You will beautify your surroundings no matter what your status in life Diplomacy in dealings will definitely pay Get set to travel

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha says, the financial squeeze should be almost over, thanks to sun and Jupiter in fine placing Your personal posers and problems will be resolved Challenges, variety and the possibility of promotion are predicted Your ability to analyse character puts you at a disadvantage

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

Take the initiative in getting to the heart of the matter. You could be concerned with property stability, security On the personal level await happy developments Dress up your product display your talent and be open to the winds of change This is an excellent week for travel and family reunions

Capricorn
December 21 - January 19

The focus is on organisation work methods, basic issues finances entertainment and amusements, therefore, it is a week of many wonderful colours and contours You will both receive and give a gift You may have to let go of old ideas to replace with new ones Week of many activities

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Flirtations, chance meetings give ice and spice to your life Your views and opinions will make a terrific impact Those who speak ill will be routed Due caution is necessary if working with electrical appliances of any kind Fire hazards may be there Your opposite sex will show feelings towards you

Pisces
February 19 - - March 20

Travel will take place or plans will be finalised That will benefit you in every possible way Financially you receive a boost and that should mean something to you Statuswise you zoom near the top But expenses will be heavy and health may not be at its best You will do well

BIRTHDAYS

November 17: **Sun sextile Neptune, says Ganesha, will lead to a generous slice of luck in property matters, status, social standing and personal matters.**

November 18: **Moon's first quarter indicates you may have to put in extra energy to get the best out of the year, but rest assured you will be able to do so.**

November 19: **Moon sextile Jupiter signifies money will come in and therefore, you can afford to relax a bit. The real danger is in falling out.**

November 20: **Moon trine sun Pluto brings recognition and rewards. Your bad patch will end and a new source of energy, and intellectual endeavour will take over. In your job or work, expect pleasing developments**

November 21: Moon square Jupiter only means expenses and extravaganza in all that you do Your insight into things and people will help you to succeed

November 22: **Sun trine Saturn signifies you are in a period of growth and evolution be it finances, romance, education, spirituality, travel or trade.**

November 23: **Sun sextile Uranus is an excellent sextile for industrialists, artists, scientists, educationalists and those in the media.**

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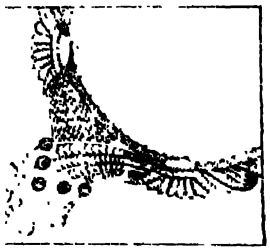
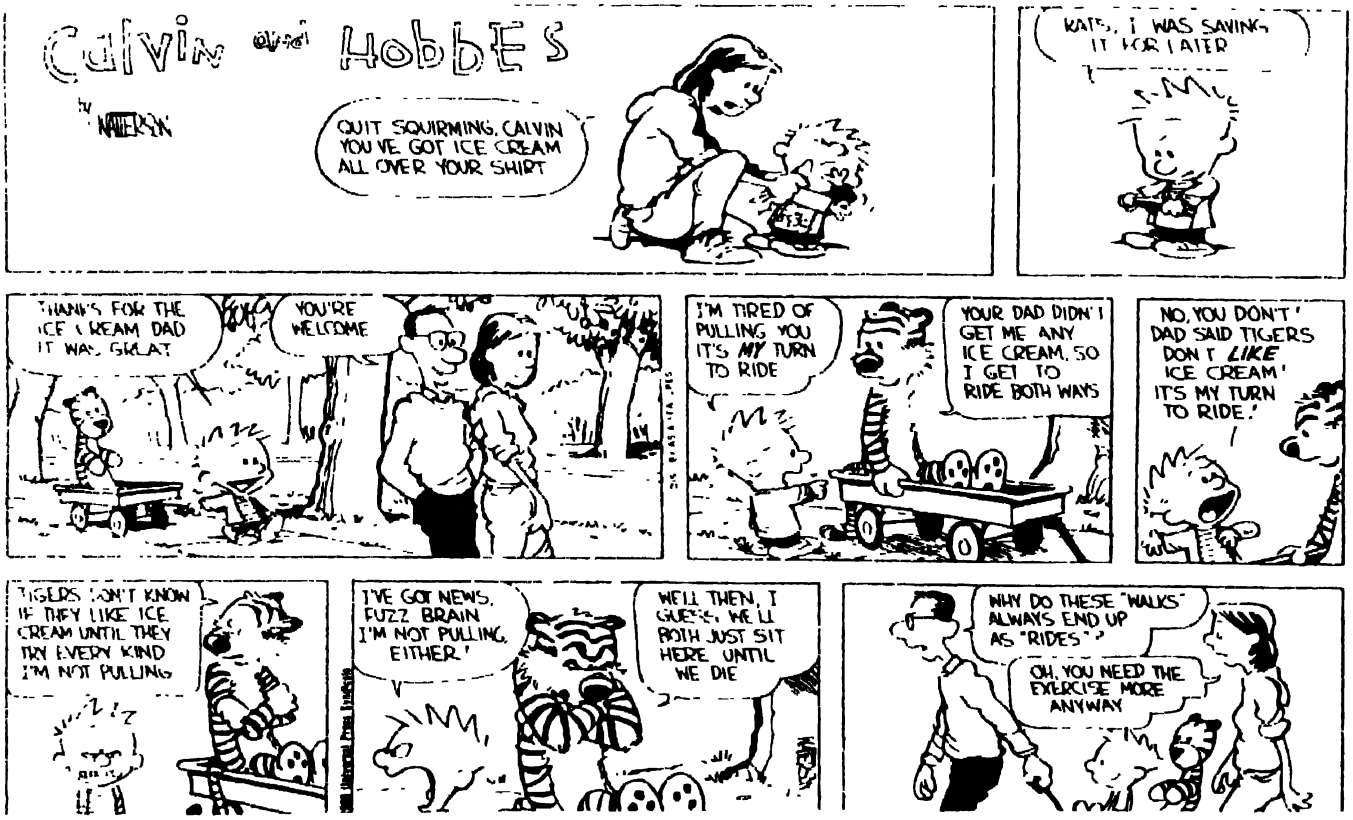


COMICS

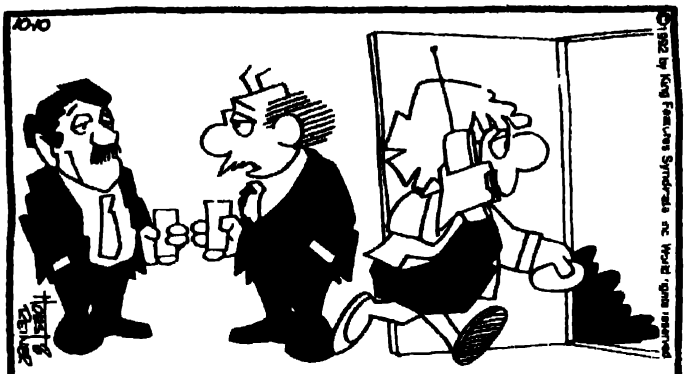
ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

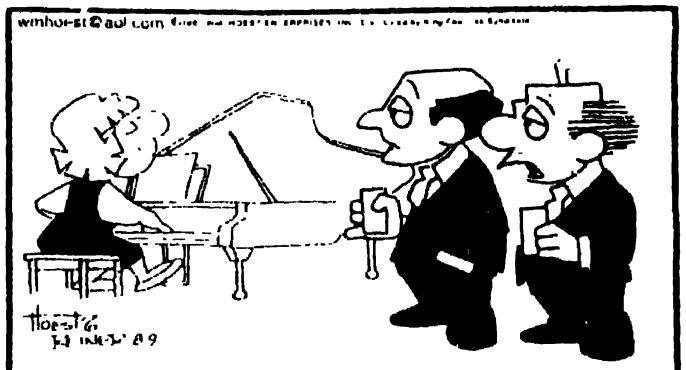


THE LOCKHORNS

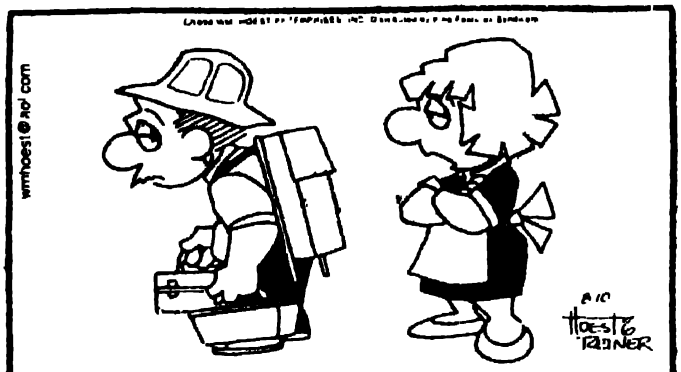
"TRY TO LOOK A LITTLE MORE MANLY, LEROY... LIKE YOUR MOTHER."



"LORETTA SHOPS BY PHONE, BUT PREFERS DOING IT AT THE MALL."

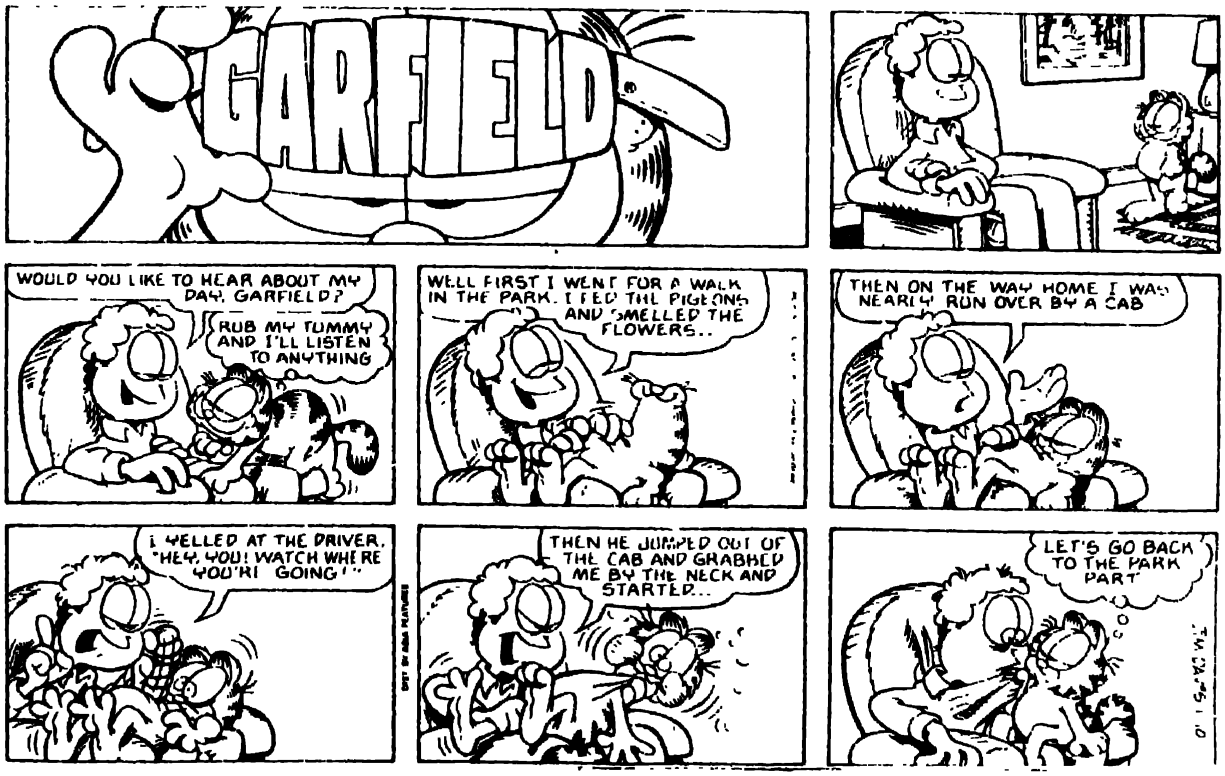


"LORETTA'S FORTE IS MUSICAL TRAGEDY"

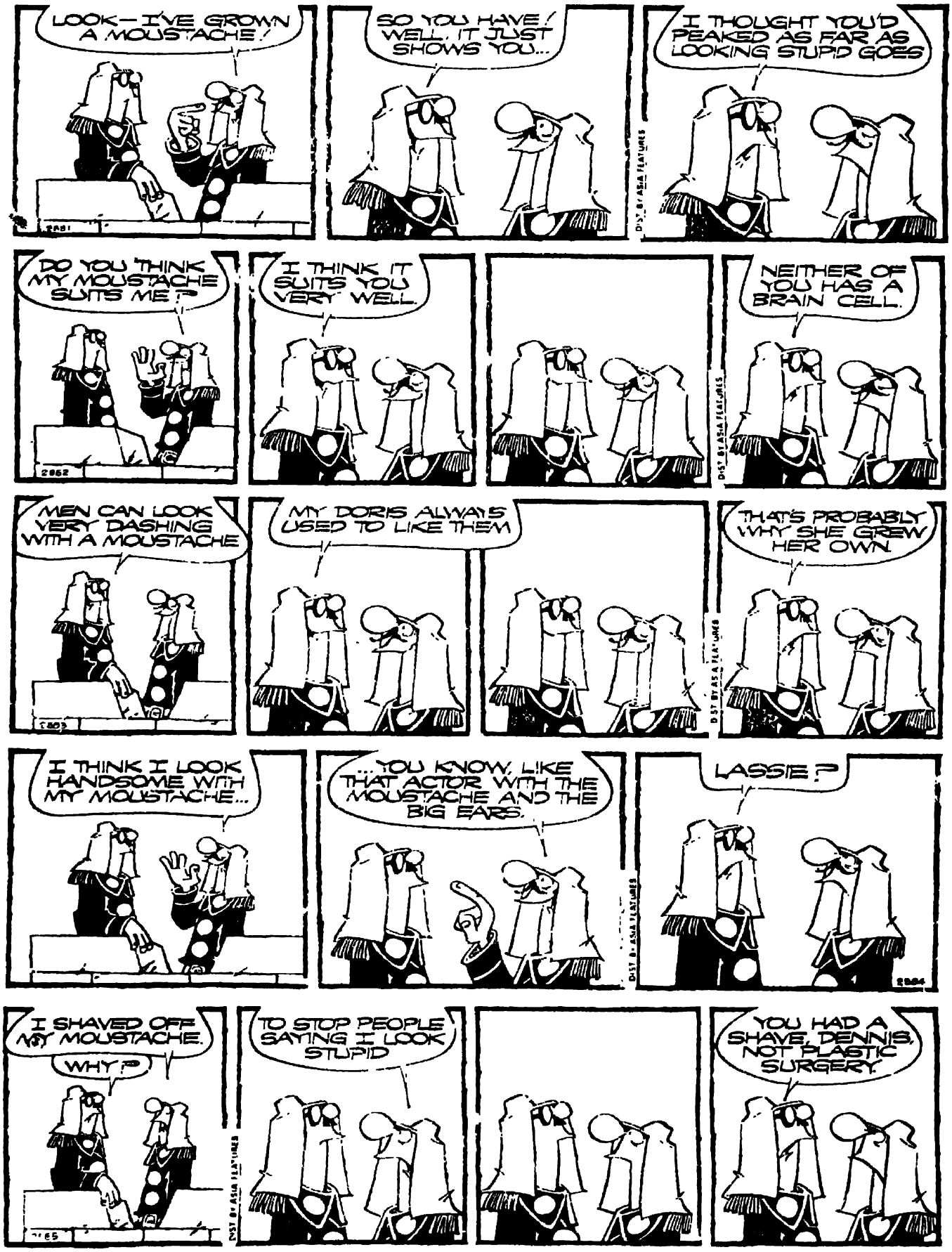


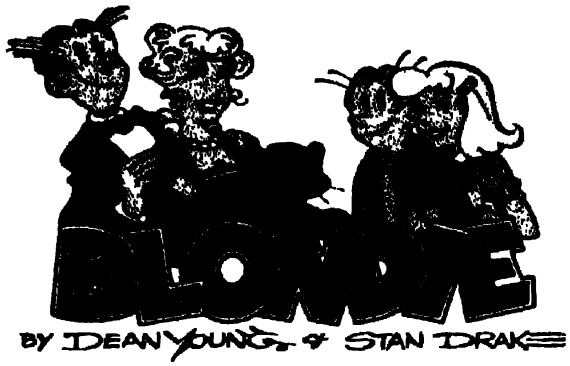
"ARE YOU THE SAME LEROY WHO CAN'T HELP ME LIFT AN END TABLE?"

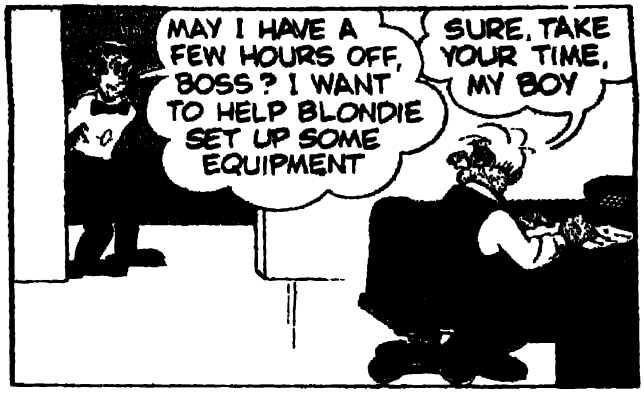
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

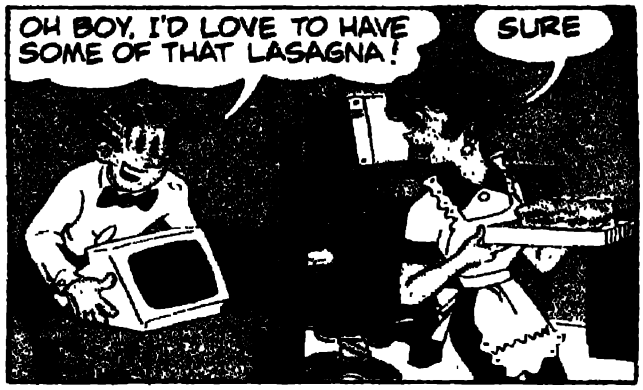


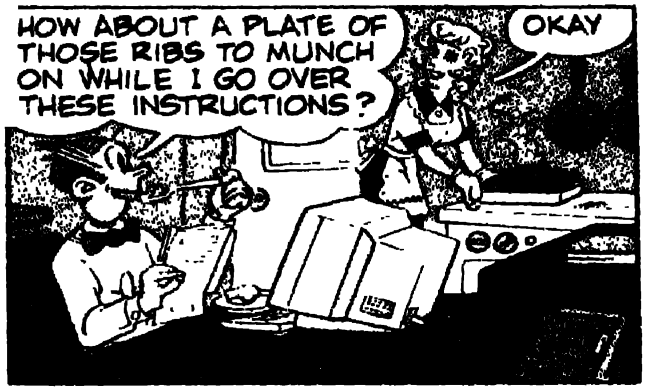
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP











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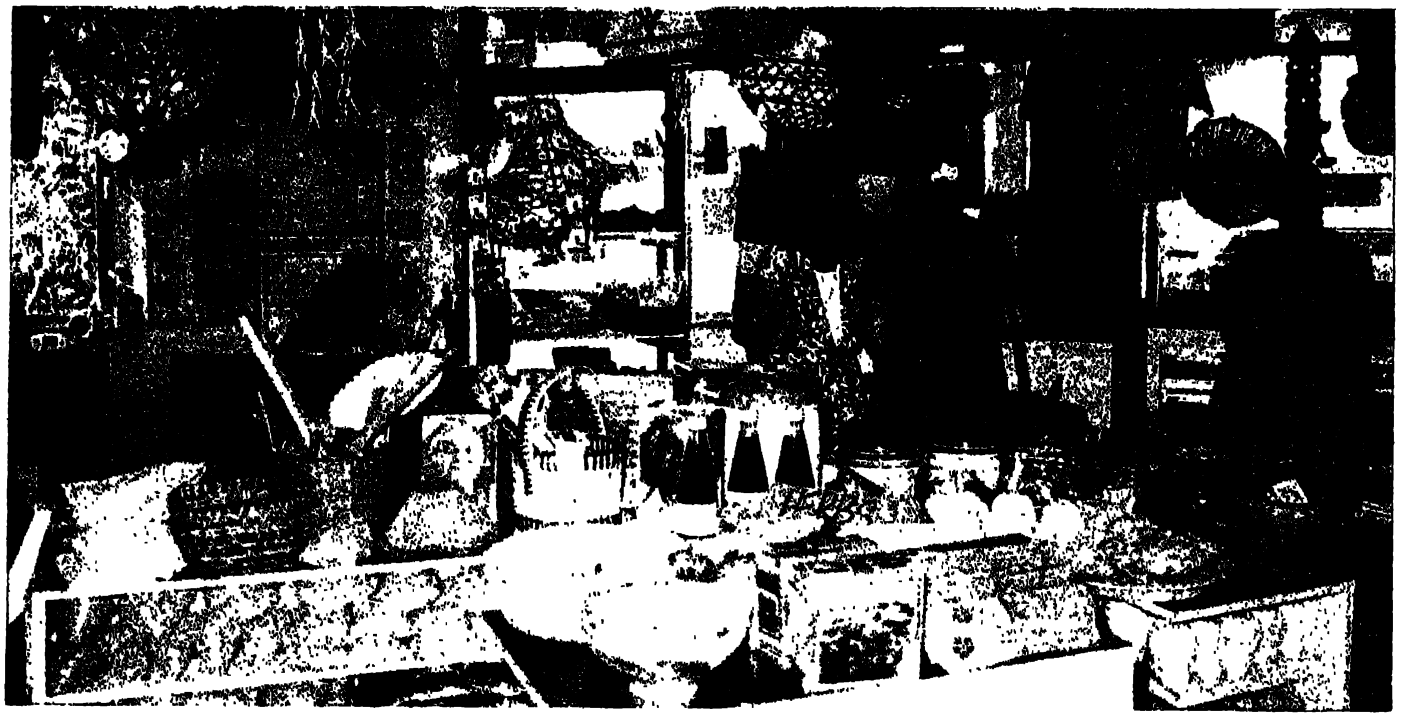


YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

As people get more and more obsessed with watching their weight, dieticians and health food shop owners emerge as the new celebrities, says ***Anita George***

All around us there are signs of people's increasing interest in health (read weight) In a generation fed on bleached, refined, skimmed, skinned, preserved, pickled, coloured and aromated food, more and more people are rushing to aerobics classes and jogging parks

And now increasingly, they are turning to dieticians and health food shops. As a result, the dietician and the health food shop owner are turning into media celebrities, specially when patronised by rich and famous clients.

But are people more concerned with their food out of a concern for their figures or their health?

Normally the concern begins when they begin to get fat This is followed by a variety of self-prescribed diets, before they land up at the door of a dietician

Anjali Mukerjee, dietician and obesity consultant, has a list of clients that includes film stars and she has worked with models in their preparation for the supermodel contest. And, she adds, "I have 150 clients on the phone from Calcutta!"

Eighty per cent of the time, she says, her clients' obesity is a direct cause of their eating habits and a lifestyle where they exercise less and eat out more. And they are well aware of it. Only they have neither the knowledge or the discipline to tackle the problem.

So they try to treat themselves first "Some starve all day and have one meal at night, and really hog then, and defeat the purpose. People aren't aware of many facts, such as one has to eat more in the morning rather than at night," says Anjali. Fasting is immensely popular among the overweight, adds Mukerjee wryly.

Dr Chandalia, President of the National Diabetic Association (W. India chapter) lists some of the diet-related illnesses which finally make people sit up and take a look at what they are eating: obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure.

There is some evidence that certain cancers of the gastro-intestinal system may be diet-related. "You could call these diseases the bane of urbanisation," he says, "of coco-colonisation!"

Enter the health food store. Bombay is perhaps the first if not the only city where it exists and actually does well. The trend setter, Kavita Mukhi's Natural Options, in the up-market Napeansea Road area, is an intriguing place to visit.

Whole grains organically grown (no fertilisers or chemicals), unpolished and stone ground; breads and bakes made from whole wheat and jaggery rather than sugar and *maida*; only sea salt used where required. Neem leaves are used as a preservative.

Sugar substitutes include unprocessed tribal honey, pam or sugarcane jaggery, raw sugar and palm sugar. The unrefined sugar is yellowish in comparison with the extreme white sugar that we are all used to. Dairy products are unprocessed — in fact, Mukhi says that the cows providing the milk feed on organic food!

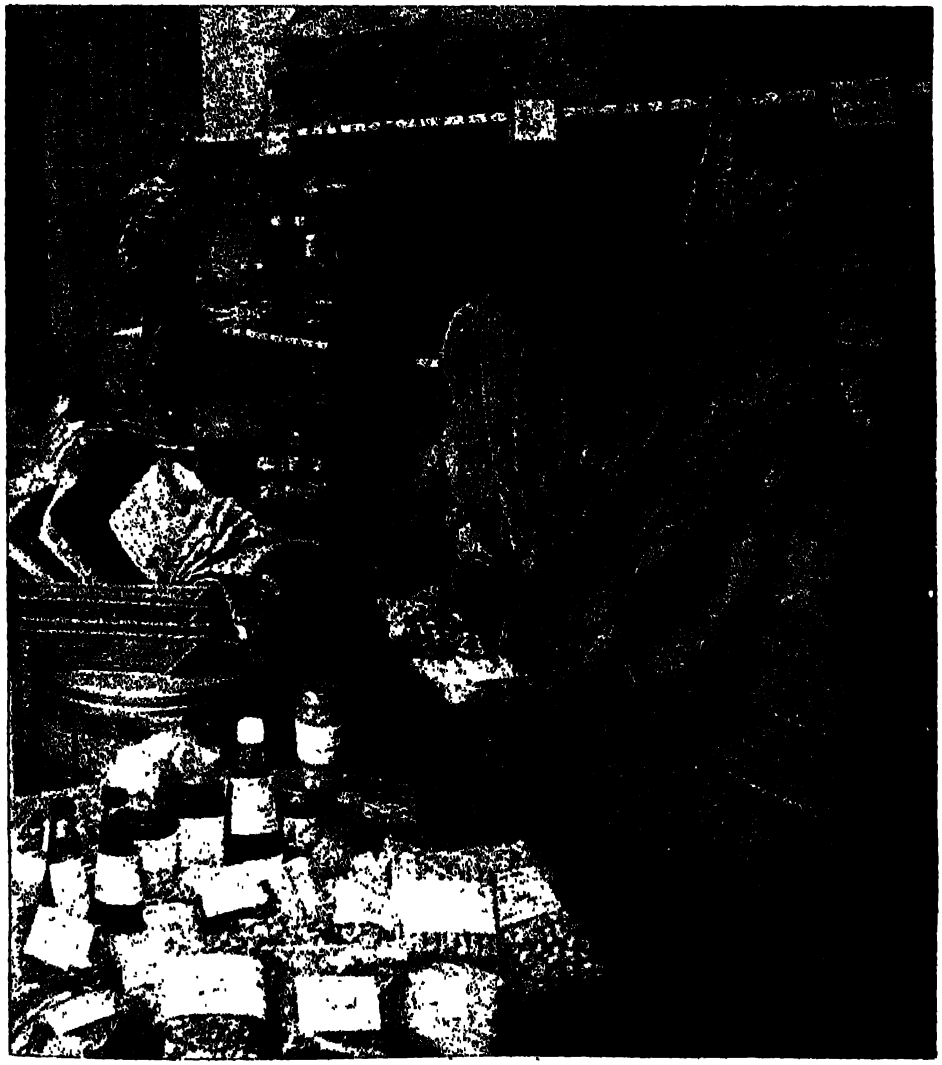
Mukhi's shop and philosophy stretches beyond food to all things natural — so you have vegetable dyed clothes, mat *chappals*, wooden massagers and even veg-dyed *dhurries* — a far greater range of products than Calcutta's own health food centre, which provides such 'exotic' vegetables as artichokes, asparagus and avocados.

Not far from Mukhi's outlet, on Peddar Road, Vineeta Mathur has set up The Health Shop, on a smaller scale. Organic wheat porridge, whole wheat pastas and whole grain snacks sit on shelves amidst branded products like Kelloggs and Dabur.

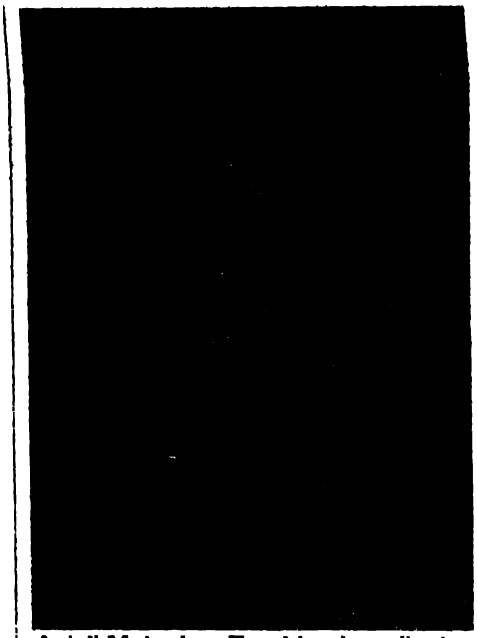
"But," says Mukhi, "what is disappointing is that while awareness is increasing, and the market is growing steadily, people are more interested in buying the healthy version of junk food. Ideally, they should be buying more of whole wheat, unrefined sugar and so on. Of course, these are still high in demand."

Some customers admit that they buy at a health shop to appease their conscience, following a binge on fried food or at Mughlai restaurants. But there are actually a few people who will only buy from the store! The wheat products surprise you with their fragrant flavour — it is like tasting wheat for the first time, and leaves one wondering about the kind of food that one eats on a daily basis.

Kavita Mukhi's Nature Options: Pioneered the health food store concept



Vikas Khot



Anjali Mukerjee: Teaching her clients to eat correctly

What is encouraging, says Mukhi, is that there is a market here that can sustain such shops, and she has plans of opening one in Goa as well. There are people keen on opening outlets in cities like Calcutta and Bangalore too

The problem is that the store's produce works out to be 15 per cent more expensive on an average than market rates and that, along with the location, ensures that it becomes an elitist privilege. The ideal, she says, is that one day everyone should be able to eat healthily

Dr Chandalia points out that in rural areas, this is more possible. As for the urbanite, he or she has heard all the dos and don'ts before: minimising direct sugar, salt, fat, cooking food only when required; using whole wheat flour, retaining the skin of fruits and vegetables as far as possible; and so on and so forth And making sure that all this input is matched by a proportionate amount of energy expended.

But knowing all this is one thing; incorporating this knowledge into our daily lives is quite another. And there are very few among us who actually bother to do so. ■

PROFILE

AS IF BY MAGIC

Prabhu Deva's face vanishes, Kamalahasan becomes a lion: all thanks to special effects man, S.T. Venki. ***Sudha G. Tilak*** *reports*

Mammooty pumps a triumphant fist in the air, as his plane performs acrobatics in the skies. Kamalahasan transforms into an eagle or a lion much to Manisha Koirala's surprise. Prabhu Deva has his mug wiped off and still continues to do his jig on the dance floor. Aamir Khan and Urmila Matondkar orbit off into space seated in a garden seat.

Welcome to the world of Sambamurthy Tanjore Venki's special effects. And meet the man who has of late turned Indian movies into a phantasmagoric experience.

Thanks to his MTV-ish visual callisthenics Venki is a much-wanted figure in Bollywood these days. In the last five years he has been special effects designer for more than 50 films in almost all Indian languages. He is currently working on six Hindi films in Bombay where his talent is much in demand today

Venki's home could give Frankenstein's house of horrors a run for its money No, not that it's atop a dark hillock, set against a blue-black sky, or that the man ha fluttering bats for pets

On the contrary, Venki's quiet home on the verdant College Road in Chennai looks like a pleasant hideout from the bustle of the city, from the outside But inside, it's a house where portraits of Dali in mustachioed splendour vie with the latest Thota Tharani abstract Where terracotta sculptures nudge warty rubber masks and works of Picasso fight for space on the wall with bloodied 'arms' peeping from a chest of drawers

Forty-year-old Venki, currently the highest-paid special effects whiz in India's movieland (he won't tell how many lakhs he charges for his efforts) smiles when visitors shriek at the realistic-looking limbs dangling by his work table or truncated heads in his atelier. But then he can afford to grin: to him goes the credit for dispelling the notion that special effects meant vanishing acts in spooky flicks or flying heads in mythologicals

Kombai

S.T. Venki, the special effects whiz: A much-wanted man in movieland

His latest handiwork features in *Indian* released in Hindi as *Hindustani*, which has chart-busting song sequences. And most of the special effects in these sequences, which use computer-aided technology, are Venki's handiwork.

The special effects for song sequences like *Maya Muchindra* had Kamalahasan and Manisha Koirala in a fantasy world And those for *TADA* with Urmila Matondkar springing in the air were all done in Venki's atelier Sitting at his table, Venki works with his sets of paints and brushes and easel, adding and pasting the Aamir Khans against soaring skies, wiping Prabhu Deva's mug off the screen for a song and much more

Venki traces his roots to the Cauvery belt at Thanjavur. And his pretty wife, Meena, exudes all the tradition that a classical Bharatanatyam danseuse from the renowned school of Kalakshetra can. But Venki's career has been based on the non-traditional, relying on the latest technology in animation.

Despite graduating from the prestigious Madras College of Arts, Venki's love of painting soon took a back seat. "Animation always fascinated me," he recalls. After dabbling in making frescoes and murals (terracotta sculptures adorn his studio as well) he went on to London to pick up the latest in animation techniques before coming home to get into the world of advertising.

A painter at heart, Venki began a short-lived career in drawing cartoons, political and otherwise. His

master remains Picasso, whose photographs and prints adorn his walls. He still has copies of his early works—made before he branched off into advertising—collected in a scrapbook.

In the mid-Eighties animation was limited to documentaries, and there was no demand for special effects in the movies. The artiste was essentially a 'repair' man, who joined bits of negatives or used a bit of animation for titles, "Optical graphics and animation were non-existent," says Venki.

But the Telugu film industry produced a regular crop of mythological movies. This gave him ample scope to turn sorcerer's heads into molten lead, create headless torsos, and, of course, some hi-tech bows and arrows to whiz in the skies, and mount ample vanishing acts.

"Our audiences are still not into sci-fis," says Venki wistfully, and that reduces the scope of special effects. According to him, the lack of sci-fis and mythologicals have resulted in song sequences becoming the focus of special effects.

The other area where special effects come in handy is in movies which have double roles. For instance, Nagarjuna, thanks to Venki's special effects, got to shake hands with his long-lost twin in a Telugu film. And a wrinkled Kamalahasan got to trot around his dancing son in *Indian*.

One of Venki's recent triumphs is the sequence in *Indian* which has Kamal, an INA personnel, shaking hands with Subhas Chandra Bose sometime in the year 1946. After extracting ill-maintained footage of Bose, Venki worked for 35 days on matching freshly-shot black-and-white footage of Kamal with the old film.

"In fact the idea had germinated in me much earlier than *Forrest Gump* was released I just didn't get the opprtunity to work on a sequence," says Venki He, in fact, used specially-designed software for the motion contract effect while matching the 16 mm film with a cinemascope one. "This hasn't been done in Hollywood either," he says, with pride.

Venki's first noticeable special effects for movies had people in splits. This was for Kamalahasan in the super successful *Appu Raja* Here, Venki doodled a face on screen, which made faces at the hero, and vastly amused the audience It was this feat that first got Venki noticed in film circles.

Prabhu Deva and Naghma in the superhit, *Kaadhalan*

The present climate of film making is specially suited to someone like Venki. The new pack of techno-savvy directors like Mani Ratnam, A.Shankar, Kadhir, Ram Gopal Varma are evolving their own grammar for making commercial hits. Special effects gives them scope to break away from the routine of 100 'extras' against the skyline in identical costumes giving little space for the lead pair to cavort. "Special effects gives a variety for the audience tired of this routine for over four decades," says Venki. And there's nobody more skilled at this game than Venki himself.

However, Venki points out that special effects for the sake of special effects will be wasted on a discerning audience. But, most of Venki's work has been in song sequences in which it has been introduced merely for effect. Yes, says Venki, but "this three-year-old fad for special effects might not last long. The future is vague."

Flak for Venki's brand of on-screen magic is not lacking. Senior directors and detractors accuse him of introducing 'unrealistic concepts' through special effects. Film maker Bharathiraja recently said in print that such special effects do not contribute much in the making of a film. Venki has his reply ready: "It is equally unrealistic to have 100 men and women dressed identically in a song sequence".

According to young film maker A. Shankar: "Special effects help in breaking the monotony during song sequences and in turning other important sequences in a film into a visual experience".

Shankar should know. He has been the one film maker who has squeezed more ideas out of Venki than anyone else for his Prabhu Deva starrer *Kaadhalan* released in Hindi as *Hum Se Hai Muquablu*. But Venki has still a lot more work left in him. And he promises that his early influences of Picasso, cubism and surrealism will come into play in the special effects he designs. "I am a designer more than an artist," he says.

So, the next time you watch Shah Rukh Khan in a Daliesque song sequence, or Ajay Devgan trying stunts that could put a rubber joint to shame, you'll know who's behind the on-screen gimmicks. It'll be none other than the man who gave you the faceless Prabhudeva. ■

MONA BHATTACHARYA, the bubbly anchorperson of Home TV's Lifestyle show says that she "cannot be caged". And this desire for freedom is reflected in Mona's free-wheeling interview style. She began her career with Doordarshan before moving on to Zee TV where she read the 10 o'clock news. But it is at Home TV that she has found her feet.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A hut on the beach away from the madding crowd.
What is your greatest fear?
Losing my smile.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
Beauty and unpredictability of nature.
What do you dislike most in others?
Pettiness.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My sinking nature.
What is your most precious possession?
My laughter.
What objects do you always carry?
My spirit (no material objects are important enough).
What makes you most depressed?
The rat race.
What do you dislike about on your appearance?
My nose.
What is your favourite word?
Smile.
What is your favourite journey?
Travelling away from the rat race.
What is your source of sustenance?
Hope.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I'm most likely to be believed.
What is your greatest regret?
Being born.
What has been your greatest achievement?
[illegible]

What is your greatest fear?

Losing my smile

What is your favourite journey?

Travelling away from the rat race

THE LOOK THAT STAYS ALL DAY
ULTRA FINESSE
Superfine powder compact for that translucent finish that lasts all day
ULTRA BLUSH
Duo powder blusher with a unique brush for that smooth finish all day long
ULTRA SHADE
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24 NOVEMBER 1996

POST

Old Soul

■ Undoubtedly, Zohra Segal's life has been the most varied and adventurous ('Vintage Zohra', September 29).

This is more so for a girl hailing from a conservative Muslim family. In those years she went to Germany to learn dancing and had to cope with a culture and people that were all alien to her.

Unless one has tremendous determination and courage one cannot succeed. Honestly, she is a role model for all women.

Anuradha Mukherjee,
Calcutta

■ There was a time when art was revered and the practitioners of the genre were dedicated towards it. Zohra Segal is the product of that era of honest dedication. Her sincerity, passion for drama and the struggle she had to go through are all evident in her persona.

Vikas Jatu,
Calcutta

■ It is the confluence of Hindu, Muslim and Christian cultures in Zohra Segal that makes her a unique personality. The veteran actress deserves the Dadasaheb Phalke award.

Reba Bose,
Jamshedpur

Krishna Murari Kishore

Laloo Prasad Yadav dresses up his son as Lord Krishna at a function in Patna

Papa Doesn't Preach

■ The 'Lifestyle' feature on Laloo Prasad Yadav was very colourful ('Hum Do Hamare Nau', September 29). I was long curious about his family. The chief minister is really an amazing personality: living like a king with all his rural and urban comforts and yet revered by the masses. It's good his children do not want to join politics and yet he is not upset about it.

Sandip Sarkar,
Calcutta

■ Laloo Prasad Yadav's children would naturally feel proud of their father because they are living the life of a prince and princess while other children are slogging it out.

What is important is, are the people of Bihar as proud of him as his children?

His gimmicks are entertaining no doubt. But how long can a government sustain on that? Have his gimmicks contributed to the progress of the state in any way?

Raymi Singh,
Patna

■ An ideal leader should be a model for his people. The *paan* and *khaini* chewing Laloo Prasad Yadav with nine children cannot be the right example for the people to follow.

M. Das,
Jamshedpur

INSIDE

Pankaj Sharma

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ARPANA CAUR, the celebrity artist, is constantly exploring new boundaries in her works of art. An interview with the painter.

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MANEKA GANDHI launches her new book, *First Aid for Animals.*

Arpana Caur

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Cover: Pankaj Sharma

COVER STORY

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Arpana Caur is the rising star of the Indian art firmament. ***Geeta Sharma*** *profiles the shy, soft-spoken painter*

Photographs by Pankaj Sharma

Making a statement through expressionistic colours and stark imagery

Arpana Caur and her painting : An extension of her social and political

AS A CHILD, THERE WERE MANY THINGS THAT THE SILENT, SENsitive Arpana Caur had felt passionately about. And prominent among them was the atomic bomb blast that destroyed two cities and brought Japan to its knees in World War II.

Even today, the nuclear destruction that the atom bomb wrought evokes the same fear, the same anguish, and the same compassion in the artist. So, when the Hiroshima Museum wrote to her last year, asking if she would do a painting on the theme 'Hiroshima', to mark the 50th year of the tragic event, Caur went to work with a vengeance.

Now back from Japan, where her work, a triptych titled *Where have all the flowers gone?*, was formally installed at

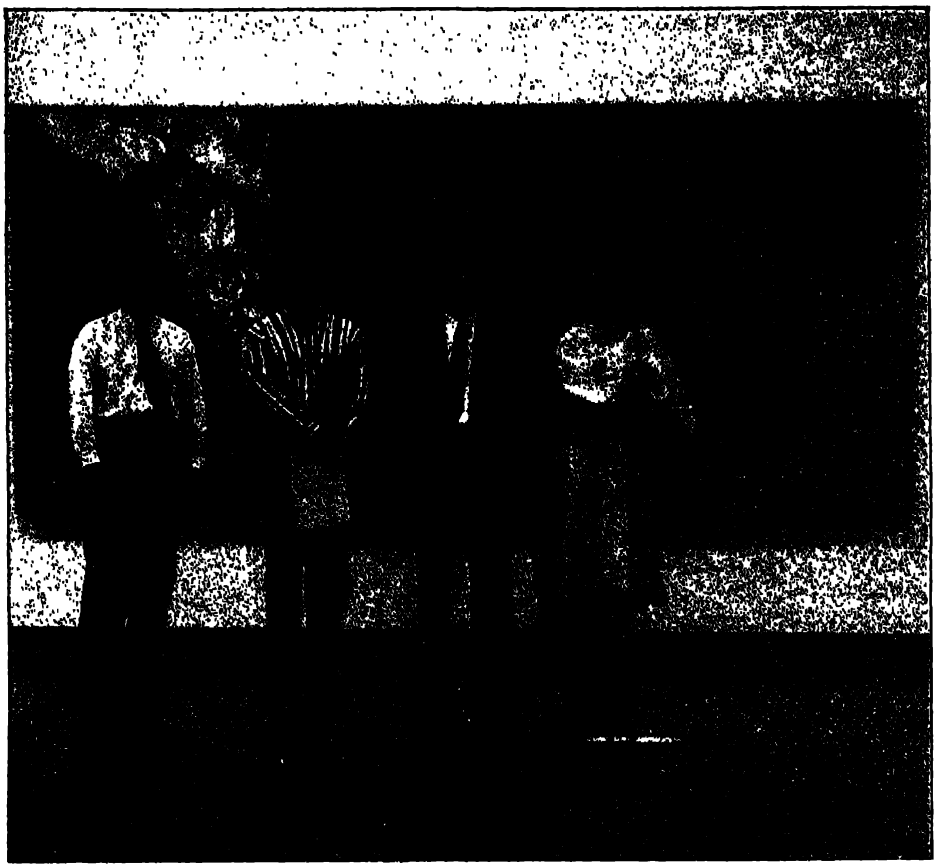
the sprawling Hiroshima Museum — along with the works of four other Asian artists, who had also been commissioned to work on the theme — Arpana Caur is both modest and full of child-like enthusiasm about her achievement.

"It was a nice feeling to see the work of not me as an 'I' but as an Indian artist hung in the museum. What was heartening was that it stood out, because of its typical Indian colours, blue and yellow, as against the blacks and browns of the other works," she says.

But what touched Caur most during her trip to Japan, which she describes as a land of beauty and peace, was the gesture of a waiter in a restaurant she ate in. As she sat there having a meal with three of the eight young curators of the museum, a waiter, identifying her nationality from her salwar kameez, came and placed two tiny Japanese and Indian flags, stuck on a piece of thermacol, on her table to convey his welcome.

"I was so overwhelmed by the gesture that I just started crying sitting there!" says Arpana

Jeet Caur



Arpana Caur in front of her painting at the Hiroshima Museum

Drawing inspiration from Oriental art

The three frames of the 12 x 6 ft triptych displayed at Hiroshima depict lotuses (symbolising life) blossoming under the blue sky and on deep blue water; guns and soldiers (signifying death); and a forlorn woman (the ultimate victim of all violence) draped in a black veil sitting despondently in the rain under black clouds of destruction. The images are a subtle yet evocative depiction of the twin themes of violence and peace.

And for once, Arpana is more than satisfied with her work. "Not all works of art are successful, irrespective of whether or not they sell," she explains. "I myself do about 12 works a year and am satisfied with less than half of them. But this triptych has given me immense satisfaction." What is more gratifying, she adds, "is that Indian art has been represented, for the first time, in the museum's permanent collection that houses some of the greatest works of art such as Henry Moore's *Atom Peace*."

Hiroshima Museum chose Arpana for the Rs 6.4 lakh commission, after having borrowed one of her works, titled *Resilient Green* from the 3,000-strong private collection of Masanori Fukuoka, a Japanese patron of Indian art, for its Asian Art Show during the Asian Games. The work, which also formed the centrespread of Fukuoka's catalogue on Indian Art, was covered in several Japanese papers. The museum officials, liked the work immensely and decided to commission Arpana for the project.

The prestigious commissioning could not have come at a better time for the artist, who by her own confession, feels that she is going through the peak of her career. "I have been on a high each day for the past two-three years. Every day is a surprise. In the morning, when I sit down to work and then take a look at it in the evening, I wonder whether I really created these new images and explored the new territories."

The number of canvases that she produces may have increased. But it's not quantity that matters to Caur; what she is most pleased about is that the quality of her work is improving. And that her paintings are now imbued with a sense of adventure, in which new boundaries are constantly being explored.

At present, for instance, Arpana's art is going through a period of transition. She has begun incorporating elements of Madhubani works in her paintings primarily because it helps create a witty juxtaposition of two

Arpana with her mother, Ajeet Caur, with whom she shares a strong bond

With husband who prefers to keep a low profile

worlds: of women's art from the villages in the form of traditional patterns of trees and animals, set off against the off-shoots of today's worlds.

In one such canvas for an upcoming exhibition, Arpana has pitted the Madhubani background against the modern deities of television sets, cars and other consumer durables and aptly titled it *Brand New Gods*.

For an artist who is forever unsure of her paintings and cannot but look surprised when you praise her work, the present assessment of her own work is an unusual one. For the most part, Caur still remains a little hesitant about the quality of her paintings.

Recently, for instance, she was due to send two canvases for the CIMA exhibition of contemporary modern Indian art in London. Recalls Caur, "I had sent three works for the show, but developed doubts about the third work. So I did another painting and sent it to the organisers so that they could chose whichever they liked more."

Arpana's strength as an artist has always been her desire to make a strong statement in her works. And she has done so through the use of expressionistic colour and stark imagery. Her paintings, an extension of her social and political concerns, speak of the complexities and duality of life in an intense and philosophical vein, using varied images. that of people with big hollow eyes, people drowning, dancing or dreaming.

Caur had a somewhat modest initiation into art. She has never been inside an art college, but today her works are the subject of Ph.D. thesis in many art colleges and universities. She has been adorned with awards from the Lalit Kala Akademi. The VI Triennial India and the All India Fine Arts Society. And her paintings are sought out for shows in London, Bombay, Ottawa, Stockholm, Calcutta, Tokyo, Athens, and even Baghdad, during the Iran-Iraq war.

But even though Caur had no formal training, the arts were all around her as she was growing up. "I remember I used to draw on walls and newspapers with charcoal but was never shouted at," she recalls. Her mother, acclaimed Punjabi writer Ajeet Caur, in fact, tried to introduced her to various creative media so that she could decide which she wanted to take up.

So dance, sitar and painting classes went on simultaneously for young Arpana, whose father died when she was barely a teenager. And of course, there were stacks and stacks of books from her mother's collection which she read alongside. The only extraneous agent in all this was a radio she got to listen to whenever her grandfather tuned it on. A television set came in much later

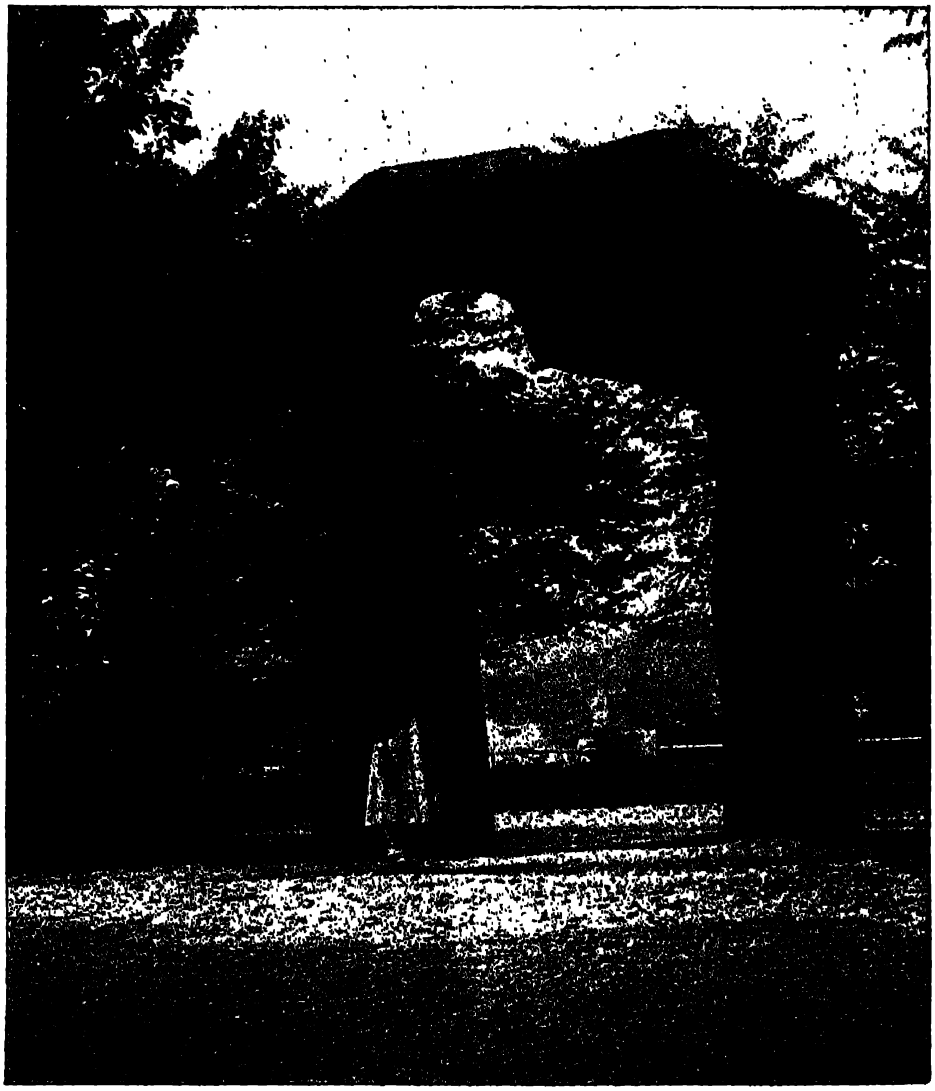
Arpana now maintains that it was because she had the best in terms of exposure to creativity that she took to painting. "I had fewer clothes than my friends and was often teased about it. but I had the best art material because my mother, who herself wrote on the best bond paper, said one should never compromise on the raw material," says Arpana.

Basically a self-taught artist, the young Caur was taken by surprise when three of her paintings were selected by M.F. Husain in a group show of young artists. From then on, matters progressed rapidly. She held her first solo exhibition in 1975, at Triveni, New Delhi. A London art gallery owner saw her work there and invited her for a show, which she went for four years later. Although the initial exhibitions did not even cover the cost of the shows, they helped young Arpana gain confidence.

Her first 'successful' exhibition came in 1980 at the Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay, where more than 80 per cent of her works were sold out. Today, her works — be they oil on canvas, small works on paper with pencil, gouache, pastels or prints — form part of the collections of such museums as the National Gallery of Modern Art, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, the Victoria Albert Museum, besides numerous private collections, including that of Husain himself.

Unlike her contemporaries, Caur has never sought inspiration from European traditions. Instead Oriental art — from miniatures to Madhubani — have found reflection in vari-

Historic Hiroshima and the lonely artist



Ajeet Ca

ous phases of her work. Her earlier works were more direct, as in the *Audience* series where the theme was the 'Missing Audience for Art'. In one such canvas, for instance, she showed a musician singing in gay abandon to the appreciation of a row of empty chairs.

Around the 1980s she felt the need to introduce some linear elements to offset the round organic effect of her figures. That is when Arpana brought in the miniature's architecture — with its impossible angles and the missing fourth wall of the structure in her series titled *Women in Interiors* where women lay passively within the walls of their homes

Then came the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and Arpana's first exposure to death at such close quarters while she worked with the riot victims in the relief camps What followed was a series called *The World Goes On* in which water became a symbol of death for her. In one such painting, she used three areas -- water, earth and sky - to show how life went on unaffected by death and destruction

There were a lot of other works too. *The Maya Tyagi Rape* series, *The Widows of Brindavan, Prakriti* reflecting the urban chaos we live in, *The Baul Singers of Bengal* who have been an endless source of fascination for Arpana.

Then came *The Body is Just a Garment*, an important series which was her way of coming to terms with life and death and wherein she used the triptych form -- a painting split into three canvases or sections -- in a progression of colour and a chronological sequence. The leit motif was the sayings of the weaver mystic poet Kabir and Lord Krishna in the *Gita*, that the body is a mere garment which one changes from birth to birth.

Given her shy, sensitive persona, it is not difficult to look for the emotional props that are as crucial to the artist as her sensitivity One is her husband, Harinder, a sitar-player, designer, and now a cartoonist, who prefers to keep a low profile

The other, who has an apparently overwhelming influence on Arpana is her mother, Ajeet Caur. In fact, the umbilical bond that ties the two together is so strong that Arpana continues to live with her mother even today

In fact, Arpana cannot discuss her art without mentioning and being grateful to her mother for what she is today. "It is she who encouraged me to paint when I was young, who persuaded me to give up my teaching job to become a full-time artist In fact so great is my emotional dependence on her that I don't like to go anywhere without her," she says.

Being a writer herself, Ajeet Caur was able to make Arpana feel the angst an artist must feel before transmuting it into a work of art Little wonder then that Ajeet Caur became the subject of a number of her daughter's paintings, be it the series called *Mother* where she explores the maternal relationship, or canvases depicting such mundane activities as her mother tweezing her eyebrows

It is almost with child-like enthusiasm that Arpana takes you around the impressive, newly-built, four-storied Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, that her mother has set up after decades of struggle and toil

The Academy, which started functioning in its new premises in the posh Siri Fort Institutional area a few months ago, houses a huge art gallery and has a hall for literary gatherings, music concerts, symposiums, films, a vocational training centre for women and economically backward youngsters besides facilities for pottery, sculpture, classes, an amphitheatre for staging plays and a cafeteria.

For an artist whose bigger works sell for anything from Rs 50,000 to over a lakh, Arpana comes across as a surprisingly simple, down-to-earth person who delights in the joys she gets from doing such mundane chores as keeping track of the daily ration needs, buying vegetables and cooking simple meals for the family — her husband, mother and herself

Basically a morning artist who has put her best on her palette by the forenoon, Arpana makes no bones about the fact that she is a reclusive person who hates having guests over, or going out for functions and gatherings, even if it is an exhibition where her own works are showing!. "Even our relatives and friends seldom come over," she says.

The only outing that the entire family enjoys is to their guru, 'Sahibji's' *ashram* in Ghaziabad, twice a week. "It provides me with a very good escape," confesses Arpana Besides meditation and recitations from the holy texts, going to the *ashram* involves doing *sewa* right from cooking meals for all, to washing the utensils and sweeping the floors

"It is a place where everybody is a nobody and the only purpose is to find spiritual peace," she explains.

Pankaj Sharma

The artist in a pensive mood

Today, looking back at her career, which she embarked on more than 25 years ago, Arpana makes a candid confident appraisal of her work. "When I started, I was a young girl, in search of an identity and in search of a path that would help me escape from falling into the assigned roles,' she says "Today, that search is long over. Now it is a direct confrontation between me and my work and the important thing is to make it evolve into a better work."

For an artist, there can be no stagnation. Life, and the creative process, has to go on. And nobody knows that better than Arpana Caur. ■

EXTRACT

Home Away From HOME

An extract from ***Shashi Deshpande****'s new novel which explores the intricate relationships within an extended family*

Gopal, who has had no intention of making a mystery of his whereabouts, is living scarcely a few miles away from Sumi and his daughters in the house of an old student of his. This is in an old part of the town, where tiny lanes criss-cross one another and homes, small shops and restaurants, jostle together in a jumble of noisy existence. Gopal's room, above the printing press that belongs to his student, is an odd place for a man to 'retreat' to—the thought will occur to all those who visit him. But like the truck drivers, who after a night of frenetic driving, go to sleep in the womb-like interiors of their driving cabins, wholly insulated from the outside world, Gopal is unaware of the jangle of noises in which he is living his life.

Now the interlude of peace suddenly ends for him. Shankar, still the student, unwilling to sit down in Gopal's presence, is there to tell him that Ramesh had rung up.

"And you told him I was here? It's all right, I never wanted to hide the fact from anyone."

So Ramesh has traced me here. I should have guessed he would be the first; he has his mother's doggedness, his father's sense of duty. And so, he will be the first to ask me the question. "Why did you do such a thing, Guru?"

I had prepared myself for this question, I had rehearsed my answers before I spoke to Sumi, I had been ready to counter her arguments. Now I have to be ready to face Ramesh, I have to brush up my reasons, for Ramesh will not let me off easily. What do I say? What were the lines I had prepared?

I heard a voice . .

No, I can't say that, it sounds utterly phoney. Even Joan of Arc didn't get away with that one.

It's a kind of illness, a virus, perhaps, which makes me incapable of functioning as a full human being, as a husband and father . .

This is the right answer to give a doctor and Premi may accept it, but will Ramesh? No, he won't leave it at that, he will ask me for my symptoms, he will try to connect them and ultimately, yes, I'm sure of this, make an appointment for me with a psychiatrist. No, best leave this alone.

I thought of Purandaradasa's line, 'Listen, the hour strikes and I I was terrified, I knew I was running out of time'.

Sumi is the one person who may understand this, she will know what I mean. But this is not enough, I have to be more honest with her, more explicit.

Extracted from
A Matter of Time
By
Shashi Deshpande
Published by
Penguin Books India (P) Ltd
Price Rs150

What then? What do I say?

I stopped believing in the life I was leading, suddenly it seemed unreal to me and I knew I could not go on.

Is this the truth? Is this why I left my home, my wife and children? Could I have said this to Sumi?

In the event, there was nothing for me to say to Sumi, for she asked me nothing. I am thankful I never had to suffer the mortification of wading through this slush of embarrassing half-truths. I have not been fair to Sumi, I know that now. I should have spoken to her earlier, given her some hint of what was happening to me. But how do you interrupt the commonplace with melodrama? There is never the right time in daily life for these things The knock on the door, the peal of bell bringing news of disaster, they can only come from the outside.

Since coming here, I have been dreaming of my father How do I know that the man I see in my dreams is my father? I was only eight when he died and nothing of him has remained with me, neither his face, nor his voice, nor his manners, nor any memory linking the two of us together Just a blank. It is odd, yes, when I think of it now, I realise how curious it is Can one erase a parent, even a dead parent so completely? To some extent, of course, Sudha was responsible for this She put away everything that was our parents', even their pictures, immediately after their death. I accepted it then, but now, thinking of it, I can imagine that she must have worked in a frenzy, sweeping the house bare of their presence And I know this too now, that she did it for me It was this, and her almost immediate marriage to P.K., that helped the quick transformation of a house of mourning into a normal home in which a family lived Man, woman and child. P.K , Sudha and I And so I forgot, how quickly I forgot the faces of my parents No memories at all. Except that, sometimes, when Sudha laughed, it seemed like something I had heard once.

And yet, I am certain that the man who visits me in my dreams is my father The knowledge belongs not to me, the man that I am now, but to the I-figure in my dreams, that disembodied self who is always a boy. This father of my dreams smiles at me, we walk the streets together, he waits for me when I lag behind, he holds my hand when I'm tired, he looks at me affectionately..

I know of course, what it is I'm doing I am recreating my father in my dreams as I had done in my waking hours All those years ago, as a boy Inventing him Knowing nothing about him then, except that he had married his brother's widow who became my mother; the possibilities had been innumerable and my adolescent mind had drawn various selves out of the protean being of the father I had imagined. So many of them:

A man who sinned against his brother by loving his wife. The brother dying of grief and the wife and the man marrying immediately after

A kind man moved by pity to marry his brother's widow, to make that brother's daughter his own.

A Lakshman -like younger brother, keeping a promise made to his dying elder brother to look after his young widow and child

(No, this never worked. Lakshman, who never looked at Sita's face, not once, so that the only bits of her jewellery he could identify after her abduction were her anklets—this devoted brother had to be discarded.)

It was when I read *Hamlet*, fortunately much later, that the most terrible version of my parents' story entered my mind. Just that once, though, for I slammed the door on it immediately. In this story my father became a man succumbing to his passion for his brother's wife, the woman compliant, a pregnancy and a child to come and then, after the husband's convenient death (no, I couldn't, I just couldn't make my father poison his brother) a marriage of convenience.

The facts, of course, few as they are, spell out a different story: Sudha's father died of typhoid and I was born two years after my parents were married.

But that was how it was for me—my father was never a father to me—not after I knew their story. He was my mother's guilty partner, he was Sudha's uncle, her stepfather, he was my mother's husband .

And now I dream of this kindly man, as if we have, through the years, achieved a kind of peace in our relationship, as if, like any son with a living father, we have finally, after a long struggle, achieved a harmonious relationship

These are peaceful dreams that don't trouble me—unlike the ugly dreams that tormented me in the last few months before I came here, exhausting dreams that seemed to go on all night, punctuated by the need to empty my bladder. So exhausting that once, waking up, I had been astonished to see that it was only 15

minutes since I last woke up; those 15 minutes had seemed a weary lifetime

All a thing of the past Now there is only this room in which nothing is mine For a few days after I came here, I heard Shankar and his wife trying to hush the children and servants but the noise and the bustle in the courtyard do not disturb me, they have nothing to do with me. Like the rain-trees on the road outside, so very mysteriously, wonderfully flourishing in this human jungle, which seem to have raised themselves above all the futile activity on the road below, I am untouched by all that is happening under my window.

Yet sometimes, when I wake up at the morning and see the branches of the rain-trees filling up my window, I feel I am back in that tree—enclosed room of the outhouse behind Kalyani's house I hear Shankar's wife call out to her children and it is Kalyani's voice calling out `Sumi Premi"

Yes, I was at peace then too, like I am now Sudha, absorbed by her young children had freed me from the tug of her concern, I had moved away from Shivpur, from Girija and a relationship that had been threatening to complicate my life. In the outhouse, I was left alone set apart from the Big House by much more than the physical distance between us. It was as if the mist that sometimes came down in the mornings, never lifted, so that the figures I saw seemed always hazy The voices muted and muffled, coming to me from some great distance I watched them, after a while I became a pastime, but there never was a sense of involvement There was the man whom I rarely saw after my first meeting with him coming out on to the terrace, standing there, gazing at nothing My landlady, whose tense, small figure advanced towards me in a burst of cordiality, then retreated just as abruptly. The younger girl sitting on the sidesteps, silent as a wraith, her knees drawn up to her chest, squeezing herself into the smallest space possible And the older girl

* * * *

It is not Sumi, however, but Kalyani who is the first to come to Gopal "There's a lady come to see you, sir," the press boys tell him and he thinks it is Sumi But it isn't, it's Kalyani. For an instant, perhaps because he has so rarely seen her outside her own home, he does not recognise her She looks a different person in these alien surroundings Was she always so tiny, so frail-looking? Charu is with her. Charu who makes it absolutely clear that she is here only as her grndmother's escort Scarcely looking at her father, she helps Kalyani up the stairs and saying, "I'll be waiting downstairs for you Amma," prepares to leave.

`Don't go, Charu, stay here"

`Let her go, Gopala Go, child, I won't take much time"

`Come out here then."

He shows her out through the narrow door, into the small terrace behind the room and then hesitates, it's too sunny here, there is no shade at all But Charu, her back to him, goes and stands near the railing, ignoring him

The moment he comes back into the room, Kalyani bursts into words

What have you done to my daughter, Gopala, don't do this, don't let it happen to my daughter, what happened to me"

And then she stops, abruptly, a hand to her forehead, as if rebuking herself This is not what she had intended to say! She begins again, this time saying things she has come prepared with She calls him Gopala, dragging out the last vowel, loading the name with affection and tenderness. He is amazed that she speaks without hostility

"When Sumi married you, she was too young, but I was not anxious for her, you were older, you were sensible and you cared for her, yes, you did I can still remember how you scolded me for being angry with her when she refused to nurse Seema She can't help it, Amma, you said to me, she isn't depriving the baby of milk on purpose How can you change so much, Gopala?"

She goes on Moving from surmise to surmise Has anyone poisoned his mind against Sumi? Has she done something wrong? Can't he forgive her? She knows—and she says this placatingly, so humbly that it hurts—he is a generous man And Sumi too—he shouldn't think that her friendliness with others means anything

`Amma, it's not that, I know Sumi.. ."

But she doesn't let him speak I know she was careless, she says, I know she didn't bother too much about her home, "But, Gopala," and now she hesitates, "how could she have known what being a good wife means when she never saw her mother being one? I taught her nothing, it's all my fault, Gopala, forgive me and don't punish her for it."

Once again he tries to tell her that he has nothing against Sumi, he tries to convince her that he never expected her to create for him the

world he wanted, that he did not make her responsible for giving him all that he wanted in life, but Kalyani hurries on

"Is it money, Gopala? If it is, you know that Sumi and you will have everything of mine. Premi is comfortable, I am not worried about her. Even my jewellery— most of it is for Sumi.

This time he does not have to speak. She looks at his face and stops. And begins to cry. He watches her distress helplessly.

"Look at me, Gopala," she says when she can speak. "My father died worrying about me, my mother couldn't die in peace, she held on to life though she was suffering—she suffered terribly—because of me, she didn't want to leave me and go.

She is crying uncontrollably now, she can't speak. And so he does. He tells her that this has nothing to do with the relationship between Sumi and him, it has nothing to do with Sumi, she has done nothing wrong, she has done him no wrong, on the contrary, it is he...

Listening to him, she begins to understand that nothing she says can affect him. He can see the anger rising in her, anger she tries to conceal, afraid, perhaps, that she will alienate him by that. Once again, this hurts.

"What about your daughters? Have you thought of them? Look at that girl standing out there—she didn't want to come, she came for my sake. Have you thought of what you have done to them?"

"I thought of everything before I took this step. Do you think Amma I haven't?"

There is a long silence after that. Then Kalyani stands up.

"Charu," she calls out.

Charu stands at the door, blinking trying to adjust her eyes to the dimness after the strong light outside. She gives Kalyani a quick look, taking in the fact that she has been crying, but she says nothing.

"Let's go, Charu."

"I'll get an auto, you wait here, Amma."

"No don't, Charu. Let's start walking, I m sure we'll get one on the road. We will, won't we?"

Before leaving, she looks about the room for the first time since she had come in, taking it all in— the thin mattress rolled into a dingy striped carpet, the rough wooden planks of the bed, the bare table, the string on the wall on which he has hung a towel and a shirt..

"You live here?" she asks him.

"Yes."

"And who's this Shankar?"

"A student of mine."

"Oh!"

She is no longer able to sustain interest in anything. The purpose that had upheld her when she came has receded from her. She goes down the stairs like a woman much older than her years, putting both her feet on a step before going to the next one. Charu follows, her *dupatta* trailing on the floor behind her as usual. Gopal has an urge to pick it up, to put it back on her shoulder, but as if she guessed his thoughts and wants to forestall him, she picks it up and adjusts it herself. Watching his daughter move away from him, he has a sense of loss so acute, it is like a physical pain. Unable to follow them, he goes back to the room and sits down, listening to their steps recede.

This is part of it, I have to go through all this, I cannot escape. What had I expected, that I could inflict pain and feel none in return?

If Kalyani came as a supplicant, Aru is an adversary, holding her hostility before her like a weapon. A sword, scrubbed to a beautiful silvery sheen, sharp-edged, ready for war. She is determined to behave like an adult, or rather, as she imagines an adult should be—cool and reasonable. She asks the polite questions of a visiting acquaintance, about this room, about Shankar, his press and what work does he do there? He imagines that this is the way a prisoner would feel with a visitor—uneasy, longing for it to be over. He can see the effort she is making, he wants to tell her to stop, he would rather see her grief and anger pour out of her, but she holds him at bay, she won't let him do anything but reply to her questions—until her questions finally peter out and they are left in silence.

"Papa," she begins, then stops as if this is not how she wants to address him. But the word has opened a valve and now it gushes out. The confusion in her mind is reflected in her language—she skips from Kannada to English and back again, her sentences incomplete, leaving out words that she can't get hold of. Her voice rises, trails away, suddenly becomes gruff and guttural as if something is choking her.

And then she can't go on any longer, she breaks down and begins to sob. But there is no relief in this outpouring, either, she fights against it, her body shaken by the effort to control herself. He gets her a glass of water, tries to make her drink it, but like a petulant child she pushes his hand away. The water slops over, spills, drenching her skirt, his trousers, yet he continues to hold the glass before her until she hiccups herself into silence, wipes her eyes and drinks the water.

But it is not over. She begins again. And this time like a surgeon who has opened up a patient, she begins to probe, knowing it is there, the tumour, knowing it has to be found and removed from the patient to survive.

Is it because of something Sumi did, something she said? Is it because of us, because of me? Is it because I was rude to you, because I always argued with you? Is it because of what I said to you when you decided to resign? Is it money?

He can see that his silence, his negatives drive her to desperation and she goes on to memories. "Do you remember, Papa?" This time the appellation comes easily, she is unconscious of it.

"What can I say to you, Aru?"

"Say it, whatever it is, tell me, I am not a child."

But it's no use, he cannot give her what she wants, what she has come here for. When she gets up to go, they have both of them the same sense of failure, they are equally

SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Sangeeta (Bijlani) Azharuddin

First brush with fame: Was as Miss India Sangeeta, then a lissom teenager, was crowned the most beautiful woman in the country, and seemed set for a lifetime in the headlines
Bijli, as she is called by friends, did achieve that, but not quite in the way that she had imagined

Her innings in show business: Began well. She started off with several prestigious ad campaigns, pushing such products as Vicco Turmeric cream, Nirma washing powder and Lakhani footwear In the latter, she teamed up with her then boyfriend, Salman Khan, who was yet to make it big in the movies

Popularly known as Ponytail Khan—after his rather unusual (in those days, at least) hairstyle — Salman was the first-born of scriptwriter Salim Khan, and had just ditched his first girlfriend after falling prey to Bijli's charms

Did they make a great pair?: Well, if you could overlook the fact that Sangeeta towered above the vertically-challenged Salman — who was soon to earn the sobriquet of sex thimble—then, yes, they did look good together But poor Sangeeta had to spend all her time at her ad shoots trying her best to look shorter than Khan; to little effect

Did Salman mind?: Not in the least He was deliriously in love with his Bijli, and all was well with his world The couple intended to settle down to blissful matrimony, as soon as Khan's career took off, and after Sangeeta had had her stint in the movies

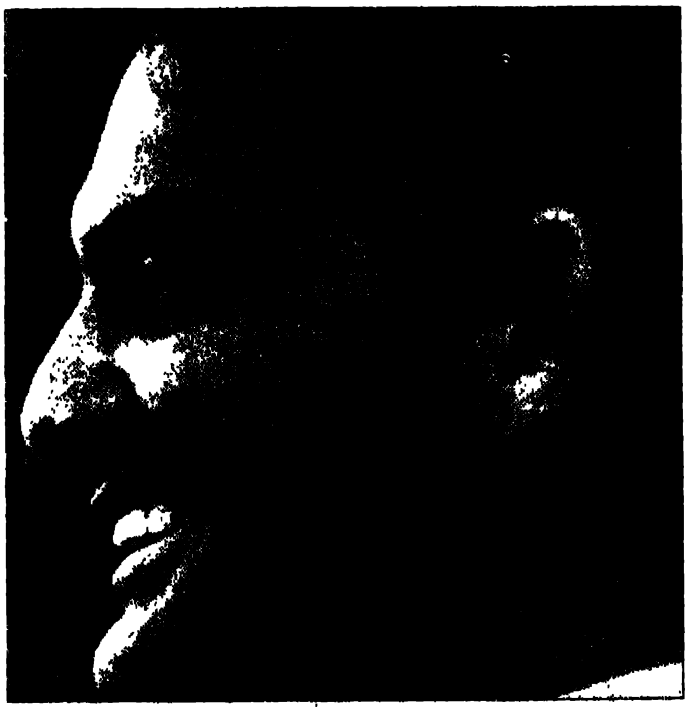
And how did that go?: Sangeeta's stint in the movies? You could sum it up in one word. Disastrous
Bijlani made her debut in Rajiv Rai's *Tridev*, as one of the three leading ladies, and came up with a performance that has yet to be surpassed in its woodenness She could have been forgiven even that, if she hadn't committed the worst sin yet in a film actress' book: she looked awful

And for an ex-model, who was depending on her cheekbones and perfect complexion to get ahead, this was the kiss of death

So, did she make an ignominious retreat from the movies?: Not quite. She was handed a face-saver by Salman, who decided that they should marry soon—he'd already had a big hit in *Maine Pyaar Kiya*. So, Bijlani announced that she was quitting films to settle down with Khan, and that she wouldn't sign any more projects

The general reaction: Was that of relief Even those producers who had retained some amount of belief in Sangeeta's artistic ability, were thoroughly fed up with having to deal with her boyfriend's histrionics. Khan, apparently, was insanely possessive of his Bijli, and exercised a firm control on how much — or how little — she could expose on camera

Sangeeta Bijlani and Mohammad Azharuddin: Has she finally found the man she could call her own?



hair. Apply it to the ends of your hair, and keep on for a couple of minutes before rinsing thoroughly. Always finish off with a cold rinse, as this locks the shine on your hair.

If you have dry hair, then you can afford to use conditioner all over your scalp, rather than just on the ends, and keep it on slightly longer

Never ever use a shampoo-cum-conditioner. These products never really work, because while a sham poo cleans hair, a conditioner is supposed to coat it with a protective film. And no one product can perform both functions.

If dandruff is a persistent problem, then you could experiment with some of the speciality anti-dandruff shampoos on the market today. But if you're into nature cure, then there are some home recipes you could try

Yoghurt often performs miracles with dandruff-stricken hair Apply it to the roots of your hair and leave it on for an hour or so before shampooing off. Some people prefer to mix it with *besan*—gram flour—before application, though yoghurt on its own does the trick as well.

HANDS

Your age begins to show first on your hands; and it shows even sooner if you don't take good care of them when you're young.

Most beauticians recommend regular manicures —once a month is generally enough, though twice is ideal—to keep hands in prime condition. But if you're the kind who hates having his/her cuticles pushed back, then you can try some home remedies instead.

Rule number one is: Always keep your hands moisturised So, even if you wash your hands after lunch or dinner, remember to dab some cold cream or body lotion on them. If you work, then keep a bottle handy at your desk or in your handbag, so that you can keep moisturising your hands every hour or so.

These days, there are plenty of specially-formulated creams in the market that are meant only for your hands—rather than your entire body. These are often enriched with Vitamin E and keep your hands soft and supple

If you wash your hands fairly often during the course of the day, then choose your soap with care Your best choice would be one with a high proportion of moisturising cream. But if you find such products too oily, then use one which has a balanced Ph value, and will not leave your hands too dry Alternately, you could plump for one of the soap-free wash gels on offer in the market today. These will not rob your skin of too much moisture.

A regular oil massage is a must to treat dryness of the scalp

FEET

Most of us cheat on our feet during the winters. After all, they're all wrapped up in socks, tights or boots, and nobody can see them. And what you don't see can't hurt you, right?

Wrong. Chapped feet are not just an eyesore, they can be awfully painful as well. So, if you know what's good for you, take time off to clean, exfoliate—a pumice stone is perfect for this purpose—and moisturise your feet. This is best done at night, so that you can cream them extravagantly before slipping on a pair of socks and going to bed That way, the cream won't end up on your slippers rather than your feet.

For your feet, a rich moisturiser is recommended, because the epidermis is thick in this area— specially around the soles—and a water-based cream may not be of much good.

SKIN

Your hands and feet may be problem areas, but other parts of your skin require specialised care as well— your face, for instance In winter, it becomes essential to clean it thoroughly with a wash gel or wash cream (soap has a drying effect and should be avoided) before exfoliating it with a scrub. This will get rid of the dead, dry layer of the epidermis, and expose the fresh, smooth skin underneath.

But after exfoliating your skin, make sure you moisturise it; with a water-based cream or lotion if you have an oily skin, and an oil-based one if you don't. If you shop abroad, you could try one of the new-skin revealing lotions on offer, which contain fruit acids, and have a gentle, peeling effect.

You should use moisturiser at least twice a day, once in the morning and once before going to bed. But if you travel by air a lot, use it as often as you can, as the dry cabin air can wreak havoc on your complexion.

Elbows are the other areas that need to be pampered during winter Regular exfoliation and extravagant application of cream is mandatory if you want to wear sleeveless blouses in the summer Avoid this routine, and you'll be cowering behind baggy full sleeves, even as the mercury shoots up, because you can't bear the thought of anybody catching sight of your grungy elbows. ■

GOING, GOING GONE...

***Trina Mukherjee** visits the auction houses of Calcutta*

Anyone with an inclination for things past would be familiar with the few auction houses of Calcutta Concentrated mainly down Russel Street, Park Street and Free School Street, these old curiosity shops continue to thrive, prosper and lure customers with the temptation of owning a piece from bygone days

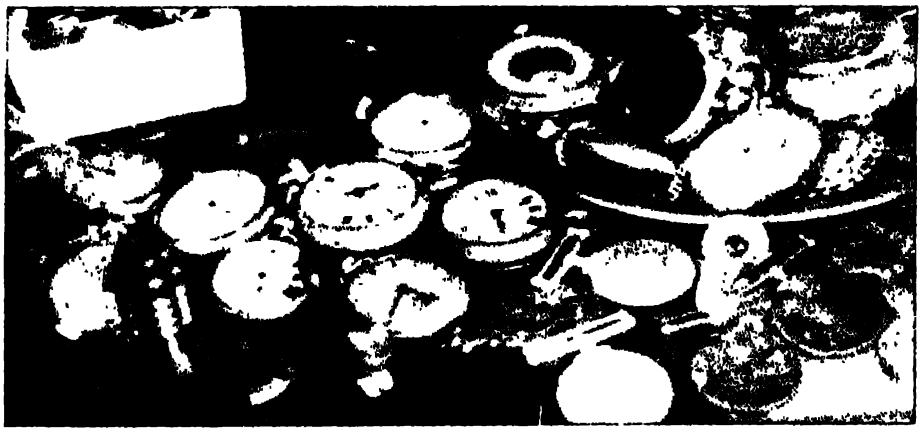
Today, however, these auction houses survive not just by selling nostalgia to the bidder, they also have to keep pace with changing times and offer anything of value to their demanding customers So antiques are rarely to be found here

Some interesting curios, maybe, but what really catches the eye is huge mounds of modern-day junk, second-hand gizmos and gewgaws, and utility items at an affordable price. A quick recapitulation of some of the existing auction marts in the city revealed the ravages of time that ensured the survival of only the fittest

The oldest auction house was Mackenzie Lyall which was established in the early 19th century and is now defunct. A few old names now include Staynor & Co, Russel Exchange, Modern Exchange, Chowringhee Sales Bureau (they have shifted from Park Street to Dharamtalla), Dalhousie Exchange and Suman Exchange. Victor Brothers still proclaims to be auctioneers but mainly sells furniture."The present wave," says A K Roy of Staynor & Co, which is at present, the oldest auction house in the city "is for household items of all types -- mainly furniture "

So, a typical Sunday morning scene at one of these houses will not find many collectors browsing in dusty corners for rare manuscripts or ancient artefacts One will discover, to his or her amusement, the frantic bidding for a set of crystal glasses, or a pair of sturdy side stools or even a compact divan with built-in this or that (to be able to fit into the narrow, small rooms of modern tenements).

At one such auction for instance, a set of scratched and much-used oven-proof bowls was proudly carried away by the winning bidder ignoring the scowls of the vanquished lot There is also a great demand for furniture produced by private dealers who often fashion them out as period pieces."We no longer cater for the discerning elite—our customers come mainly from the upper to middle-class stratum," says Arun Dey of Modern Exchange



Pabitra Das

Time stands still in these old curiosity shops

The glorious age of auctioneering is indeed a page from the past. The gold rush for antiques, family heirlooms and other *objets d' art* began immediately before and after Independence. After World War II Europe was trying to protect its valuables from the all-devouring Nazis and quite a sizeable amount of the finest European art found its way to India.

As far as Calcutta was concerned, when the *Gora Sahibs* left independent India in a hurry, they sold some of their valuables at throwaway prices, and quite a few of those found their way to the auction houses

Though a far cry from their glamorous *Angrezi* cousins, Sotheby's and Christie's, these auction houses had a quaint charm of their own. And business peaked in the Seventies before petering off in the Nineties

These auction houses may project an old, familiar sameness to unsuspecting passersby but their contents have changed over the passage of time and the buyers even more so A discerning visitor would be stunned to see so much of cheap porcelain on offer along with *phoren* stuff—say for instance, a ludicrously fat Marilyn Monroe statuette leaning against a bottle of perfume, next to a bright floral teaset, above a shelf displaying Ray-Ban glasses (genuine? maybe, maybe not). Just below, lay some semi-precious jewelleryalong with a blow drier or a set of curlers, beside a pair of Navtal locks Everything of any value has its place in an auction.

Nowadays, a prospective buyer would rather opt for a second-hand air-conditioner or a refrigerator coming from foreign consulates and corporate houses than hunt around for Queen Anne chairs or Dresden china "In any case, such pieces are rare and far between—if they come here at all. And they come for a high price,' says Roy of Staynor.

So, next time, you are sauntering down these streets and feel like picking up a few bric-a-bracs that catch your fancy, do so, by all means. You might carry home a cute little figure in wood, china or metal, some wholesome (meaning intact and a complete whole) pieces in glass, unusual trinkets, an odd piece of furniture or two, or even a couple of good old records.

But if you think you have managed to buy a relic from the past, chances are, you have been duped, not by the auction house staff, but by your fancy for the glorious past. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha claims keep your channels of travel, communication, contacts alive and buzzing, or face acute problems of misunderstandings and losses. For quite a few a change in job, business and profession. Health will not be of the best the next 21 days. This is very clearly a period of transition.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Mercury and Mars turn favourable giving you sweetness and strength. In practical terms it means work will be done, relatives and friends come over to visit you or you go and see them. A trip a tie gives great satisfaction. This week finds you striving might and main to further your career.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

The full moon encourages you to take chances. You may be able to pick winners too. Obviously, that would mean more money in the kitty. Many of you will be beautifying house, office, shop or making important changes or be in the process of buying, selling, renting, leasing and so on.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The name of the game is finance and romance and the two can and should go together. Mars, well placed in solarscope acts as an added incentive to name and fame. Publishing, conferences, meetings, contacts, journey and victory over enemies are highlighted this week. Many of you will be rewarded.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Mercury-Jupiter fine juxtaposition favours partnerships and links. Also, court cases with an out-of court settlement foretold. Many Leons will be finding themselves after a long time and by December this process should be complete. Those in films, broadcasting and trading do a great job.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

The sun in your third angle according to Western astrology, conjoins Mercury helping you to take crucial decisions, come to an understanding, start a new venture, do away with gloom and despair, take time by the forelock and move ahead. November 26-27 is for contacts and communication.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Venus in your second angle according to Western astrology results in expenses, affairs of the heart or at least spending for comforts, luxuries and pleasures. Children, sports, hobbies and creative pursuits will have an extra edge. Ganesha says you may have to tend to the sick and needy.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Right from house and property to friends and family to the tough world outside, you will be covering a wide range of activities now thanks to the Mercury-Jupiter solarscopic placing. You should deserve credit for your courage and efforts also. It will be to your advantage to finish pending work.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

November 26-27 should be pretty busy dates for Sagittarians and therefore, you should be on your toes now. Meets, conferences and gatherings find you in the centre of activities. This will certainly be a most newsy week and that is for sure, so gear up for contacts and communication.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The chances are you will be making money. Contracts can be bagged. Negotiations can lead to positive settlements and thus there will be relief from tensions and anxieties. Many Capricornians will feel secure and thus be ready to take a chance which should prove very worthwhile.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

The full moon, according to Western astrology, gives you just the boost you require. The concentration will be on career, job, profession, loans and possibly moving house, office, unless you have done so already this year. If signing a contract, better consult a lawyer. Do expect visitors.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Expenses and a feeling of unease and perplexity are distinctly possible now. But that should not deter you from your duty or work, though rest and relaxation will help. One thing is certain. The worst should be over by the end of this month. By November 26, normalcy should prevail.

BIRTHDAYS

November 24 : Sun Pluto conjunction says Ganesha makes you magnetic and a natural leader. Money should pour in. By next year you will have prosperity.

November 25: The full moon in your sign leads to opportunities for advancement even if you think you are at a dead end. Marriage for the fancy free.

November 26: Moon square Mars might lead to accidents, operations, serious misunderstandings with your life partner. Meditate and pray.

November 27: Moon trine Venus, square Saturn leads to travel opportunities and to socialising. But do not neglect your work. Your health too will trouble you so take care. Stay clear from family hassles.

November 28: Moon sextile Mars, opposition Jupiter signifies, by and large, there will be good money coming your way. There is also chance for you to marry.

November 29: Moon opposition Neptune means you should be practical and guard against deceit. Travel is possible. Children give joy.

November 30: Moon trine sun means you will have many chances to show your true worth and therefore, the likelihood of success and fame is great.

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COMICS

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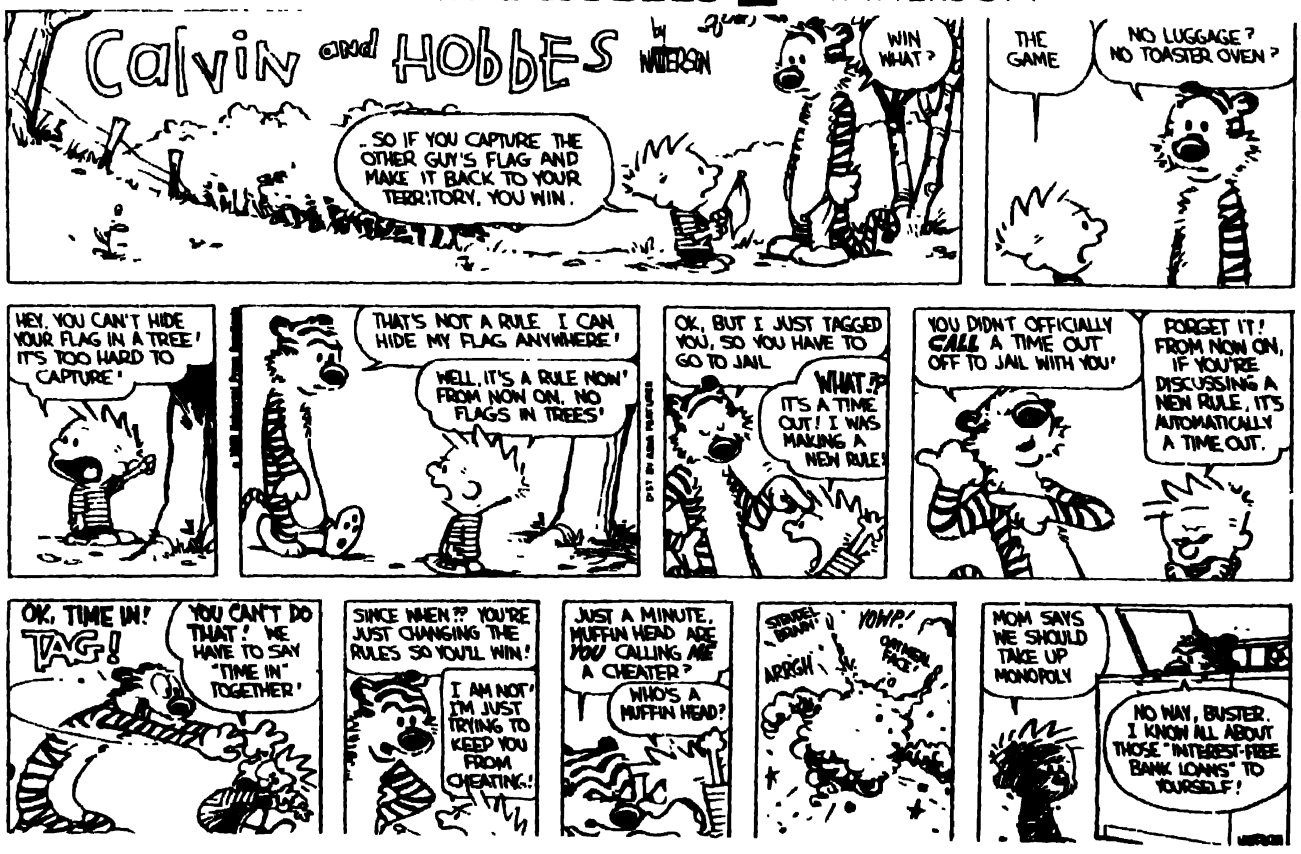
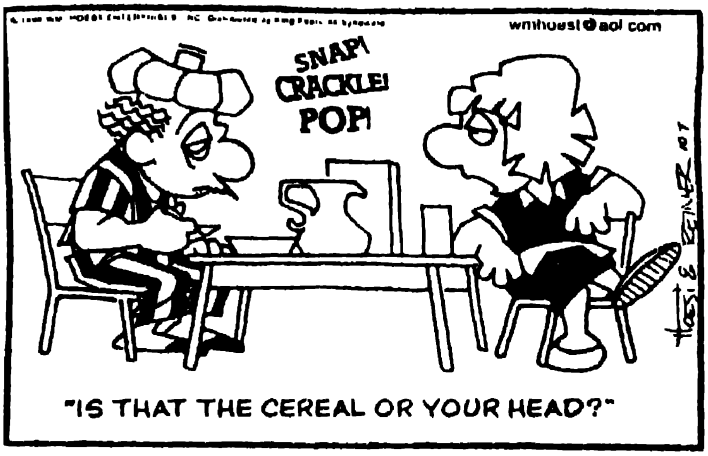
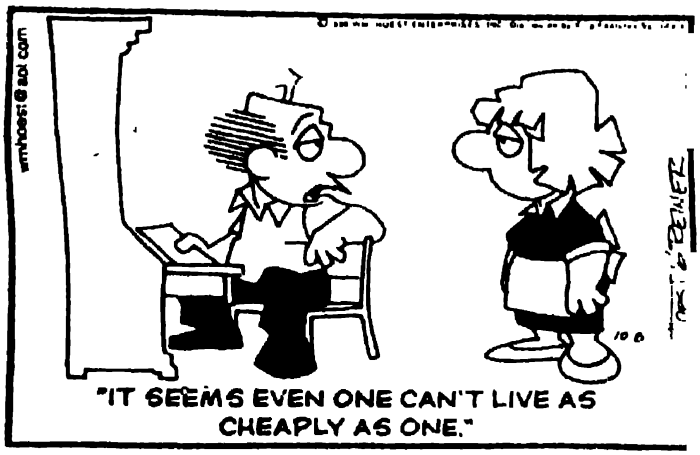
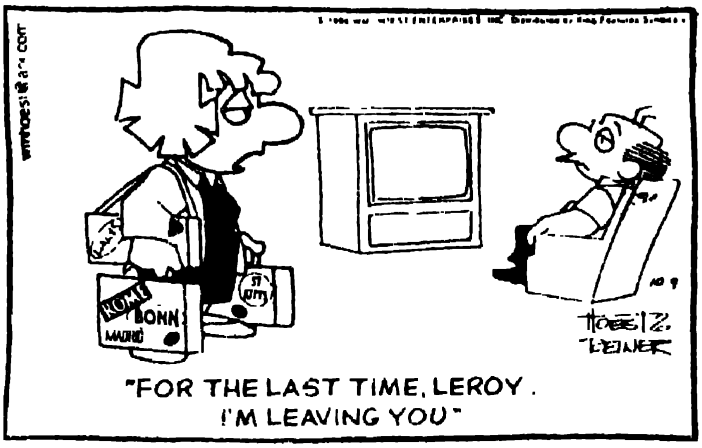
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

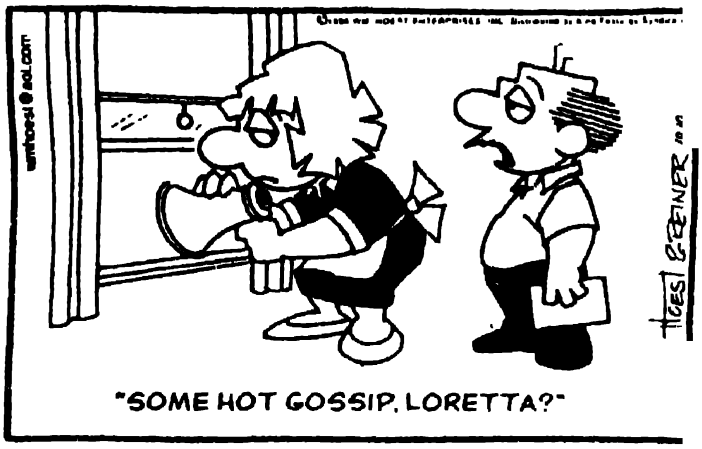


THE LOCKHORNS



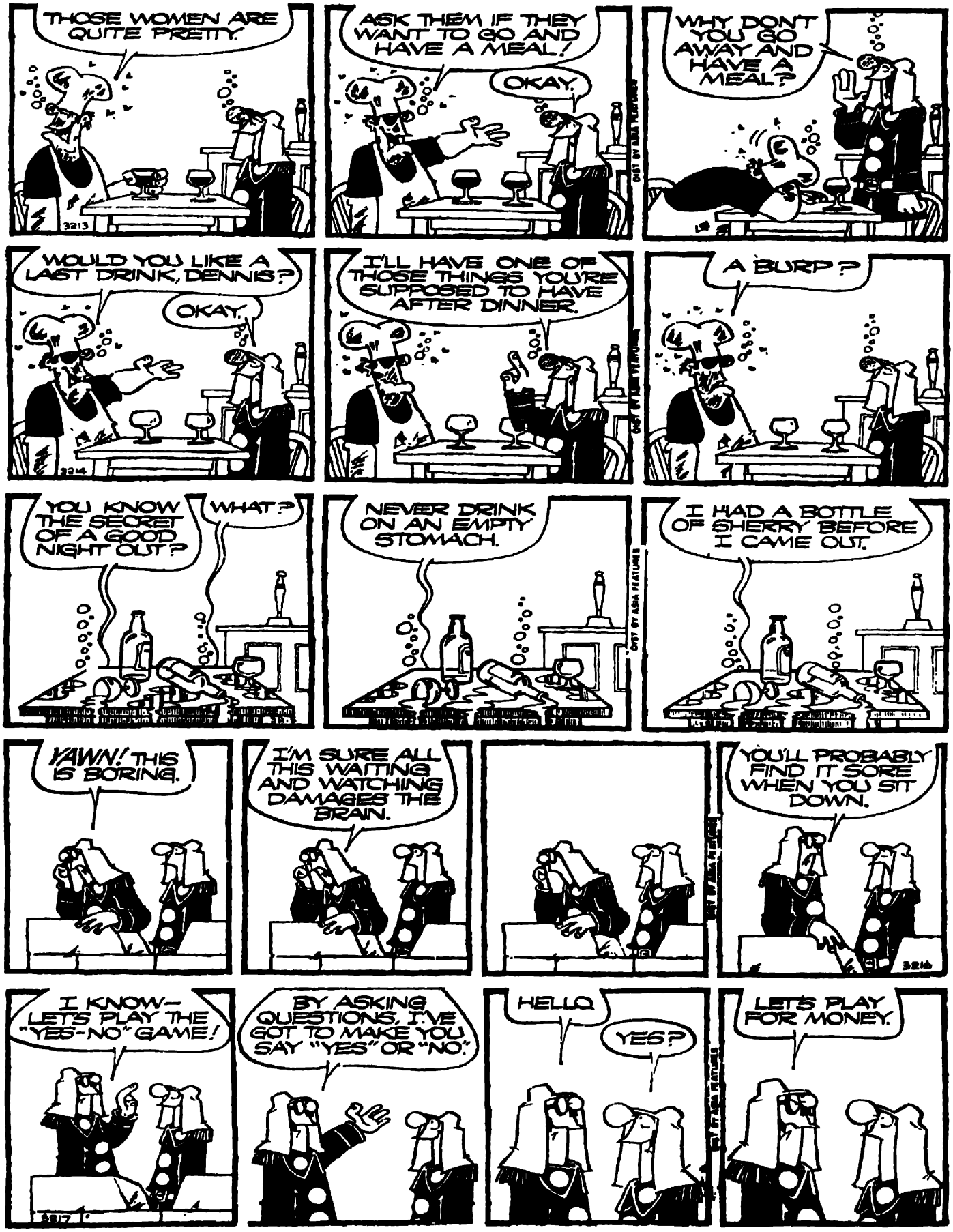


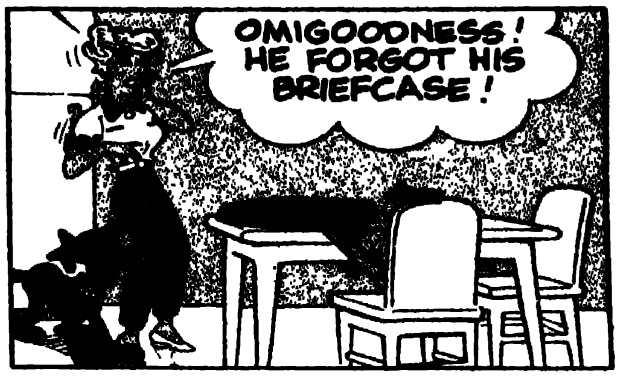


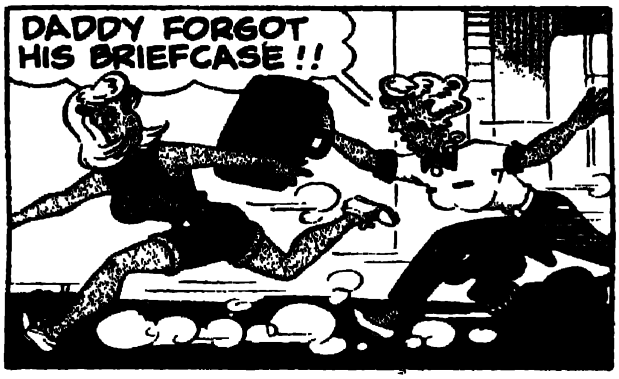


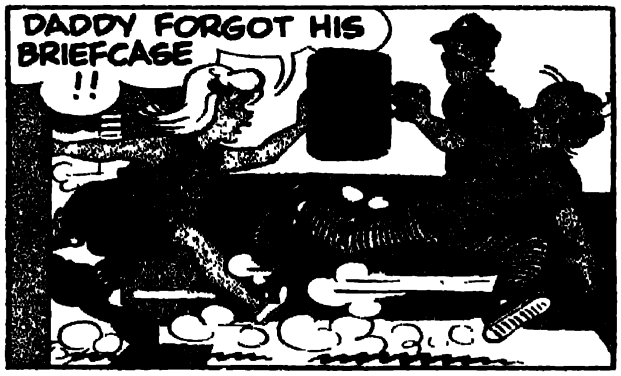
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

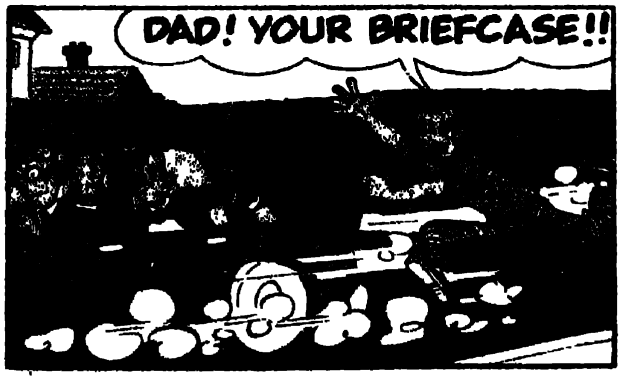
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

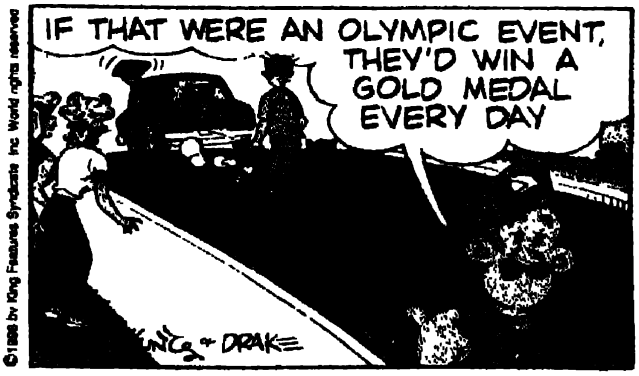












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FOCUS

PET PROJECT

Maneka Gandhi's love affair with the animal world continues, says ***Samita Bhatia****, reporting on her new book,* First Aid for Animals

It's difficult to believe that a street mutt could be so soft to touch. Or that its coat would slither so glossily over its under-nourished frame. But then, not every mongrel has the celebrated animal rights activist, Maneka Gandhi, looking after him.

Pedigree doesn't interest our Green Queen. It's the nondescript pooch off the street, that everybody ignores or kicks around, that she takes under her wings—to nurture, pamper and hopefully put up for adoption by animal lovers like her.

Visitors to her house in Delhi's up-market Maharani Bagh, be prepared. The moment Maneka settles down in her chair, a motley canine crew will surround her. And the lady will find the time to give due attention to each and every one.

Even as she speaks to you, her hands wander under the pelt of the dog nearest her, hunting for errant fleas that he may have picked up. Once she finds one such specimen, she flings it on the marble floor and quashes it underfoot—clearly, animal love doesn't extend to insects.

Gandhi has a new project on her hands these days: a first of its kind guide to *First Aid for Animals*. Co-authored with Gautam Grover (Sterling Paperbacks, Rs 60), this book will tell you all you need to know about caring for an injured or ill pet—or even stray animal for that matter.

Says Maneka, "There was no such first aid book in India. We've come across hundreds of people in this country who want to help animals but find themselves helpless to do so. As a result when they are not able to help the animals they stop noticing the pain of the animal. So it actually acts as a block that protects their own conscience. So we thought of doing this book."

While writing the book Gandhi drew on the brigade of youngsters dedicated to the organisation, People for Animals—perhaps India's largest NGO (non-governmental organisation) with a membership that has already crossed 1,50,000—beginning with Grover who had to co-ordinate with various veterinary surgeons for the diverse information that the book offers. It took all of eight months to gather all the information, to collate it and cross-check facts.

Gandhi explains, "We took on the task of publishing a book which affords such in-depth information because most vets throughout the country don't know anything." Veterinary institutes and colleges she has found, in fact, restrict themselves to animal husbandry and what is far ical ethics.

"Besides, they do such a huge amount of unnecessary dissection that by the time the student graduates from the institute, he or she has lost any feeling of compassion for the animals, from whom they are going to be earning their livelihood," she adds.

This may come as a surprise to most people, but around 90 per cent of the graduating vets prefer working for slaughterhouses while nine per cent wind their way to poultry farms or piggeries—slaughter houses of a different kind.

Says Maneka, "Just a paltry one per cent actually end up working for

Maneka Gandhi surrounded by her canine crew: 'I chose animals deliberately'

animal welfare. In fact, I find that compounders are far more learned and sensitive to the animal than the supposed vet."

It has been her experience—and countless pet owners will corroborate this—that vets by and large know nothing about diagnosing diseases in animals. The result: thousands of animals die unnecessarily just because the vet is unable to make an accurate diagnosis. Says Gandhi, "They have been known to operate unnecessarily or just pump the animal with B-Complex doses for any odd ailment."

Healthy young dogs have been known to end up with cataract due to an overdose of steroids or to die at their master's feet after anti-rabies shots have been injected into a vein! Horrific cases have come to light where the vets have operated on the animal and failed to stitch it up, so its intestines have fallen out.

Gandhi insists that errant vets must be brought to book. She explains, "The offenders get away scot free because nobody has thought about taking them to court." On the contrary, she has found that colleges, syllabuses and even vets abroad have reformed because people are litigious by nature and don't spare them for their careless mistakes.

In this scenario, Gandhi saw the necessity of publishing *First Aid for Animals*, a book which, she says, should have been brought out by the veterinary colleges of Hissar or Izzatnagar. Says Gandhi, "It's unfortunate that these institutions have not contributed in any way to veterinary science."

Maneka hopes that this book will serve a dual purpose: as a hands-on guide on animal care, and a textbook to train vets throughout the country. She explains, "If you take your pet to a vet then you must know the medicines that he will be prescribing for the animal. So it's for you to keep a double check."

Training vets in smaller towns like Jhunjhunu and Bikaner and other remote areas of the country is Gandhi's larger gameplan. She hopes that, "this book will bring some dignity into the profession."

The book is already doing great business. The first day that it hit the stores, an animal lover from Bangalore picked up 250 copies with the intention of redistributing them in the city. Besides, Maneka Gandhi's office has sent letters to the over-200 units of People for Animals, asking them to sell a minimum of 10 copies each.

People for Animals is an institution started two and a half years ago with Maneka Gandhi as its chairperson. The NGO performs two basic functions, explains Maneka, "One is animal welfare and the other to create awareness about animal rights. You can't have animal rights unless you have animal welfare."

On the NGO's agenda is saving animals, running shelters, ambulances, taking individuals and organisations to court, collecting money that is then donated to other animal care institutions that need it. Thus, there are a lot of shelters which are not directly run by People for Animals but are funded by it.

The NGO goes about its task systematically, by establishing animal shelters and hospital; and when it encounters lack of space it provides ambulances which administer treatment to the local animals. The second major task for People for Animals are their adoption programmes. Gandhi elaborates, "That's to try and get animal lovers to adopt stray dogs off the street rather than go for pedigree dogs which are forcibly bred."

Another welcome task performed by People for Animals is the production of literature on animals of which there is a paucity in India. Thus, animal lovers today have access to material which instructs them what to do when they witness cruelty being perpetrated on animals. Another is a treatise devoted to the 'Animal Laws of India', which is a collection of all the laws pertaining to animals. This has been sent out to judges and lawyers, so that they can refer to it.

Few people are aware that this country boasts of the greatest number of laws in the world pertaining to animals. "Every day we get hundreds of letters from people who want to know what they should do if they come across an animal being mistreated. We have to stop hiding behind ignorance. The laws pertaining to animals empower us. But it is unfortunate that nobody knows about these laws and thus takes no action," says an impassioned Maneka.

While it's common knowledge that there exists The Prevention of Cruelty Act, 1960, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, few are aware of the Indian Penal Code Sections 428 and 429 devoted to cruelty perpetrated on animals. So if your pet was in any way hurt by the vet, the latter empowers you to have him sentenced for three years!

Armed with these laws People for Animals has been able to rescue animals from a cruel fate. With a quirky smile Gandhi says, "Amongst the things that People for Animals does is to go to court all the time. We are very litigious and have never lost a case."

So recently, camels—used on Bombay beaches for rides along the waterfront—were rescued and sent back "home" to Rajasthan; bullfights were banned in Goa; and 17 construction companies were pulled up in Chandigarh for overloading bullocks at sites.

The latest feather in the NGO's cap has been having a ban implemented on testing cosmetics on animals in the country. Explains Maneka, "While there are a few cosmetic companies (essentially those dealing in herbal products) that don't test their products on animals, other leading Indian brands like Lakme and Godrej were employing animals to carry out tests. But as of last week they don't."

With Ritu Beri at the fund-raiser meant to sensitise people towards animals

Gandhi's triumphant smile is understandable when you consider that this victory will save four crore animals in a year from a tortuous death

Gandhi also heads the government committee that is involved in testing and running experiments on animals "We are on the verge of stopping dissection altogether," says Maneka, whose People for Animals units throughout the country have been campaigning against dissection for over a year now

Since raising funds is an important task for the NGO, recently People for Animals tied up with designer Ritu Beri to produce a range of designer items that were meant to sensitise people towards animals The fund raiser was instrumental in establishing additional animal care centres in the country.

There were T-shirts, mugs, notepads, caps, postcards, pens, key chains, stuffed toys and even geometry boxes that sent out a singular message. animals are people too. And the motto was: caring means sharing

The entire collection—a sell-out in all the cities that it travelled to—was replete with figures of animals for whom extinction looms large while it was crafted in materials that did not require the killing of animals.

For the future, Maneka says, "We'll be doing different things all the time Another fund-raiser is coming up in the near future which is going to be a raffle to be sponsored by Sita World Travels." The raffle will be drawn by actress Sridevi who'll probably add a liberal dose of glamour to the proceedings

Celebrities obviously pitch in quite readily for the good cause. When the Chandigarh unit of People for Animals was raising funds for an ambulance, Madhuri Dixit was there to lend a hand "proving the fact that the animal movement is very important in this country," says Gandhi

Maneka's animal love has come in for a fair share of criticism as well Her detractors have often questioned this overriding concern for animals in a country where the poor and underprivileged often lead bestial lives.

Gandhi is not fazed by such talk, though "Those who need to do things for human beings should do so," she says "Besides, in my involvement with an animal's movement, I work closely with people as well."

And it's not that Maneka is not concerned with human welfare. Rugmark, of which she is president, has battled to save children from being drawn into the carpet-weaving industry of India, where they are preferred as workers over adults because of their nimble fingers.

Says Maneka firmly, "I find that people who feel and work for animals do the same for everybody. People who criticise movements like People for Animals actually end up doing nothing for anybody—the cocktail party sorts."

Maneka clearly has little patience for these types. As she says, "The bottom-line is that everybody should help each other. In India, governments don't work and have traditionally never worked. Therefore, India runs because people help one another and it will continue to run, however haphazardly, as long as we have a sense of social justice and anger"

Thus in her own constituency Pilibhit, the first thing Gandhi did was to establish an animal shelter—and nobody objected. She explains, "I chose animals deliberately. Nobody else would have the courage to do it. Somehow the point had to be driven home that people ARE dependent on animals and that animals were getting a bad deal It needed somebody to come forward and to take their side"

Besides, she explains, her efforts for animal welfare are, in fact, directed towards people what with 70 per cent of our population dependent on animals for their livelihood The People for Animals teams fan out into the villages, teaching people how best they can look after their livestock, and also vaccinate the cows free of charge. For, says Maneka, "if these animals die or are badly treated, then their owners run the danger of losing their livelihood. So we are not just a cat and dog movement."

While the People for Animals membership grows at the rate of five to 10 members a day the only real problem is the lack of formal training for members. But a solution may be at hand, with Gandhi actively working towards the establishment of an Animal Welfare Institute at the end of next year that will provide training to members and anyone who is interested in animal care.

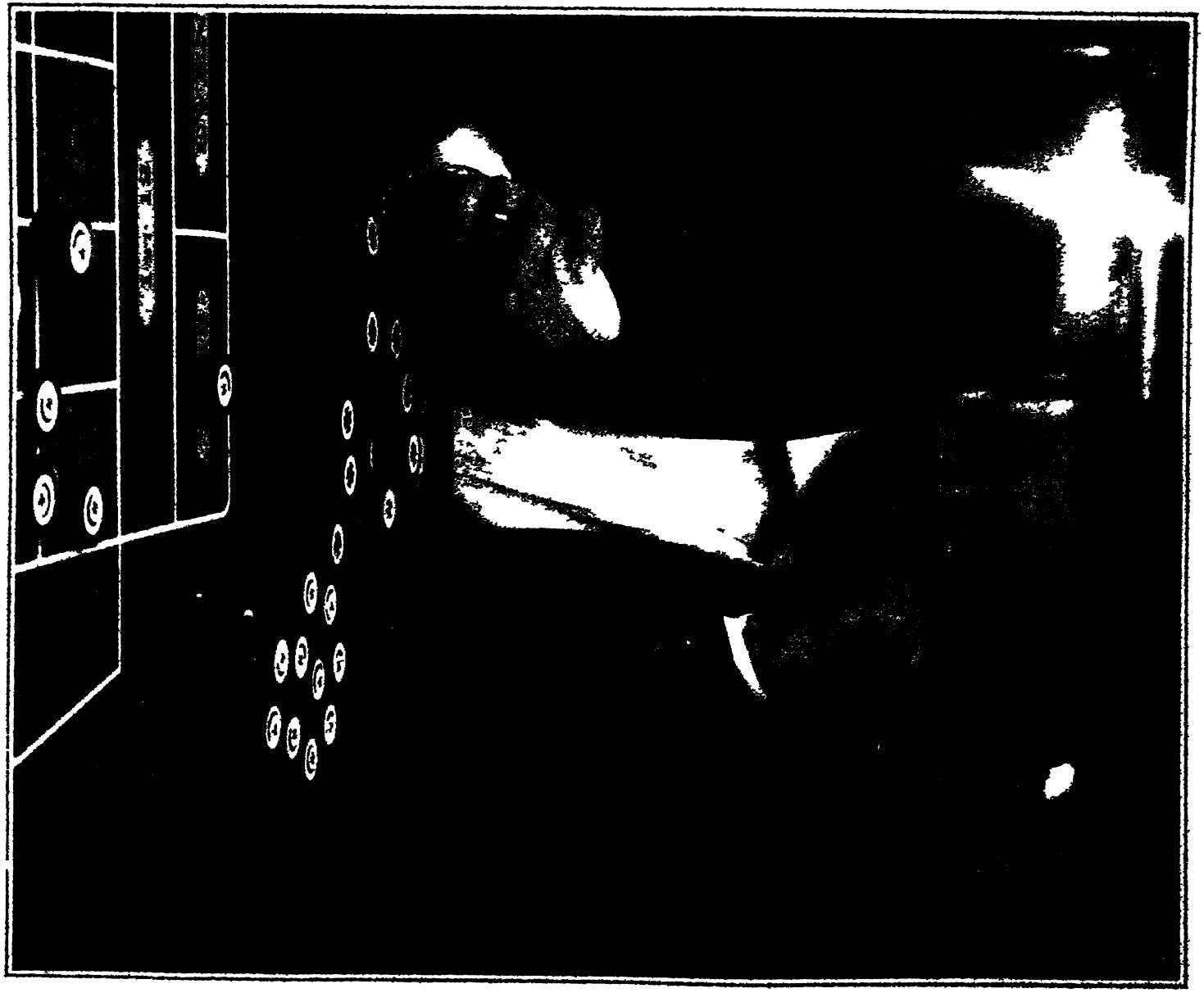
At the end of the day, says Gandhi, "We want to train judges, agricultural extension workers, get involved with the pesticide movement, link up the environment, animals and the vegetarian movement."

Good idea that. As Maneka would say— echoing her now-famous ad propagating vegetarianism on television— '*acchha hai*'. ■

CRAYONS

THE INTERNATIONAL FAVOURITE

STATUTORY WARNING CHEWING TOBACCO IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

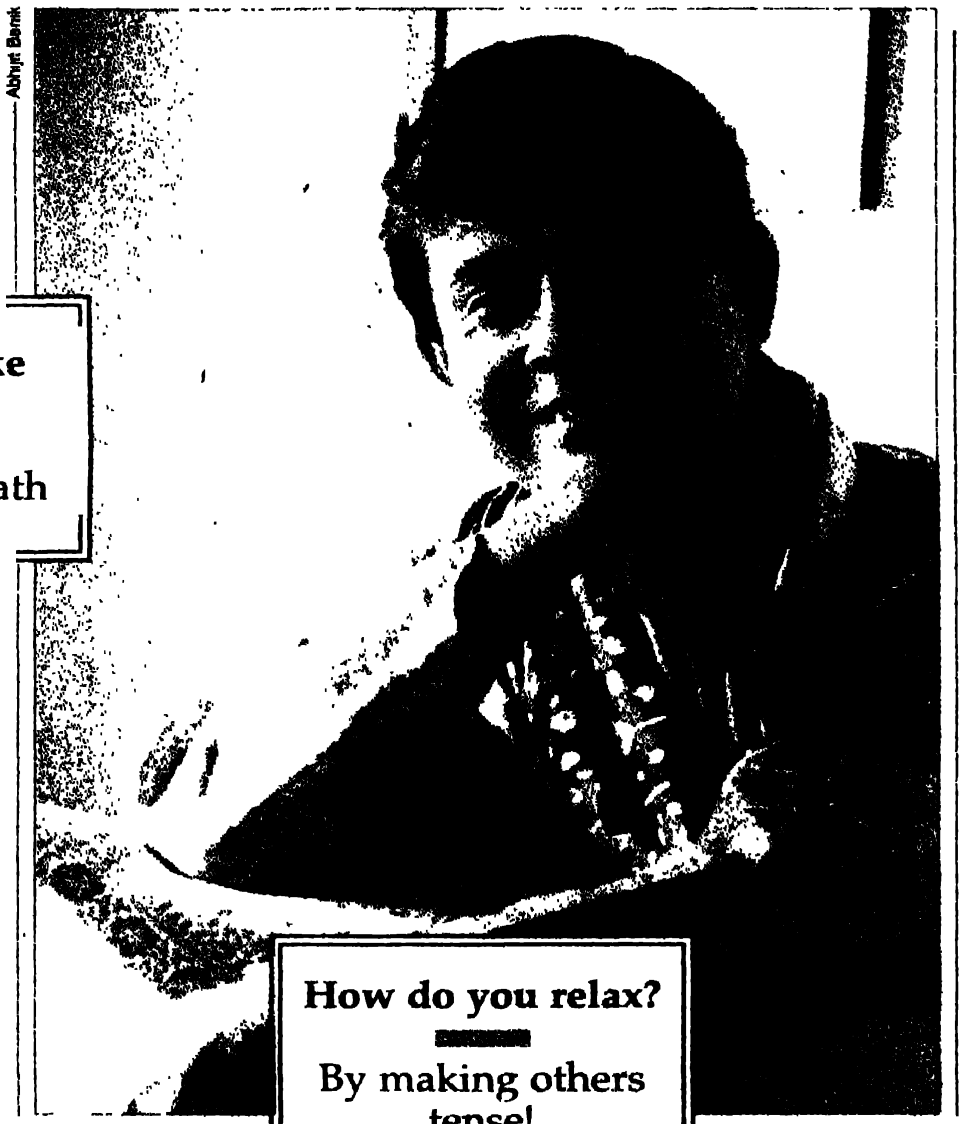


BABA

FIRST PERSON

JAYABRATO CHATTERJEE, film-maker and corporate communicator, has recently had a runaway success in his first novel, Last Train to Innocence. *The book opened to excellent reviews in India and abroad. And now news has come that he is the only Indian author to be nominated for the 1997 Hawthornden Castle Fellowship, Scotland. Jayabrato is looking forward to working there with four other international authors.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Spending an entire Sunday with oil in my hair and a song on my lips.
What is your greatest fear?
Losing my designer kurtas.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
The permanence of some relationships.


Abhijit Banik

What do you dislike most in others?

Big talk and bad breath

What do you dislike most in others?
Big talk and bad breath.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My outspokenness.
What is your most precious possession?
My sense of humour.
What objects do you always carry?
A bottle of Obsession for Men, Alka Seltzer, dental floss and lots of laughter.
What makes you most depressed?
Inequality of any kind
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
Never thought about it.

What is your favourite word?
Fun and fiddlesticks.
What is your favourite journey?
Catching the Last Train to Innocence.
What is your favourite dream?
Sipping a robust Chateauneuf-du-Pape over a lazy monsoon evening with my beloved.
What is your nightmare?
Waking up on Monday mornings.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My family and friends.
What is your source of sustenance?
My nervous energy.

How do you relax?

By making others tense!

On what occasions do you lie?
When I am totally exhausted.
What is your greatest regret?
That I was never born as Peter Pan.

What has been your happiest moment?
When I met my daughter, just born, curiously staring at me from the nurse's lap at the Woodlands corridors.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Sad songs by Nat King Cole and torrid sunsets.
How do you relax?
By making others tense!
What do you envy most in others?
Nothing at all.
How would you like to be remembered?
As one who loved not wisely but too well.
How would you like to die?
In a designer ensemble and with my claws perfectly manicured!

THEY SAY FAT PEOPLE MAKE THE BEST LOVERS.

DON'T YOU WISH IT WAS TRUE?

But you know it isn't.

Because when you're all self-conscious about your own body, it's hard to get enthusiastic about someone else's.

So what are you going to do about it?

LOVE AND STARVATION DON'T MIX

Starving is disastrous for your body. Not to mention your love life. It's hard to be passionately loving when you're desperately hungry.

And while starving does help you lose a little fat, it also deprives your body vital nutrients that include vitamins, salts and proteins.

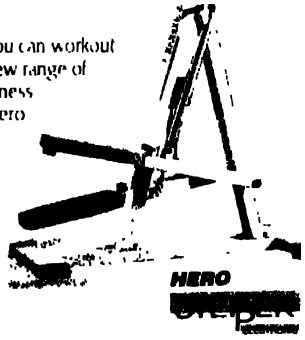
Actually, the key to a shapely body is to sculpture the body, by losing inches from the right places.

The only way to do this is with the right exercises.

DO IT TOGETHER THE FUN WAY

Now both of you can workout together on the new range of Magical Bodies Fitness Machines. From Hero.

The **Hero Stepper Electronic** helps you simulate the stair climbing activity, which as all fitness buffs. Know, burns the maximum calories.



HERO
Presents
Magical **BODIES**
Fitness Machines

And it gives you a wide range of exercises from low impact aerobics to high impact workouts.

The **Hero Allegro Electronic** firms up your arms, shoulders and stomach with its simulated rowing action.

And it keeps thighs, legs and calves in shape with the vigorous pedalling motion.

The **Hero Jogger Electronic** helps you effectively perform the very first exercise known to man: putting one foot in front of the other.

The faster and more rhythmically you do it, the more effective it is. Because that's when walking turns into jogging, which raises your body metabolism for up to eight hours after you stop. So you continue to burn calories, long after your workout is over.

WHEN AND HOW YOU WANT IT

All the new Hero Fitness Machines have built in computers that keep track of your performance and the number of calories you've burnt. Allowing you to tailor workouts not only to your body's needs but to your time schedules as well.

So you can exercise whenever you like. Together.

And with regular workouts you'll find you have the kind of body both of you love.

The Magical Bodies Range of Fitness Machines is available at leading sports shops and Hero Cycles dealerships. For further information contact Hero Cycles Limited, Hero Nagar, G.T. Road, Ludhiana 141003, Ph. (0161) 670080, Fax (0161) 670602. **Branch Offices. New Delhi** Ph. 3270269, 3274926, 3280263, **Mumbai** Ph. 2833958, 2855561, **Calcutta** Ph. 2251041, **Madras** Ph. 4992830.

FROM JYOTHY LABORATORIES, MUMBAI

The Telegraph

1 DECEMBER 1996

POSTMORTEM

Romi Plays Other

Kapil Dev has once proved that behind every successful man there is a woman ('Kapil's Maidens', October 6). In fact, it would not be a mistake to call her a superwoman considering the way she has managed the cricketer's life and business affairs.

In the glamorous world of cricket, where permissiveness and infidelity are a rule, Romi and Kapil have remained together although I am sure there have been many ups and downs in their lives.

Kapil owns a major part of his success to his wife whose support the cricketer has always strongly relied upon. Being a cricketer husband is a most taxing proposition for a wife as she has to live up to the pressures of his professional life.

Now that Kapil has retired from the game, the duo can really plunge into parenthood.

Shome Mukherjee
Calcutta

■ Romi is definitely the stronger partner in the Dev marriage. Cricketers, in the prime of their careers, are hardly able to play the dutiful husband, often being away on tours for months. The wife has to be not only mature and understanding but also patient as she will have to bear with grin many disappointments in her marital life.

Kapil is certainly not one of the most articulate cricketers. And Romi has compensanted this beautifully with her grasp of both Hindi and English.

Ranabir Roy,
Calcutta

■ As a celebrity wife and now as a mother, Romi has attained total fulfilment which is evident in her radiant appearance. She had everything a woman could wish for in life: a hugely successful husband, pots of money, a string of lucrative business ventures and fame.

The only thing missing was the patter of tiny feet. This wish of hers has also been granted. Isn't Romi the happiest woman on earth?

Mitali Das,
Calcutta

■ In the 78 years of my life, I have neither been a sportsman nor a cricket lover, yet I have always liked Kapil Dev. I am so glad he has become a father.

P.C. Dasgupta,
Calcutta

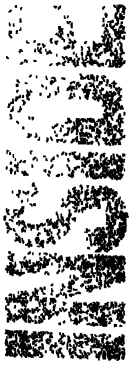
■ I differ with your view that Kapil was not an imaginative captain. Kapil is a natural cricketer and a genius and a genius cannot be calculative. He had the calibre by which he could turn the impossible into possible.

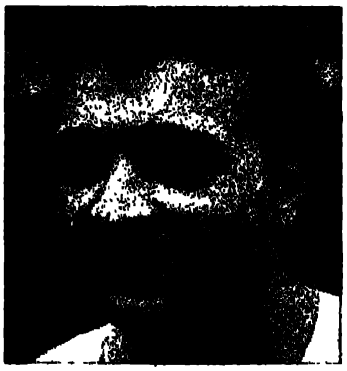
As a skipper he brought India many moments of glory. It was under his stewardship that India won the Prudential World Cup.

It is sad, but true, that Kapil Dev did not receive the desired support from many senior players in the team for whatever the reason. Had there been less politicking he could have given India many more victories.

Debanjan Banerjee,
Calcutta

Little Ameya: The new love in Kapil-Romi's life





Vikas Khot

Lucky Ali

PAGE 4

LUCKY ALI, son of comedian Mehmood, becomes a celebrity in his own right with his very first album, *Sunoh*. A profile

PAGE 26

DELHI STARTS looking for an alternative township in green Gurgaon.

SECTIONS

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22 COMICS
26 FOCUS
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover: Vikas Khot

COVER STORY

LISTEN UP!

Lucky Ali strikes gold with his maiden album, Sunoh, *proving that there's more to him than his celebrity father, Mehmood.* ***Seema Goswami*** *reports*

THE MOST FAMOUS STORY ABOUT LUCKY ALI, BEFORE HE ACHIEVed celebrity in his own right, involved his far-more-famous father, Mehmood. As the highest-paid and busiest comedian of his time, Mehmood didn't get to spend too much time with his family. His kids saw him only rarely, and then for brief periods. So, the actor was understandably excited when he was meeting with his four sons after a long spell apart.

The reunion was set at the airport, and Mehmood headed straight for his kids, all set to gather them in his arms. But there wasn't a flicker of recognition on those young faces. And then

Vikas Khot

Happy memories: Mehmood surrounded by his sons

Lucky Ali with his son

suddenly, his second-born son, Lucky, gave a start, and pointing excitedly at his father began shouting, "*Arre dekho*, Mehmood, Mehmood!"

The four-year-old may not have recognised his father in the man approaching them, but he knew the Hindi film comedian, Mehmood, all right.

Like all stories involving the film world, this one too has some truth to it But, as Lucky himself volunteers, this wasn't exactly how it happened. Ali's version of the incident goes something like this.

His parents, he says, were going through a far-from-amiable divorce, when he was around three or four, and his youngest brother, Masoom, was only one. So, rather than have their children witness the ugliness of a bitter battle between their parents, Mehmood and his wife decided to send the two eldest ones off to boarding school in Mussourie.

Lucky and his elder brother were, thus, despatched to Hampton Court, where they stayed while their parents sorted out the details of their separation. The boys' grandfather and uncle would come visiting, and take them for the odd movie and outing. But it wasn't until the end of the term that they went back to Bombay to meet up with their mom and dad again

The entire family had gathered at the airport to greet the boys on their return, and there was much excitement as they stepped off the plane But after that long spell apart, neither of the boys could recognise the members of their family Until, of course, Lucky's eyes alighted on the vaguely familiar form of his father. He had seen this man somewhere before.

Of course, he had seen him at the movies! That was the funny man who had made him laugh so much: Mehmood

But no, he didn't shout out, "Mehmood, Mehmood!" as legend has it And no, his father was not mortified by this reception. On the contrary, he was thrilled that he was the only member of the family that Lucky had recognised.

Today, of course, Lucky Ali is a recognisable figure in his own right. At 38 — a little late by show-biz standards — he has had a runaway hit in his maiden album, *Sunoh*. His single, *O Sanam*, has moved to the top of every countdown chart on every channel, with its video — set against the pyramids of Egypt — being played incessantly on television. And Ali's has been anointed the best debut of the year.

But as you catch up with Lucky, perched on the window-sill of a small room in Hotel Sands in suburban Bombay, he seems remarkably unaffected by all the hoopla surrounding his recent success. Dragging deep on his cigarette — he takes care to exhale out of the window so that the air that his infant son, Ta'Awwuz, breathes is not polluted — he talks about his childhood, his family, himself ,and the genesis of *Sunoh*.

The songs of *Sunoh*, says Ali, had been bubbling within him since he was in his mid-20s. The concept of the traveller going through life had always appealed to him, and he had worked some tunes out on such themes. But it wasn't until he turned 36, that Ali began seriously considering recording the album.

Around that time, he met a couple of Englishmen at the pool at Hotel Sun 'N' Sand, who offered to produce the album for him in England. But they expected Lucky to put up his own money, and he wasn't sure he should go along with them. So, he flew off to England to consult his brother-in-law, Michael McCleary, a sound engineer at Trident Studios in London, where such famous groups as The Beatles and Queen have recorded their albums. Michael heard the songs, and insisted that he would record the album, and after some hard thinking, Ali decided to go along with this plan.

Thus it was that *Sunoh* came into being at the Sound Studio in Soho, London, arranged and engineered by Michael McCleary for Smelly the Fox Productions. The album, produced by Lucky for Crossover Music, had lyrics by Aslam and Arif Dehlvi, while the music was scored by Ali himself.

Once the album was recorded, began the quest to sell it to a music company Ali had complete faith in his product. As he says, "I knew that something that had touched my heart

The singer and the VJ: Ali with Luke Kenny

would touch the hearts of others as well." So, he flew down to Bombay and began offering *Sunoh* around to such companies as the Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited (ABCL) and Plus Music. But in the end, Ali plumped for a smaller company, BMG Crescendo (India) Private Limited, which he felt would be more committed to his music and promote it more aggressively.

And given the unprecedented success of *Sunoh*, that gamble seems to have paid off. The album is flying off the shelves in music shops around the country. And Lucky, who says that he had never dreamt that *Sunoh* would be such a huge success, has proved to be true to his name.

As a child, Lucky — so nicknamed because his father's career took off after his birth; his real name is Maqsood — had shown little musical promise, though he did play the air guitar (as in strumming an instrument that

Mehmood plays the comedian

existed only in his imagination). A self-described 'closet singer', who used to exercise his skills only amidst the hills of Mussourie because he liked the way his voice echoed back at him, Ali became seriously interested in music at 13 years when his stepmother, Tracey, presented him with his first guitar.

But even then, he was far from being a child prodigy. He did sing as part of the school chorus, but as a teenager he was too busy being a rebel to concentrate on anything else. As a student at Bishop Cotton School in Bangalore — where the family had moved, taking up residence at their farm — this rebellion took the form of smoking marijuana, much to the horror of his parents.

By then, Lucky's mother had married again — a man whom her son could not stand — and he was living with Mehmood and his stepmother, Tracey, whom he was very close to. "But I was a very strange kid," he says now, "I would do something wrong, and then I would make sure that my second mother (as he calls Tracey) knew about it. It was very important to me that she knew what I was doing, or how bad I was being."

Tracey may have been tolerant of this kind of behaviour, but Mehmood wasn't. And every couple of months

Vikas Khot

'Now my father says he is very proud of me'

or so, Lucky would be thrown out of the family home, as punishment for his misdemeanours. "There I would be," he laughs today, "clutching my suitcase and walking down the driveway But, by some miracle, I always managed on my own." Until, of course, he reconciled with his family yet again — and then was thrown out once more

Ali dropped out of the educational system after school, refusing to go through the rigours of college. Instead he began helping his father on his farm, and doing other such odd jobs He even started his own business in Bangalore at one point, cleaning carpets, and made as much as Rs 30,000 a month. Other jobs included working on the rig of the Great Atwood Oil Company

Says Lucky, "My father just couldn't understand why I couldn't settle down in life. He used to keep asking me, *'Kya kar rahe ho zindagi mein?'* He used to regard me as a bit of a bum, while I couldn't understand why he couldn't get off my case. In fact, one reason why I never thought of working in films was that I didn't want to go around asking people for a break. I didn't need that kind of humiliation. My father had humiliated me enough in life."

Not surprisingly then, one of the things that pleases Ali most about his recent success is the change in people's attitudes towards him — specially that of his father. "Now he says that he is very proud of me," says Lucky, "and that is something that I cherish the most."

His relationship with his father has always been a meaningful — and often, difficult — part of Lucky's life. He realised fairly early in life that his father was special; not like the fathers of the other boys in school. "When I was about four or five and at boarding school in Mussourie," says Ali, "often I would find the nuns escorting some parents to my classroom. They would enter and tell me, 'Stand up, Lucky' I would do so, and all the visitors would stare at me. Only now do I realise that they were taking a good look at Mehmood's son."

But this kind of attention wasn't always welcome. Often Lucky would have people ask him what his father did for a living. "He's a comedian," the little boy would reply. What's his name, would be the next question. In all innocence, Lucky would answer, "Mehmood "

Recounts Ali, "The moment I said that, they would start laughing in my face. And that would really disturb me. I couldn't understand what was so funny about Mehmood being my father."

As he grew up, Lucky understood better just what was so funny about his father's being a comedian But that didn't make things any easier for the sensitive teenager, and perhaps this explains his aversion to the film world, which lasts to this day. Ask him if he will sing for Hindi movies, and he is quick to issue a disclaimer.

"I am simply not interested in the kind of stuff that they do today," he says. "The other day I had someone call me and ask me if I would like to record his song. The lyrics went something like, *Teri tirchi kamar...* I told him that I wasn't into doing things like that, and he replied, *'Saab, aaj kal to yehi chalta hai.'* I had to explain to him that I was only interested in 'jo nahi chalta'."

Alisha Chinai: *Made in India* pop diva

And that is only too obvious if you listen to *Sunoh*. At a time when such singers as Baba Sehgal are trying their luck with rap music and proudly proclaiming *Main Bhi Madonna;* when Bally Sagoo is remixing old Hindi films songs with samples from sundry Western pop and rock hits; and when even such traditional staples as *Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram* are being given a disco beat; Lucky Ali remains the exception to the rule.

Rather than go with the flow, Ali has decided to charter entirely different waters. So, instead of the sound made famous by Shweta Shetty (as in *Johnny Joker*) and Alisha Chinai (*Made in India*), in Lucky's debut album we have a re-creation of the music of the Sixties and Seventies, when Mohammad Rafi and Kishore Kumar were masters of all they surveyed.

There is a cursory nod to the disco audience in the title track, *Sunoh*, but such other songs as *Pyar Ka Musafir* and *Yeh Zameen Hai, Aasmaan Hai*, and even *Yeh Mumbai Nagariya*, rely on melody rather than beat. And *Melegi Melegi Manzil* is more reminiscent of the ghazal style of singing than anything else.

But what made Lucky choose *O Sanam* as the first single to be released on video? Did he think that this was the strongest song on the album?

No, says Ali. On the contrary, he thought that *Sunoh* was a far stronger track, and so was *Yeh Zameen*. "But," he says, with a wry smile, "my countrymen are very romantic. And *O Sanam* was the most romantic number I had. So, I thought I would have better luck if I released that as the single."

Despite such calculations, Lucky insists that commercial success leaves him completely cold. "I will make music only as long as I enjoy it," he says firmly. "The day I stop enjoying it, I will stop. And that could be 10 years from now, or it could be tomorrow."

For the moment, though, Ali plans to release his second album next year. But before that, he will be touring with an African group, Impala, in February 1997, holding concerts in five cities, including Calcutta and Colombo.

Has the success of *Sunoh* put any extra pressure on him?

No way, says Ali. "In fact, I sometimes wonder why I do this at all," he says. "All I really want is to keep my life simple I just want to be myself; the way I've always been."

But the Lucky Ali that we see today is very different from the boy that grew up in Bombay, Mussourie and Bangalore. And a major part of the credit for this — as Lucky concedes himself — goes to his wife of two years, Masooma.

When Ali first met her, however, she was named Megan. The daughter of missionary parents from New Zealand, Megan too had grown up in Bangalore, where she went to school. But while both she and Lucky are convinced that they met as children since they lived in the same cities and haunted the same spots (the Ashoka swimming pool, for instance), they don't really have any recollections of these encounters.

Their first official meeting occurred

two years ago in Delhi, when they were introduced by Lucky's brother, Mackie. Ali was on his way to do some shows in Punjab, but the two of them hit it off, and exchanged telephone numbers. Says Lucky now, "I was attracted by how she wasn't blatant. She had a certain old-world charm. I felt that she was very Indian; there was a sense of traditionalism about her."

After his shows, Ali flew off the United States while Megan returned home to New Zealand. But Lucky found that he was missing her terribly and called her up to ask her meet up with him in India. Megan agreed.

"She arrived here on a Wednesday," recalls Ali, "I proposed to her on Thursday, and we were married on Friday." Megan embraced Islam before the *nikaah* and was given the name of Masooma.

Neither of their families attended, though Mehmood arrived in Bombay soon after the *nikaah* was solemnised. Says Masooma, with a laugh, "Well, we had a lot of explaining to do afterwards. But we connected to each other so strongly that we felt that it would be a tragedy if we missed each other."

But while the Alis were quite happy with the match, Megan's parents were appalled that she was rushing into marriage in this precipitous manner

Baba Sehgal

And they were even more unhappy about the fact that she had not just converted to Islam but had also embraced the concept of *hijaab*, or purdah.

This meant that in public, Masooma was always seen in a salwar kameez and with a *chador* wrapped around her head and face, so that only her eyes were visible — in fact, she even appeared in the video of *O Sanam* in this garb. The McClearys, who had brought up their daughter in liberal New Zealand, were very disturbed by this transformation.

Says Masooma, "I had to spend a lot of time with them, trying to explain why I had decided to embrace *hijaab*." Finally, she reminded her mother of their first-floor tenant, a young girl who spent all her time in shorts, and often opened the door to visitors in her underwear. "If her state of undress doesn't bother you," she asked her mother, "why does my being covered bother you so much?"

Her mother saw the point.

But why did Megan decide to embrace Islam and go into *purdah*? After all, even Lucky's mother, stepmother and sisters didn't practise *hijaab*? So, why her?

Masooma explains: "I was always a somewhat hypocritical Christian, even though my parents were missionaries. So, I wanted no hypocrisy

Anaida: Singing *Raghupati Raghav* ...

Bally Sagoo

Ali: Not sailing with the tide

Mehmood occupies a special place in his son, Lucky's heart

when I accepted Islam. If I was going to become a Muslim, I wanted to be a good Muslim."

And in this, she had the support of her husband, who had always been strongly rooted in his Islamic faith from his childhood. "I have always been close to my Creator," says Lucky. "I never ever gave up on my religion. And that has helped me get through life."

Ali maintains that his life changed dramatically after he married at the age of 36. Until then, he says, he had been something of a drifter. But the steadying influence of Masooma — who is five years younger than him — grounded him.

"Until the age of 36," says Lucky, "I was going through this phase where I didn't know where I was going. After meeting Masooma, I finally found direction."

It is not entirely a coincidence that it was only after his *nikaah* that Ali seriously got down to the business of recording his album — and he acknowledges his debt to his wife on the cover, thanking her for standing by him in his darkest hour.

Now, however, she is sharing his success with him. The Alis always travel together, and Masooma makes it a point to take baby Ta'Awwuz along. As Masooma says, "We decided that life is too short not to do things together. If we don't do that, there is every danger of our drifting apart. And since it's God that brought us together, we should try our best to stay together."

Hence, the decision that she should appear in the video of *O Sanam*, even though only her eyes would show. This was their way of telling the world that they were a team.

Along with their infant son, of course, who has just learnt to say '*Abu*' and '*Amma*'. His birth, at the Holy Family Hospital in Bombay, was the high point of Lucky and Masooma's life. But, says Ali, "I never ever felt responsible for him in the sense of having to provide for him. The Creator will provide; I don't have to worry about these things."

Now, the Alis are based in New Zealand, though they spend a lot of time in England and Bombay as well. While in Bombay, they live in a hotel rather than stay in the family home because, as Lucky explains, "My family is very important to me, but so is my space."

But no, they have no plans of moving to India full-time. As Masooma says, a little apologetically, "I love India. But I feel that Bombay is no place to bring up a child. In New Zealand, at least, I can take him out to the park or something. Here, there's no chance of that."

But the couple remain committed to India, nonetheless. And as Masooma bravely tries to master the intricacies of Hindustani — which will help her understand the lyrics of her husband's songs, among other things — Lucky touches base with his extended family. He may not have lived in the same house as them ever since he turned 16, he says, but they are family for all that, and very important to him.

Lucky attaches equal — if not more — importance to ensuring that success, fame and fortune do not change him. "As human beings all of us are tempted," he concedes, "but money is not that important to me."

Music is; and that is what will keep him going, long after *Sunoh* is just a distant memory. ■

POTTED HISTORY

What the chattering classes are talking about

This Week: The salwar kameez

The talking point: Why, Jemima Goldsmith Khan, of course. The young attractive English wife of Imran gave up on *haute couture* (Gianni Versace was her personal favourite) soon after her conversion to Islam and began appearing in soft, luxurious salwar kameezes that flowed gracefully around her thin frame, making the outfit the new fashion statement of the Western world. And the final seal of approval was granted by Diana, Princess of Wales — said to be in love with a Pakistani, Dr Hasnat Khan — who also began appearing in salwar kameezes, although her's were more slimline than Jemima's versions.

Media madness: Was inevitable, of course. While Indian and Pakistani papers made much of the fact that the salwar kameez had finally found a place in the world of high fashion, such foreign publications as *Tatler* and *Vogue* ran full-length photo-spreads featuring the variations on the salwar kameez put out by such internationally-renowned designers as Catherina Walker, Bruce Oldfield and Rifat Ozbek

Did these bear any resemblance to the humbler version seen on Indian streets?: Only a very, very tenuous one. The Western take on the salwar kameez had the trouser cut very close to the leg, while the tunic was far more tailored than the Eastern version. And more often than not, the *dupatta* was shortened into a scarf, which was slung over one shoulder instead of being draped over the torso in the sub-continental style.

Did the salwar kameez find life outside the pages of these magazines?: Not really. Western women continued to regard it as exotica, which they wouldn't mind experimenting with once in a while. But a fashion staple? You had to be joking

And why was that?. Quite simple really. Women who were used to wearing skirts, trousers or dresses, teemed with matching jackets, thought they looked completely over-dressed in the salwar kameez. So, while they would — at a pinch -- wear it to the opera or to a fancy dress ball, they certainly didn't regard it as daywear.

Didn't Jemima make a difference?: Alas, no. The newspapers may have made much of her as the new style guru after Diana, but her look didn't translate too well in fashion stores. And it didn't help very much that Jemima slipped into a long dress and fitted jacket during the hearings in the libel case against Imran —filed by Ian Botham and Allan Lamb — in order to present a more conventional appearance that would go down better with the jury.

Life before Jemima: Went back a long way for the salwar kameez. It originated in the north western region of undivided India and in the tribal areas of Afghanistan, where both men and women wore the baggy trousers and loose tunics that characterise the outfit.

In Punjab, the salwar was referred to as a *suthhan* and the

Diana, Princess of Wales, and Jemima Khan: Popularising salwar kameezes

The modern version of the salwar: Flowing and flowery

kameez was also called a kurta in the pre-Partition days. But after Pakistan came into being, the term *Awami suit* came to be used to describe the salwar kurta, when it was worn by a man.

The *Awami suit* was generally teamed with a waistcoat by the men in this region, though the women stuck to their *dupattas*.

The design element: Was conspicuous by its absence. There had never been a strong tailoring tradition in India — most outfits in this region, the dhoti and the sari for instance, depend on drapes rather than cut for their impact — and the concept of making anything to size was not a widely accepted one. Thus, all salwars were the same size on the whole, and the *nada* — or string — was used to make them fit both lean and fat frames.

The *gaz naap* was what was used to make the outfits — that is, a measurement of one yard (or three feet) was used to make the salwar and-kurta.

Tailoring came in: Courtesy Hindi cinema. In the early Sixties, movie heroines began to appear in tight-tight kameezes that showed off every voluptuous curve they possessed to best advantage. These ended at just above the knee and were teamed with either slim salwars or skin-tight churidars
It wasn't long before every college-going girl was wearing the outfits made famous by Sadhana, Asha Parekh and Mumtaz, and before you knew it, the salwar kameez craze was on.

Other variations: Followed soon after. You had printed salwars and *dupattas* matched with plain kameezes; plain salwars and *dupattas* set off by printed kameezes; elaborately-embroidered salwar kameezes; salwar kameezes with cut-work or mirrorwork on them; long flowing kurtas; short, fitted ones; transparent salwars...the versions were endless.

The design boom: Which began in the late Eighties changed everything. It began with the boutique craze, in which every housewife with an empty garage and a good local *darzi* set herself up as a designer, and began holding exhibitions of her salwar kameezes. But the reign of the bored housewife didn't last long; she was soon pushed out of business by the real professionals.

And who were these?: Leading the way was the pioneer of the fashion revolution in India, Rohit Khosla, followed closely by Tarun Tahiliani. The latter's contribution was, of course, the kalidar kurta, which he said would soon become to India what the little black dress was to the West.

Angry rejoinders: Were forthcoming from Tahiliani's rivals, the designer duo of Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, who insisted that the kalidar kurta was their design innovation. And how dare Tarun lay claim to it?

How was this issue resolved?: It wasn't ever — though some people were heard to wonder why these designers were laying claim to a style that had been around since Mughal times.

Other designers: Soon jumped into the fray. Rohit Bal with his dogra salwars; Suneet Varma with his seashell embellished collection; Rina Dhaka with her vibrantly-coloured line; and Ritu Beri with her elaborately embroidered creations.
But their attempts to re-invent the salwar kameez didn't really make an impact on the mass market, thanks to their pricing policy — though some knock-offs did appear in the high street.

The salwar kameez ruled, nonetheless: Not in its high fashion incarnation, but in its humbler form as popularised by women, both young and old, from all the way from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari.

Over the last decade, it has taken over from the sari as the outfit of choice for most Indian women; and in time more triumphs seem on the cards — even if Diana has re-discovered the joys of a short, sleeveless dress after a brief flirtation with the mystique of the East. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	0750	1 3 5 6	IC 742	1015	5
D5 604	0600	1 5 7	IC 742	1210	1 4
IC 743	0945	2	IC-744	1205	2
IC-743	1300	1 3 4 5 6 7	IC 744	1510	1 2 4 5 6 7
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC 715	1620	1 5 7	IC 716	2100	1 5 7
AIZAWL					
PF 301	0645	1, 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1550	1 3 5
			PF-302	1600	1 3 5
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	0935	1 3 4 5 7	IC 722	1400	1 3 4 5 7
D2 161	1330	1 3 5	D2 161	1600	1 3 5
BANGALORE					
IC 771	0600	daily	IC-772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W-512	2150	daily
IC 773	1825	3 5 7	IC-774	1740	3 5 7
BHUBANESWAR					
D5-402	0700	4 6	D5 401	1[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 544	1230	1 2, 4 5	IC 543	[illegible]	1 2 4 5
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC-770	2000	2 4 6
BIKIR					
IC-263	0700	daily	M9 303	0620	daily
9W 902	0845	daily	9W-401	0810	daily
M9 304	0850	daily	AI-680	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 402	1715	daily	IC-855	0955	4
IC 856	1830	4 7	IC-401	0[illegible]5	[illegible]
M9 302	1935	daily	M9 301	1900	[illegible]
9W-912	1950	daily	9W 911	19[illegible]	daily
			IC-264	[illegible]	daily
DIBRUGARH					
D2 162	1225	2 4 6 7	IC-702	1610	1 4 6 7
IC 701	1240	1 3 5 7	D2 162	1625	1 3 5 7
DIMAPUR					
IC 257	1145	2 4, 6 7	IC 257	1550	2 4 6
PF 301/305	0645	2 4, 5	PF 306 302	1500	2 4 5
GUWAHATI					
IC-703	0750	1 4, 7	IC-704	1200	1 4 6
D5-601	0630	1 2 3 6	IC-240	1310	[illegible]
PI-301	0630	1 3 5	9W 612	1310	daily
IC 229	1000	daily	PF 302	1[illegible]	daily
9W-611	1020	daily	IC 714	1510	3 7
IC 713	1100	3 7	D5-605	2[illegible]	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W 511	1400	daily	IC-772	1[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 771	1700	3 5 7	IC-770	2[illegible]	1
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	9W-512	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0900	1 4 5	IC-256	1350	[illegible]
IC 213	1140	[illegible]	IC 213	1540	[illegible]
IC 713	1100	3 7	IC 714	1[illegible]	
JAIPUR					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145 301	1[illegible]	1 2 4
IC 715	1620	1 5 7	IC 716	2[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
JAMMU					
M9 304/119	0850	2, 4	M9-128/301	1900	1 2 3, 4, 5, 6
JORHAT					
IC-257	1145	2 4, 6, 7	IC-257	1550	2 4, 6 7
9W-621	1010	3 5	9W-622	1320	3 5
KHAJURAHO					
PF 301/303	0645	1 3, 6	PF 304/302	1635	1, 3, 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1530	1 3 5	IC 811	1915	1, 3, 5
CHENNAI (MADRAS)					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC-065	0815	daily
IC 966	0905	daily	IC 543	1125	1 2, 4 [illegible]
IC-944	1230	1 2 4, 5	D2 171	1155	daily
D2 172	1140	1 3 5	D5 401	1230	3 5
D2 174	1705	2 4 6, 7	IC 766	2020	daily
IC-715	1750	daily			
MUMBAI					
			IC 675	0820	daily
9W [illegible]	0715	daily	D2 191	0850	daily
IC [illegible]	0730	daily	9W 201	0945	daily
D2 102	0930	daily			
IC 7[illegible]	0950	2 4 6	IC 726	[illegible]	2 4 6
IC 7[illegible]	1620	1 4 7	IC 16	[illegible]	1 4 7
AI 306	1930	6	AI 305	1730	5
9W-912	2000	daily	IC 274	1850	daily
IC 723	1945	daily	9W 211	1[illegible]	daily
D2-104	2005	daily	D2 103	193[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4, 6	IC 770	2000	2 4 6
PATNA					
IC 77[illegible]	0900	2 4 6	IC-776	1615	2 4 6
D2 406	1430	3 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
IC-812	1530	1 3, 5	IC 811	1915	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
IC 285	0630	1 3 5	IC-286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 725	0950	2 4 6	IC 726	1615	2 4 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0800	3 6 7	IC 254	1040	3 6 7
IC-255	0830	1 4 5	IC 256	1350	1 4 5
TEZPUR					
IC-213	1110	2, 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3, 5	D5 406	1835	3 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5-402	0700	4 6	IC 543	1125	1 2, 4 5
IC 544	1230	1 2 4, 5	D5 401	1230	3 5

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BANGKOK					
RJ-185	1445	4	RJ 184	0700	1
KUALA LUMPUR					
KL 876	0325	7	KL 875	0130	
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0855	2	KB 106	10[illegible]	2
KB 105	1755	4	KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0800	2 5	IG 313	1240	1 [illegible] 6
			IC 732	1410	2 5
IC-855	1105	4, 7	IC 856	1730	4 7
TG 314	1355	1 3, 6			
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2130	5 7	RO 075	1100	5, 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC-225	1130	3 7	IC-226	1350	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4 5
BG-092	1150	1 2, 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC-729	1300	1, 2 3, 6 7	IC-724	1520	1 2 3 6 7
BG-094	1905	1 2 3 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2 3 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1830	4
BG 096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1430	6	Q7 060	1330	6
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC 747	1315	1 2 4, 5 6	IC 748	1645	1, 2 4 5 6
[illegible]					
BA 142	2115	5 7	BA-143	1315	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU-538	2100	4	SU 537	0910	1
PARIS					
KB-106	1105	7	KB 105	0810	7
KB 106	1425	5	KB-105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-41[illegible]	[illegible]45	2 5	SQ 41[illegible]	2230	2 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1640	4
TOKYO					
AI-306	0910	5	AI 309	182[illegible]	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1540	1 7	IC-228	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** ModiLuft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
2311	19 35	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 45	2312
1005	19 20	**Amritsar Mail**	[illegible]	2006
3003	20 00	**Mumbai Mail** via Allahabad	13 15	3004
2381	9 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Grand Chord Dep Wed Thur & Sun Arr Tue Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
2301	9-15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tue Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tue Thur Fri & Sun	16 15	2301
[illegible]	16 [illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sun Arr Mon Tues Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
2305	15 45	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	12 50	2306
2307	23 50	**Jodhpur Express**	3 30	2308
2019	6 00	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep & Arr Except Sunday	21 10	2020
[illegible]	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** in Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Thur Wed & Sat	11 35	[illegible]
3045	23-00	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep Tue Wed & Sat Arr Thurs Fri & Sat	12 20	3046
5046	23-00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5045
5047	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 15	5048
3009	20 30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7-00	3010
3007	9-45	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 10	3008
3039	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5-15	3040
3049	13 10	**Amritsar Express**	15 40	3050
3019	21 55	**Kathgodam Express**	11 5[illegible]	3020
3021	16-00	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
5659	17 30	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	6 15	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
3029	17-11	**Coalfield Express**	10 20	3030
3035	19 20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
3231	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	323[illegible]
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9-55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
3017	5-45	**Rampurhat Express**	21-45	3018
1159	15-25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
9305	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7 55	9306
3327	14 40	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-50	3328
1181	15-25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri, Arr Tues	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7-15	3112
5657	6-25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lumding) Express	20-35	5658
3153	22-00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
3151	11-45	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBG Loop	12-30	3134
3103	18 50	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10-25	3104
5285	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	4-25	5286

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 15	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Mumbai Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	17-25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 30	2859
2021	6-00	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20-50	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 40	8033
8030	19 40	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14 50	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 20	2842
7003	7 50	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19 40	7004
6511	22 45	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	11-45	6512
8013	17-40	**Tata Steel Express**	18 20	8014
8011	6 0	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	21 35	8012
8005	20 40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5 [illegible]	8006
8015	21 35	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 20	8016
8007	22 00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8409	19 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-40	8410
2821	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	2822
8041	9 15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	11-20	8042
8017	16 35	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12 05	8018
6003	23 30	**Tirupati Express**	4 15	6080
1030	15 45	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep Sunday Arr Friday	[illegible]	1029
2321	16 10	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Sunday only	10 15	2321
2422	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah Saturday only	[illegible]	2422
6322	22-30	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 10	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13 45	6321
	14 10	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	[illegible]
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	
6324	22-35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep. & Arr. Saturday	13 45	6323
6316	22-35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	
	14 10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203546-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37.
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

EXTRACT

Recollections of a Distant CHILDHOOD

During my childhood and early boyhood with my father, we were never in one house or dwelling for very long. I think the Tennis Bungalow in Jamnagar (in the grounds of the Ram Vilas palace) housed us for a couple of years, and that was probably the longest period.

In Jamnagar itself we had atleast three abodes—a rambling, leaking old colonial mansion called 'Cambridge House'; a wing of an old palace, the Lal Bagh, I think it was called, which was also inhabited by bats and cobras; and the aforementioned Tennis Bungalow, a converted sports pavilion which was really quite bright and airy.

I think my father rather enjoyed changing houses, setting up home in completely different surroundings. He loved re-arranging rooms too, so that this month's sitting-room became next month's bedroom, and so on: furniture would also be moved around quite frequently, somewhat to my mother's irritation, for she liked having things in their familiar places. She had grown up in one abode (her father's Dehra house), whereas my father had never been in one place for long. Sometimes he spoke of making a home in Scotland, beside Loch Lomond, but it was only a distant dream.

The only real stability was represented by his stamp collection and this he carried around in a large tin trunk, for it was an extensive and valuable collection—there was an album for each country he specialised in Greece, New Foundland, British possessions in the Pacific; Borneo, Zanzibar, Sierra Leone, these were some of the lands whose

An exclusive extract from ***Ruskin Bond's*** *forthcoming autobiography*

stamps he favoured most....

I did share some of his enthusiasm for stamps, and they gave me a strong foundation in geography and political history, for he went to the trouble of telling me something about the places and people depicted on them—that Pitcairn Island was inhabited largely by mutineers from H.M.S Bounty; that the Solomon Islands were famous for their butterflies; that Britannia still ruled the waves (but only just); that Iraq had a handsome young boy king; that in Zanzibar the Sultan wore a fez; that zebras were exclusive to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika; that American presidents were always changing; and that the handsome young hero on Greek stamps was a Greek god with a sore heel. All this, and more, I remember from my stamp sorting sessions with my father. However, it did not form a bond between him and my mother. She was bored with the whole thing.

Between Tennis Bungalow and the palace were lawns and flowerbeds. One of my earliest memories is of picking my way through a forest of flowering cosmos; to a five-year-old they were almost trees, the flowers nodding down at me in friendly invitation.

Since then, the cosmos has been my favourite flower—fresh, open, uncomplicated—living up to its name, cosmos, the universe as an ordered whole. White, purple and rose, they are at their best in each other's company, growing almost anywhere, in the hills or on the plains, in Europe or tropical America. Waving gently in the softest of breezes, they are both sensuous and beyond sensuality. An early influence!

There were of course rose bushes in the palace grounds, kept tidy and trim and looking very like those in the illustrations to my first copy of *Alice in Wonderland*, a well-thumbed edition from which my father often read to me. I think I have read *Alice*... more often than any other book, with the possible exception of *The Diary of a Nobody*, which I turn to whenever I am feeling a little low. Both books help me to a better appreciation of the absurdities of life.

There were extensive lawns in front of the bungalow, where I could romp around or push my small sister around on a tricycle. She was a backward child, who had been affected by polio with some damage to the brain, and she was the cross that had to be borne by my parents, together and separately. Inspite of her infirmities, Ellen was going to outlive most of us.

Although we lived briefly in other houses, and even for a time in the neighbouring State of Pitthadia, Tennis Bungalow was our home for most of the time we were in Jamnagar.

There were several Englishmen working for the Jam Saheb. The port authority was under Commander Bourne, a retired British naval officer. And a large farm (including a turkey farm) was run for the State by a Welsh couple, the Jenkins. I remember the verandah of the Jenkins home, because the side table was always stacked with copies of the humourous weekly, *Punch*, mailed regularly to them from England. I was too small to read *Punch*, but I liked looking at the drawings.

There was one cinema somewhere in the city, and English language films were occasionally shown. My first film was very disturbing for me, because the hero was run through with a sword. This was Nal Coward's operretta, *Bitter Sweet*, in which Nelson Eddy and Jennette MacDonald made love in duets. My next film was *Tarzan of the Apes*, in which Johnny Weissmuller, the Olympic swimmer, gave Maureen O'Sullivan, pretty and petite, a considerable mauling in their treetop home. But it was to be a few years before I became a movie buff.

Looking up one of my tomes of Hollywood history, I note that *Bitter Sweet* was released in 1940, so that

was probably our last year in Jamnagar My father must have been over 40 when he joined the RAF, to do his bit for his King and country He may have bluffed his age (he was born in 1896), but perhaps you could enlist in your mid-forties during the War. He was given the rank of pilot officer and assigned to the cipher section of Air Headquarters in New Delhi So there was a Bond working in Intelligence long before the fictional James arrived on the scene

The War wasn't going too well for Britain in 1941, and it wasn't going too well for me either, for I found myself interned in a convent school in the hillstation of Mussoorie. I hated it from the beginning. The nuns were strict and unsympathetic; the food was awful, (stringy meat boiled with pumpkins); the boys were, for the most part, dull and unfriendly, the girls too subdued; and the latrines were practically inaccessible. We had to bathe in our underwear, presumably so that the nuns would not be distracted by the sight of our underdeveloped sex! I had to endure this place for over a year, because my father was being moved around from Calcutta to Delhi to Karachi, and my mother was already engaged in her liaison with my future stepfather. At times I thought of running away, but where was I to run?

Picture postcards from my father brought me some cheer. These postcards formed part of Lawson Wood's, gran'pop' series—'Granpop' being an ape of sorts who indulged in various human activities, such as attending cocktail parties and dancing to Scottish bagpipes. "Is this how you feel now that the rains are here?" My father had written under one illustration of 'Granpop' doing the Rumba in a tropical downpour

I enjoyed getting these postcards, with the messages from my father saying that books and toys and stamps were waiting for me when I came home. I preserved them for 50 years. My own letters can perish, but not those postcards!

I have no cherished memories of life at the convent. It wasn't a cruel place but it lacked character of any kind; it was really a conduit for boys and girls going on to bigger schools in the hillstations. You took nothing away and you left nothing behind

One day in mid-term, my mother turned up unexpectedly and withdrew me from the school. I was overjoyed but also a little puzzled by the sudden departure After all, no one had really taken me seriously when I'd said I hated the place.

Oddly enough, we did not stop in Dehradun at my grandmother's place. Instead, my mother took me straight to the railway station and put me on the night train to Delhi. I don't remember if anyone accompanied me—I must have been too young to travel alone—but I remember being met at the Delhi station by my father in full uniform. It was early summer, and he was in khakis, but the blue RAF cap took my fancy. Come winter, he'd be wearing a dark blue uniform with a different kind of cap, and by then he'd be a flying officer and getting saluted by juniors. Being wartime, everyone was saluting madly, and I soon developed the habit, saluting everyone in sight.

An uncle on my mother's side, Fred Clark, was then the station superintendent at Delhi railway station, and he took us home for breakfast in his bungalow not far from the station. From the conversation that took place during the meal, I gathered that my parents had separated, that my mother was remaining in Dehra Dun, and that henceforth I would be in my father's custody. My sister Ellen was to stay with 'Calcutta Granny'—my father's 70-year-old mother The arrangement pleased me, I must admit.

The two years I spent with my father were probably the happiest of my childhood — although for him, they must have been a period of trial and tribulation Frequent bouts of malaria had undermined his constitution; the separation from my mother weighed heavily on him and it could not be reversed for she had already married again; and at the age of eight, I was self-willed and demanding

He did his best for me, dear man He gave me his time, his companionship, his complete attention

A year was to pass before I was re-admitted to a boarding school, and I would have been quite happy never to have gone to school again My year in the convent had been sufficient punishment for uncommitted sins. I felt that I had earned a year's holiday.

It was a glorious year, during which we changed our residence at least four times—from a tent on a flat treeless plain outside Delhi to a hutment near Humayun's tomb, to a couple of rooms on Atul Grove Road; to a small flat on Hailey Road, and finally, to an apartment in Scindia House facing Conaught Circus.

We were not very long in the tent and hutment — but long enough for me to remember the scorching winds of June, and the *bhisti*'s hourly visit to douse the *khas-khas* matting with water. This turned a hot breeze into a refreshing fragrant zephyr—for about half an hour. And then the dust and the prickly heat took over again. A small table fan was the only luxury

Except for Sundays, I was alone for most of the day; my father's office in Air Headquarters was somewhere near India Gate. He'd return at about six, tired but happy to find me in good spirits. For although I had no friends during that period, I found plenty to keep

me occupied—books, stamps, the old gramaphone, hundreds of postcards which he'd collected during his years in England, a scrapbook, albums of photographs... and sometimes I'd explore the jungle behind the tents; but I did not go very far, because of the snakes that proliferated there.

I would have my lunch with a family living in a neighbouring tent, but at night my father and I would eat together. I forget who did the cooking. But he made the breakfast getting up early to whip up some fresh butter (he loved doing this) and then laying the table with cornflakes or grapenuts, and eggs poached or fried.

The gramophone was a great companion when my father was away. He had kept all the records he had collected in Jamnagar, and these were added to, from time to time There were operatic-arias and duets from *La Boheme* and *Madame Butterfly;* ballads and traditional airs rendered by Paul Robeson, Peter Dawson, Richard Crooks, Webster Booth, Nelson Eddy and other tenors and baritones, and of course, the great Russian bass, Chaliapin. And there were lighter music-hall songs and comic relief provided by Gracie Fields (the Lancashire Lass), George Formby with his Ukelele, Arthur Askey ('Big-hearted' Arthur--he was a tiny chap), Flanagan and Allan, and a host of other recording artistes. But you couldn't just put on some music and lie back and enjoy it That was the day of the wind-up gramophone, and it had to be wound up fairly vigorously before a 75 rpm record could be played. I enjoyed this chore The needle, too, had to be changed after almost every record, if you wanted to keep it in decent condition. And the records had to be packed flat, otherwise, in the heat, and humidity they were inclined to assume weird and become unplayable. After a few torrid months in the tent house and then in a brick hutment, which was even hotter, my father was permitted to rent rooms of his own on Atul Grove, a tree-lined lane not far from Connaught Place, then the hub and business centre of New Delhi. Keeping me with him had been quite unofficial; his superiors were always wanting to know why my mother wasn't around to look after me. He was really hoping that the War would end soon, so that he could take me to England and put me in a good school there. He had been selling some of his more valuable stamps and had put quite a bit in the bank.

One evening he came home with a bottle of scotch whisky. This was most unusual, because I had never seen him drinking—not even a beer. Had he suddenly decided to hit the bottle?

The mystery was solved when an American officer dropped in to have dinner with us (having a guest for dinner was a very rare event), and our cook excelled himself by producing succulent pork chops, other avians and vegetables, and my favourite chocolate pudding. Before we sat down to dinner, our guest polished off several pegs of whisky (my father had a drink too), and after dinner they sat down to go through some of my father's stamp albums. The American collector bought several stamps, and we went to bed richer by a couple of thousand rupees.

That it was possible to make money out of ones hobby was something I was to remember when writing became my passion.

When my father had a bad bout of malaria and was admitted to the military hospital, I was on my own for about 10 days. Our immediate neighbours, an elderly Anglo-Indian couple, kept an eye on me, only complaining that I went through a tin of guava jam in one sitting. This tendency to overindulge has been with me all my life. Those stringy convent meals must have had something to do with it.

I made one friend during the Atul Grove days. He was a boy called Joseph—from South India, I think—who lived next door. In the evenings we would meet on a strip of grassland across the road and engage in wrestling bouts which were watched by an admiring group of servants' children from a nearby hostelry. We also had a great deal of fun in the trenches that had been dug along the road in case of possible Japanese air raids (there had been one on Calcutta) During the monsoon they filled with rainwater much to the delight of the local children, who used them as miniature swimming pools. They were then quite impracticable as air raid shelters.

Of course, the real war was being fought in Burma and the Far East, but Delhi was full of men in uniform. When winter came, my father's khakis were changed for dark blue RAF caps and uniforms, which suited him nicely He was a good looking man, always neatly dressed; on the short side, but quite sturdy He was over 40 when he had joined up—hence the office job, the ciphering (or helping to create) codes and ciphers He was quite secretive about it all (as indeed he was supposed to be), and as he confided in me on almost every subject but his work, he was obviously a reliable intelligence officer.

He did not have many friends in Delhi. There was the occasional visit to Uncle Fred near the railway station, and sometimes he'd spend a half-hour with Mr Rankin, who owned a large drapery shop at Connaught Circus, where officers' uniforms were tailored. Mr Rankin was another enthusiastic stamp collector, and the two of them would get together in Mr Rankin's back office and exchange stamps or dis-

cuss new issues. I think the drapery establishment closed down after the War. Mr Rankin was always extremely well dressed, as though he had stepped straight out of Saville Row and on to the steamy streets of Delhi.

My father and I explored old tombs and monuments, but going to the pictures was what we did most, if he was back from work fairly early.

Connaught Place was well served with cinemas—the Regal, Rivoli, Odeon and Plaza, all very new and shiny—and they exhibited the latest Hollywood and British productions. It was in these cinemas that I discovered the beautiful Sonja Henie, making love on skates, and even getting married on ice; Nelson and Jeanette making love in duets; Errol Flynn making love on the high seas; and Gary Cooper and Clandette Colbert making love in the bedroom (Bluebeard's eighth wife). I made careful listings of all the films I saw, including their casts, and to this day, I can give you the main performers in almost any film made in the 1940s. And I still think it was cinema's greatest decade, with the stress on good story, clever and economical direction (films seldom exceeded 120 minutes running time), superb black-and-white photography, and actors and actresses who were also personalities in their own right. The era of sadistic thrills, gore, and psychopathic killers was still far away. The accent was on entertainment—naturally enough, when the worst war in history had spread across Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

When my father broached the subject of sending me to a boarding school, I used every argument I could think of to dissuade him. The convent school was still fresh in my memory and I had no wish to return to any institution remotely resembling it—certainly not after almost a year of untrammelled freedom and my father's companionship.

"Why do you want to send me to school again?" I asked. "I can learn more at home. I can read books, I can write letters, I can even do sums!"

"Not bad for a boy of nine," said

my father. "But I can't teach you Algebra, Physics and Chemistry."

"I don't want to be a chemist."

"Well, what would you like to be when you grow up?"

"A tap dancer."

"We've been seeing too many pictures. Everyone says I spoil you."

I tried another argument. "You have to live on your own again. You'll feel lonely."

"That can't be helped, son, but I'll come to see you as often as I can. You see, they are posting me to Karachi for some time, and then I 'll be moved again—they won't allow me to keep you with me at some of these places Would you like to stay with your mother?"

I shook my head.

"With Calcutta Granny?"

"I don't know her."

"When the War's over, I'll take you with me to England. But for the next year or two we must stay here. I've found a nice school for you."

"Another convent?"

"No, it's a prep school for boys in Simla And I may be able to get posted there during the summer."

"I want to see it first," I said.

"We'll go to Simla together. Not now—in April or May, before it gets too hot. It doesn't matter if you join school a bit late—I know you'll soon catch up with the others."

There was a brief trip to Dehra Dun. I think my father felt that there was still a chance of a reconciliation with my mother. But her affair with the businessman was too far gone. His own wife had been practically abandoned and left to look after the photographic shop she had brought along with her dowry. She was a stout lady with high blood pressure, who once went in search of my mother and stepfather with an axe. Fortunately they were not at home that day and she had to vent her fury on the furniture.

In later years when I got to know her quite well she told me that my father was a very decent man, who treated her with great courtesy and kindness on the one occasion they met.

I remember we stayed in a little hotel or boarding house just off the Eastern Canal Road.

Dehra was a green and leafy place. The houses were separated by hedges, not walls, and the residential areas were criss-crossed by little lanes bordered by hibiscus or oleander shrubs.

We were soon back in Delhi.

My parents' separation was final; and it was almost two years before I saw my mother again. ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says you will make your views known at a group meeting, a conference or a meet. Your intuition will aid you in your business. Loans and funds will be pivotal. A problem will be resolved and that should give you sweet satisfaction. But try to avoid a confrontation of wills.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

A little bit of fun and creativity, a little bit of funds and loans and some amount of partying take up your time. Children give joy. Take care not to go all overboard when it comes to handling money. You will need extra time to pursue personal and private interests and whims. Take care of your health.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Geminis are usually good at getting and ferreting news, information and gossip. The home will also call for attention and you may have a lot to handle. Do tackle things one at a time. There will be an elaborate round of socialising in store for you. Travel is a distinct possibility; so gear up for it.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

The idiosyncracies of others should not be allowed to stop your progress. Be firm and tolerant and assess a given situation. December 2-4 will be newsy and rosy. Through a friend or the boss, you will make new contacts which will help you. Collaboration efforts are definitely focalised.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Love will radiate light and laughter for you. It will also work wonders for your ego. Also, you may be faced with extra duties, both at work and in the home front. Take it as a challenge. You could turn to mataphysical and spiritual interests. Finances, taxes and sources of revenue will figure also.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Trust your judgment and move ahead. You will have the chance to make your mark. An exceptionally favourable Mars placing helps you to get what you want. Someone at a distance may do you a big favour or make matters easy for you. Benefits accrue through socialising and friendship.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Children's interests and motivations, travel, trade, ties, contacts and communication, expenses, buying, and selling could keep you occupied. These various experiences will also hold you in good stead. Some leftover tasks will have to be attended to this week. Therefore, gear yourself for it.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Ganesha claims good news relating to finance, romance, publishing, publicity and educational matters, all of which make you happy. December 2-8 favours ties and business transactions. You may also look forward to an influx of wealth the next 21 days. You will reach an agreement in the next 41 days.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

You will be a square shooter and win the game. Your drive to succeed will be enormous and that will help you to achieve your goals. If small problems arise about relationships, you will be able to solve it. You will be inspired to do something creative. That should give you an extra dimension.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

The use of finances, joint assets, insurance and legacy will be of paramount interest. Your income, too, will come in for scrutiny and maybe a raise is on the anvil. A get-rich-quick scheme will be proposed to you. There is a lot happening socially so you can now make the most of it. Travel is on the cards.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

The law of chances helps you to be popular, travel, gain goodies and have money. Some of your social plans will work out with a few changes. Travel plans will give excellent results or yields now or next month. Get feedbacks for your ideas. The signing of contracts and deeds will be important.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

Contacts, contracts, an engagement, a position of trust and authority are the happy features of the week. You will have a rapport with people despite the struggle for power. Take care of impulsive extravaganza as it will cost you dearly. Do not quibble about minor matters if you want to be happy.

BIRTHDAYS

December 1: Moon trine Mercury, says Ganesha, will prove favourable for those in sales, teaching, preaching, politics and service.

December 2: Moon square Pluto means a little patience will do the trick, specially if things do not quite go your way. Learn to concentrate and pray. Promotions foretold.

December 3: Moon trine Jupiter means good fortune awaits you in this birthyear. At least one major wish should be fulfilled.

December 4: Moon trine Neptune means writers, artists, musicians, travel agents, actors, directors, stage artists and poets have it made. For others too, this will be a year of changes and chances.

December 5: Moon sextile sun shows whether in business, job or profession, you will have the opportunities you need to make it big. Marriage is on the cards.

December 6: Moon square Jupiter-Neptune shows while the going may not be great, you will have your just rewards provided you are willing to work for it.

December 7: Moon sextile Mercury indicates you should work in secrecy for best results. You will succeed in selling your ideas, products and services.

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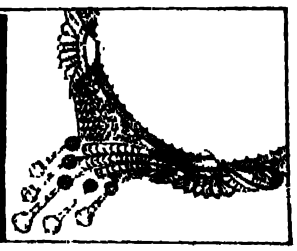

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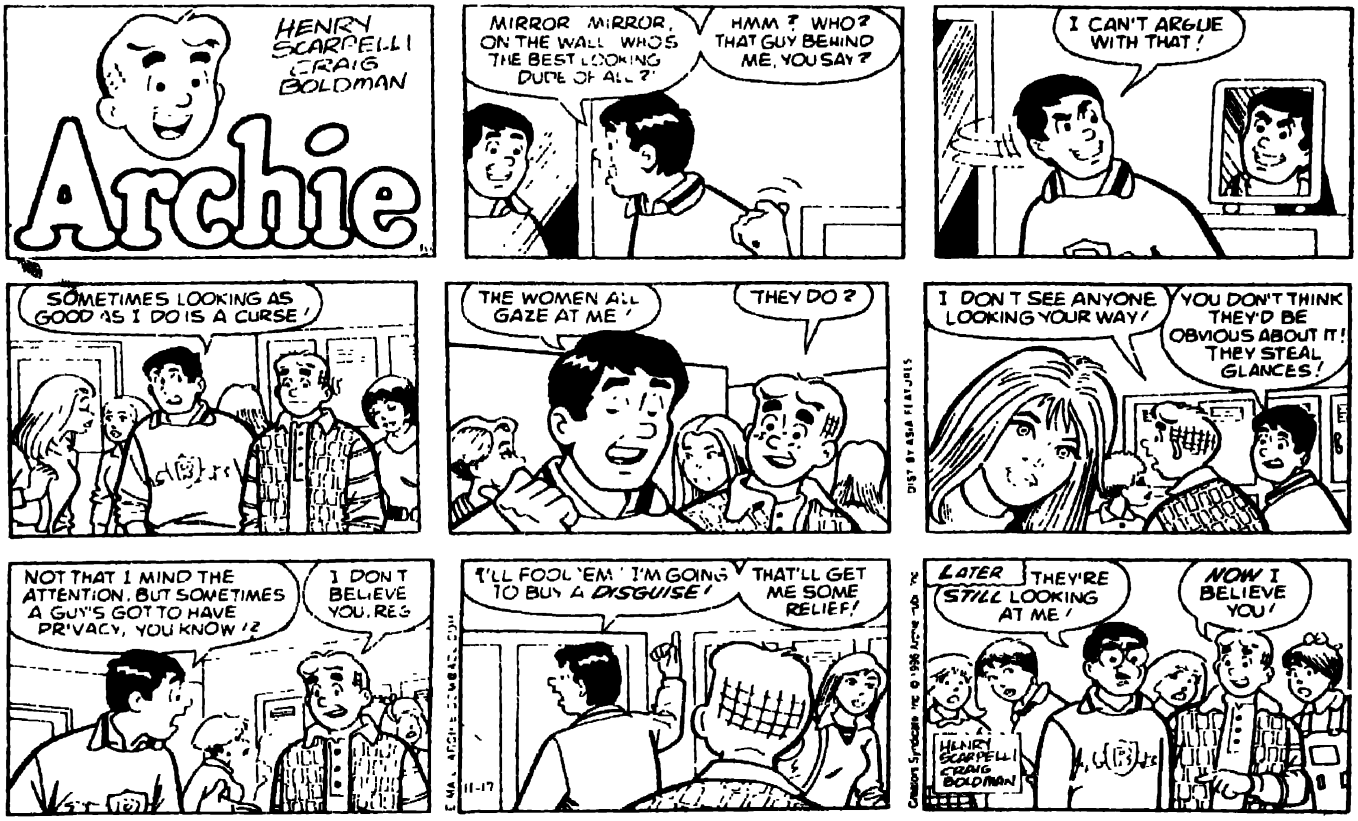
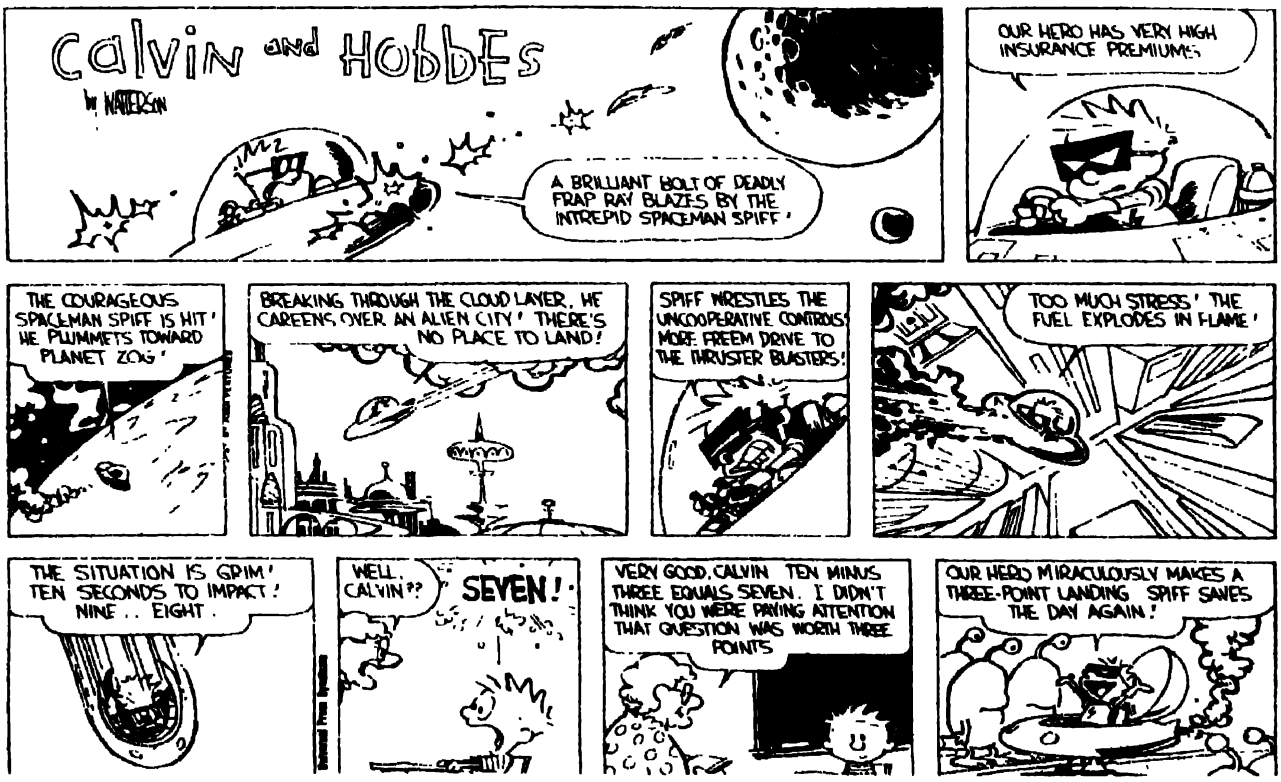
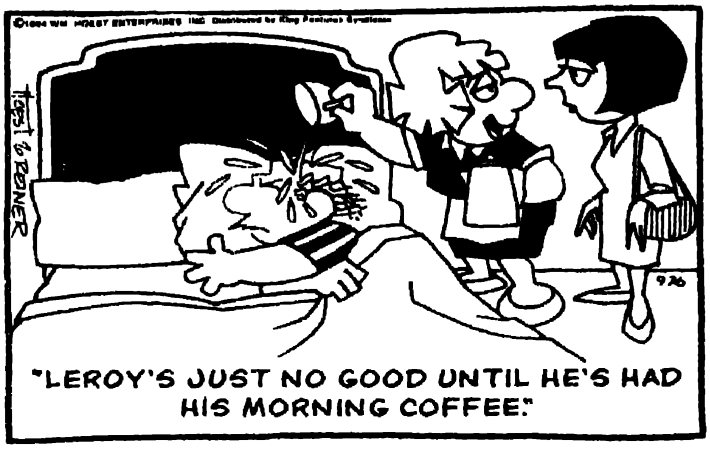


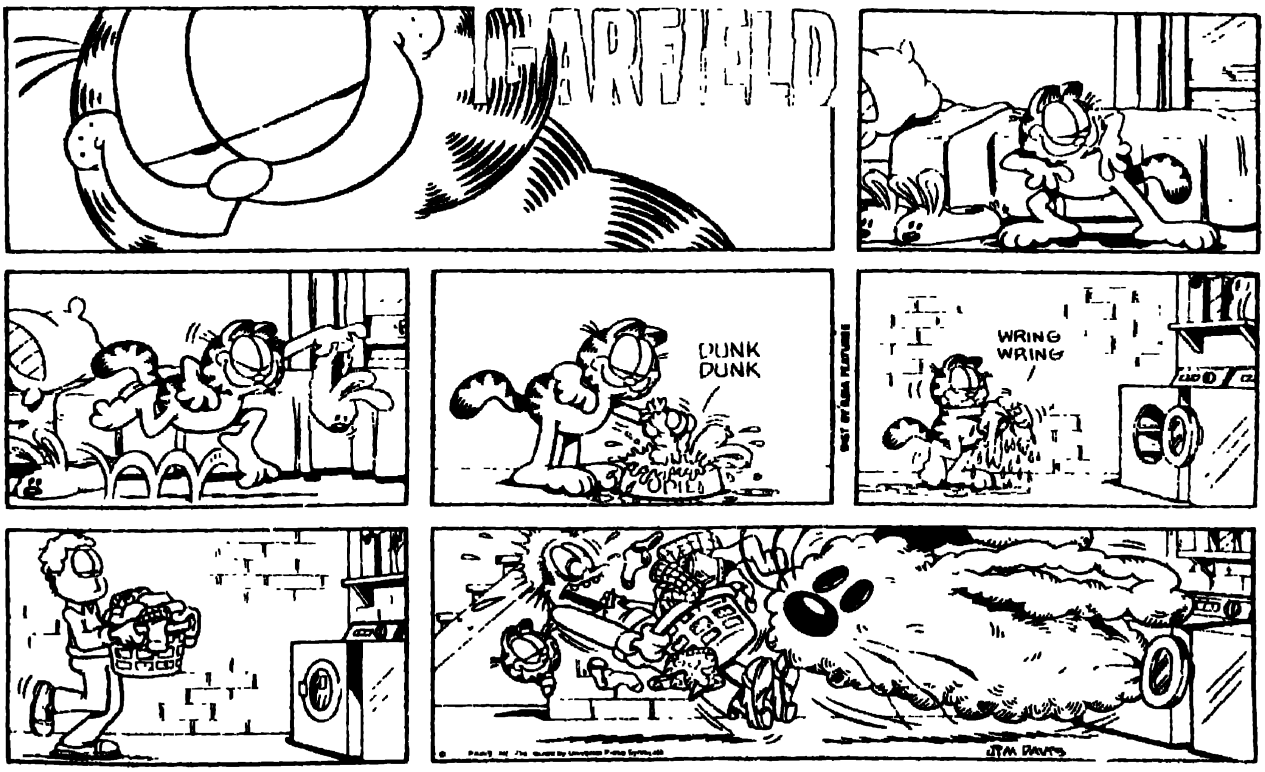
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS



GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS



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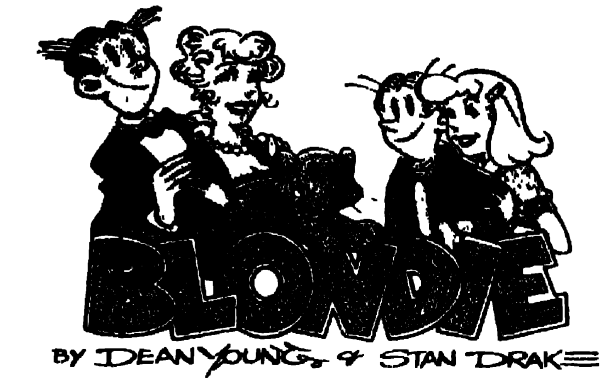

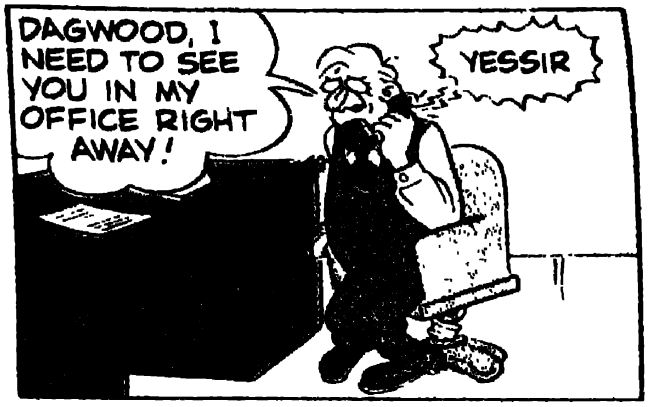

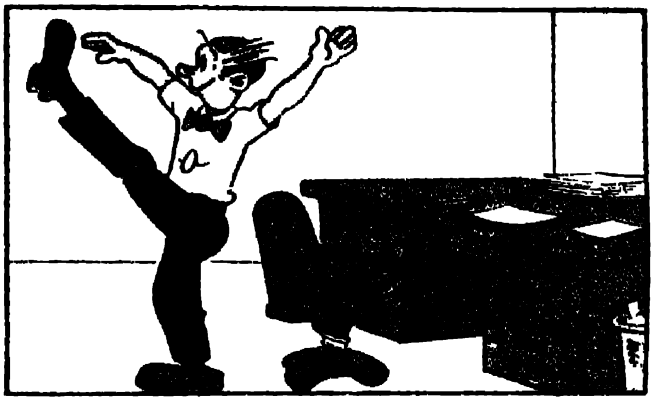

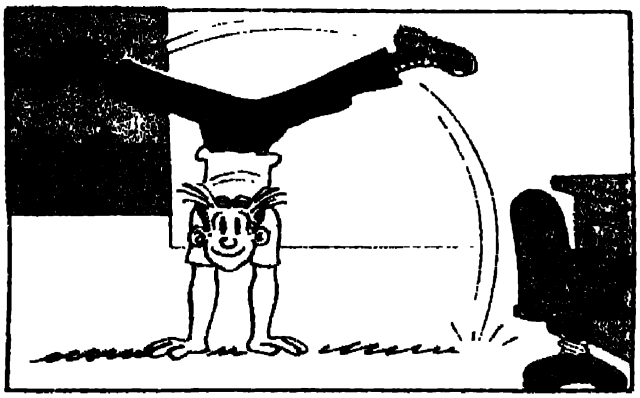

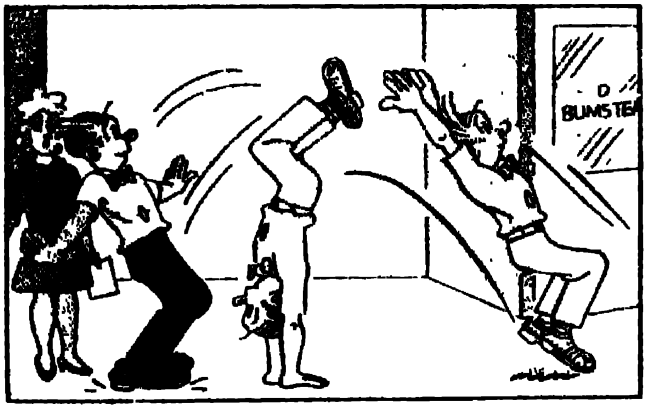

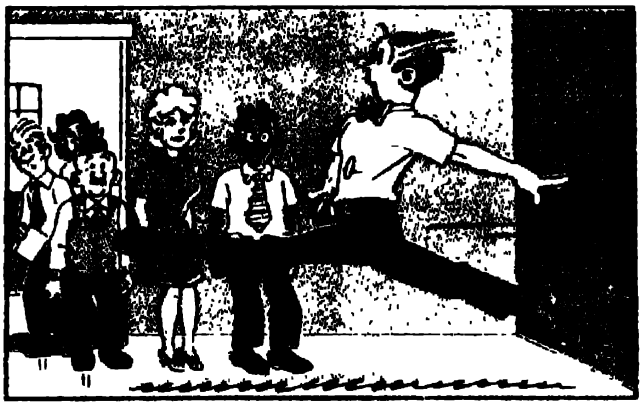

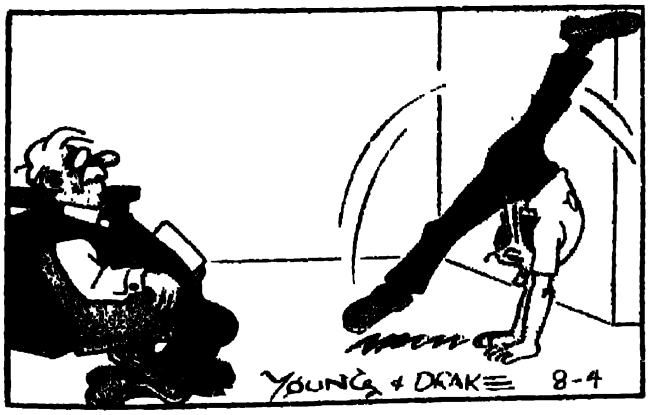

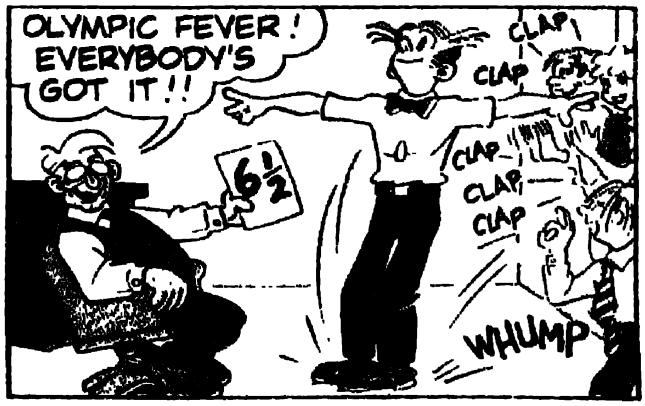

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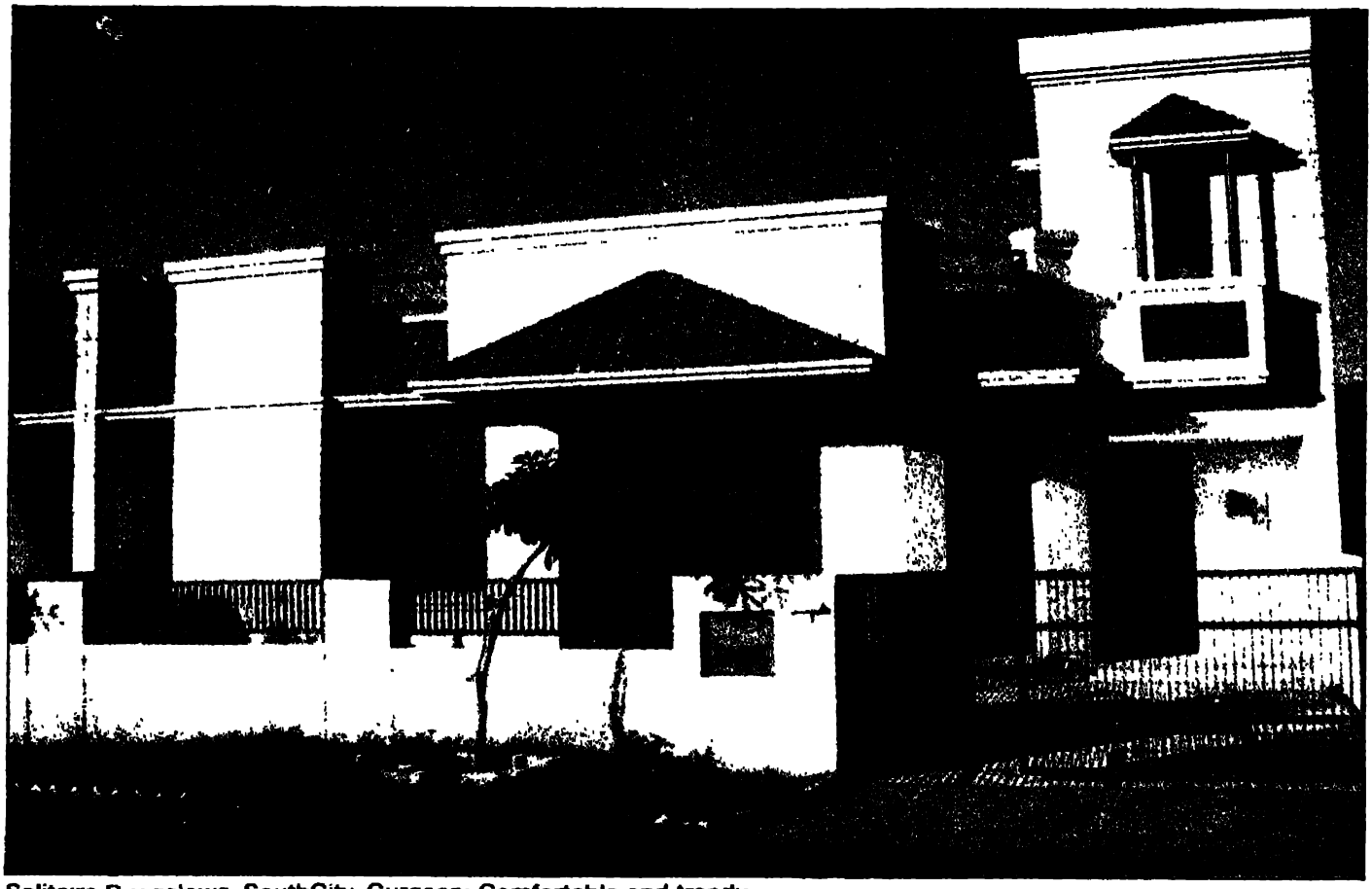
FOCUS

IN SUBURBIA

As land prices in Delhi rocket, more and more people are moving to the outskirts of the city. ***Samita Bhatia*** *reports*



Solitaire Bungalows, SouthCity, Gurgaon: Comfortable and trendy

Finally The magic of nature, the luxury of open spaces and a home you'd love to own Air that is actually crisp and clear A sparkling blue sky which you can actually 'see', complimented with wispy clouds to complete the picture-perfect setting Close your eyes and imagine an apartment or an ideal home with large, airy rooms No dark, dingy corners, no unnecessary echoes, no bumping into furniture for lack of space

Just as Delhi bursts at the seams, splutters and chokes in its own smog, Delhites looking for a home — far from the madding crowd — have innumerable options thrown open to them Options that are just a stone's throw away on the fringes of the wheezing capital Strategically located on the foothills of the Aravalis and the intersection of the Delhi-Jaipur national highway that crisscrosses with the Mehrauli-Gurgaon and Faridabad-Gurgaon highways, lies the green alternative to the capital

As in any other bursting metro, Delhi's exodus to its southward suburbs is on History proves that Delhi has consistently moved southwards in search of a better quality of life - - from old Delhi to new and then onwards to south Delhi Only today the march is towards the environmentally-friendly townships that have been unobtrusively establishing themselves just beyond the Delhi border since 1980 Huge corporate giants, committed to providing comfortable housing to those aspiring to better their quality of living, are developing over 6,000 acres in Gurgaon, the most coveted settlement just 'south of south Delhi'.

The development of Haryana, courtesy private builders, has been a blessing in disguise even for the farmers from whom the land has been purchased Says Colonel Prithvi Nath, spokesperson DLF Group, one of the first and major players in the area, "The private sector has bought land from the farming community at prevailing market rates, which has been six to seven times higher than the government rates," explains

Nath. Thus, the land is clear of litigation and farmers have in fact "become partners in progress," says Nath.

Besides, the colonies developed by the private sector have shown an infrastructural and social development that is four to five times greater than the areas developed by the government. Nath adds, "This, despite the fact that private builders must assemble the entire internal infrastructure in the area and depend on the government only for the external infrastructure."

The saga of DLF Universal began in 1947 when India awoke to freedom. That's when DLF was called upon to develop as many as 25 urban townships in Delhi to house half a million residents. It was in DLF's south Delhi that well-planned development took place in prime areas like Greater Kailash, South Extension and Hauz Khas. This was the beginning of DLF's involvement in providing high quality housing and establishing social infrastructure — a concept that was hitherto unknown in India.

Just then Delhi was frozen and Haryana, which surrounds Delhi on three sides, passed the Haryana Development Regulation of Urban Areas Act which allowed the private sector into the business of housing in the state. Says Nath, "While the ball was set rolling in 1980 the area has only today reached a take-off point and DLF Qutab Enclave has grown to become the largest private sector township in all of Asia sprawling over 2,500 acres."

Of the six dormitory towns—Bahadurgarh, Kondi, Faridabad and Gurgaon in Haryana and Noida and Ghaziabad in UP—that form a concentric ring around the capital, Gurgaon has won hands down in popularity.

The mini-townships in Gurgaon — be it DLF Qutab Enclave, Ansal's Sushant Lok or Palam Vihar, or Unitech's SouthCity—are all designed for comfortable living, offering stylish and classy homes to residents. All of this is symbolic of a firm commitment to premium construction with a judicious mix of low, mid and high-rise buildings interspersed with large open green areas.

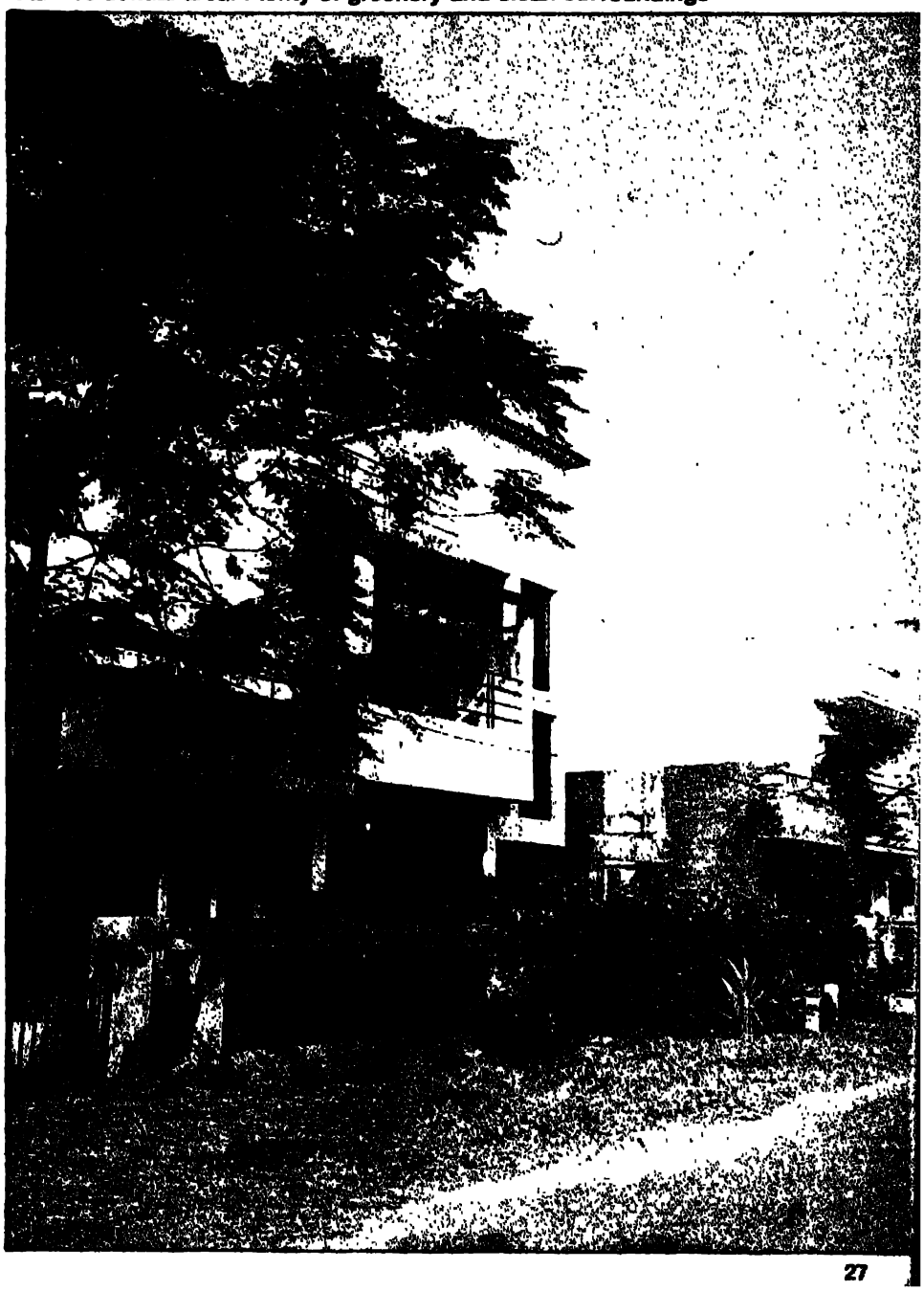
A major factor that is edging residents towards Gurgaon is the sky-rocketing property prices in Delhi. As in every city, as property prices spiral, the tendency is to move outwards to the suburbs. Says Akash Gupta, a property agent operating in Gurgaon, "When prevailing land prices in south Delhi—traditionally a most coveted area for home seekers—range between Rs 17,000 a sq ft to over Rs 1,00,000 per sq ft, prices like Rs 8,500-9,500 just on the fringes of Delhi seem like a dream."

According to Dr G.R. Bahri, director, Unitech, which is involved in developing mini-cities over 800 acres in Gurgaon, satellite townships have recently caught the fancy of Delhiites as residential areas for diverse reasons. Topping the list of reasons is that the homes here are more affordable and the quality of life that the townships offer residents far beats anything Delhi could offer them.

Says Bahri, "When people buy a house just on the fringes of Delhi, they don't just finance a home but in fact buy a lifestyle. The townships are self-contained with dedicated clubs for members, tight security arrangements, schools, health clubs and a lot of greenery and landscaping that is no longer easy to find in the congested Delhi localities."

And the residents of Delhi are slowly realising the pluses that these satellite towns offer over the capital city. Today Delhi, amongst

DLF residential area: Plenty of greenery and clean surroundings



OWNING YOUR OWN HOME

It can be a dream come true, or a nightmare, depending on whom you're dealing with

Those looking for homes find themselves faced with some vital questions. Whom do they approach for guidance? Do they have all the information? Is the information credible? Are they buying the right property? Is the title clear? Are they being quoted the right price?

And most important: where do they find the money?

A dream house is probably what everyone aspires to but the process of acquiring one is unendurably tedious. Given the large number of developers, it is difficult to pick the ones with credibility. The process of choosing the properties is tedious as there are far too many people to speak to. When everything seems right, the budget is not right while raising the finances too can present the problems.

The interest that has been generated in townships like Gurgaon has galvanised many institutions into offering potential buyers the answers and the finance to buy themselves their dream homes. The development of housing loan institutions—government, quasi-government and private—that provide finances are essentially in response to the continued healthy growth of the property market.

Driven by the needs of the customer, PropShop—an exhibition that brings the developer and financier under the same roof—makes shopping for a home easier for the customer. Says Raj Khosla, director, Shelters, a home loan associate of Citibank and promoter of Propshop, "The customer is looking out for specifics and as financiers we give them what we have dubbed as the 4Cs. Credibility: or reliability of the people the customer is dealing with; Choice, a range to choose from to make his decision; Credit, attractive financing packages and terms to finance the purchase; and Convenience and ease of the whole process."

Hence Citibank decided to sponsor exhibitions which brought all the four elements together for the customer. At the PropShop exhibitions there are innumerable pluses that come to the customer—by bringing pre-screened developers offering a wide range of projects which have been approved by Citibank. By offering the Citibank housing finance package for all the properties available and offering all this under the same roof by trained staff.

At PropShop the customer can visit the exhibition, get information about the loan options available to him, fix his budget, meet with a gamut of developers and scan the range of properties available to him, go on site visits (in a chauffeur-driven car) and book his dream home, get the loan sanctioned for it — all in one day.

PropShop 96 in Delhi had on offer a host of affordable home loan options from Citibank which offered on-the-spot loan facilities upto 70 per cent of the property value based on the customer profile.

As Sarvesh Sarup, business manager, mortgages & community banking, Citibank, confirms, "We address a gamut of consumer needs, one of which is owning a home." Loans given out by Citibank since the launch of their Home Loan scheme in 1991 have been to the tune of Rs 120 crore to as many as 2,000 clients. He adds, "Convenience is the key as our loans can be paid back over 10 to 15 years, they are easy to access and the documentation has been kept simple."

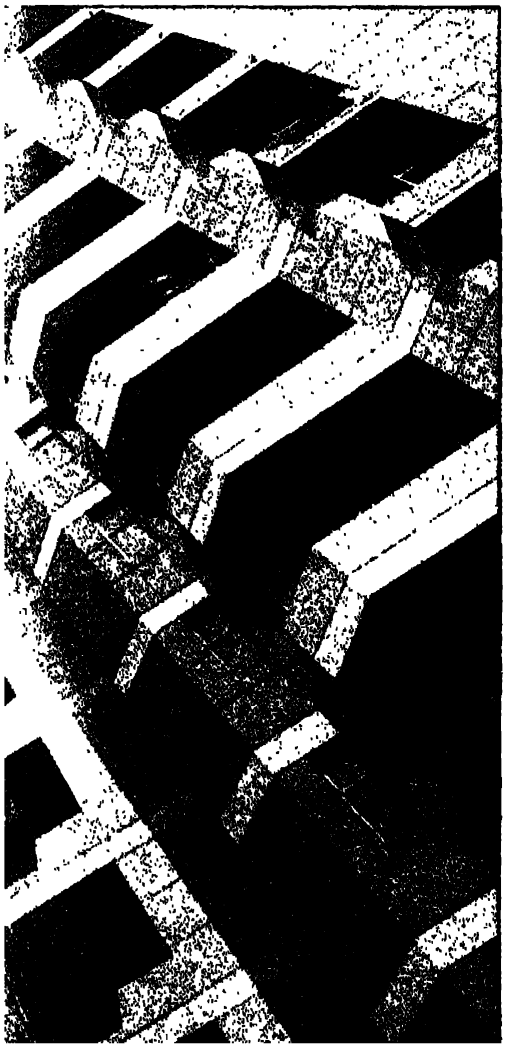
Silver Oaks: Swanky condominiums for the high-income group

the most polluted cities in the country,' is driving people away from it. Surveys indicate that one of three residents suffer from lung ailments due to the heavy air pollution. Pollution has primarily been on a rise due to a phenomenal increase in traffic in the city over the years.

Explains Bahri, ``Thus, noise levels too are that much higher. The trend is not just an interest among the people to invest in property in the satellite towns but a desire to relocate themselves away from the city."

So was the case with Anup Gupta, a businessman based in Delhi who sold his house in Safdarjung Enclave, an area that some may well consider a coveted south Delhi colony But Gupta moved to DLF where he invested in a modular Town House despite protests from his surprised family members

Says Gupta, ``I found the colony getting far too congested The norm in south Delhi is for house owners to sell out to builders who construct flats on the plot. As a result there is a great pressure on infrastructure in these colonies as more people move into the freshly-built flats."



Gupta found that he had no space to park his cars and that his children had nowhere to play. ``Blocks cease to boast of parks and my children were stifling. The pressure on infrastructure also led to frequent power failures and acute shortage of water. In fact, most of Delhi colonies are beginning to become hellish."

Like Gupta, Osama Manzar, executive in a corporate house, too is delighted with the home he has on rent in Sushant Lok. ``Most importantly the area is free from pollution and offers you some peace and quiet that can only be imagined in Delhi "

The distance of the townships from the heart of town, however, continue to rattle some despite the fact that the builders' claims that Gurgaon lies just 20 minutes from south Delhi and the international airport

DLF Group's Nath, however, has a different take on this He says, ` Time is at a premium A shorter distance within Delhi may take a longer time to cover than a longer distance between Delhi-Gurgaon. I think most residents of Gurgaon are of the same view." Others may consider this as a fair trade-off between travel-time and better quality of life.

It's not just families who are making a move, corporate houses too are relocating themselves in these satellite townships Amongst the most popular options at hand for companies is DLF's Corporate Park Says Nath, ``The commercial complex is one of the unique features in Phase 3 of DLF Qutab Enclave which is geared towards providing a distinct identity to corporations seeking exclusive offices."

Today, Corporate Park has become a preferred choice of prominent multi-nationals and Indian companies, not just for the state-of-the-art facilities that it provides but because of the walk-to-work option that the centre allows them. The companies can, in fact, locate their executives in the integrated private sector townships around the area Corporate Park has attracted names like Pepsico India Holdings, GE Capital, Compaq, RPG Enterprises, VXL India, Interglobe and other blue chip companies.

In the residential areas the options are plenty. From single family homes to multi-family homes to the swankier condominiums. Luxurious homes and apartments with fine credentials and equally fine names. Take your pick: `Ivory Towers', Greenwoods City with its duplex and independent homes christened `Solitaire Residency', `Manhattan', `Sunbreeze Towers' all from Unitech; apartment complexes like Casa Royale', `Silver Oaks' condominiums from DLF and `Designer Villas', `Executive Villas', `Designer Homes' from the Ansals.

Prices vary and plots and flats that have been sold for Rs 8,500 to Rs 9,500 per sq yard some years ago are today commanding re-sale prices of Rs 9,000- Rs 25,000

Unitech's Dr Bahri compares the prevailing prices between Delhi and Gurgaon, ``If 200 sq yards in south Delhi will cost upwards of Rs 1.5 crore then a similar plot size can be purchased for Rs 20 lakh! For townships to work, the prices have to be kept reasonable " Making the homes all the more attractive are various customer-friendly installment options

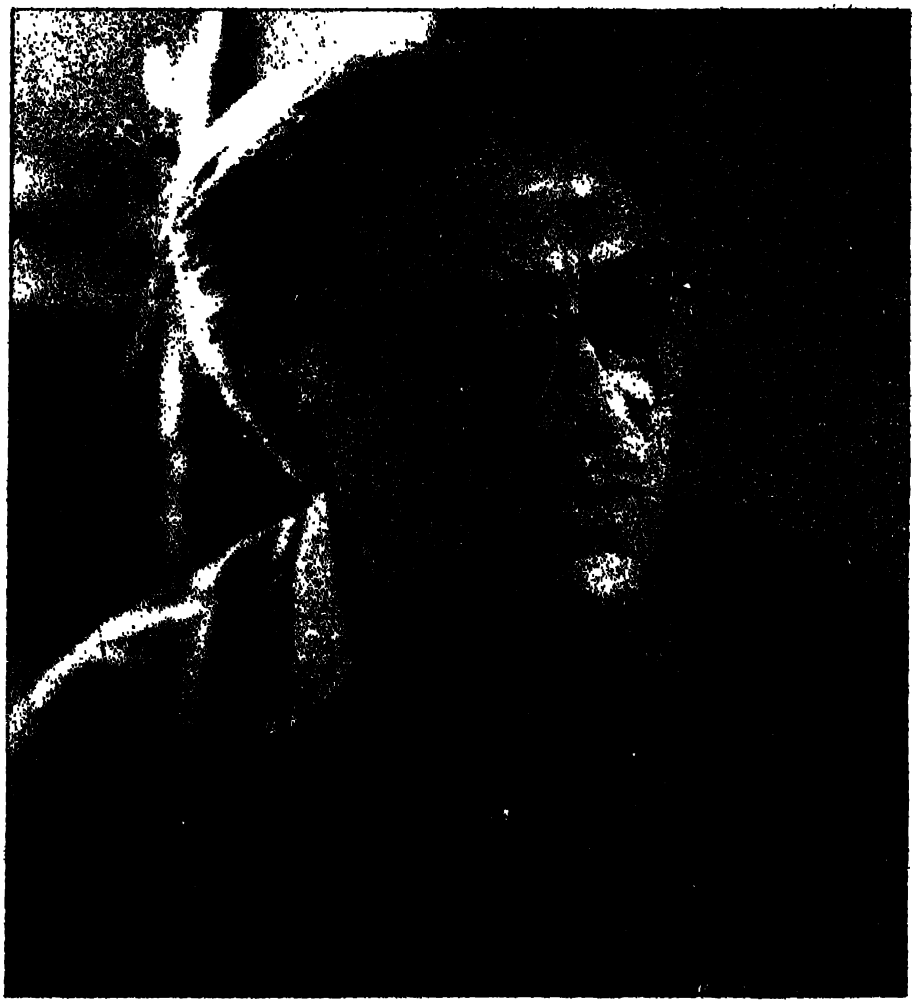
Needless to say that apartments and homes find buyers almost as soon as they are advertised with bookings coming in from NRIs as well.

If a host of advantages come as a package deal with satellite townships, they are sometimes not devoid of handicaps Says a resident of Ansal's Palam Vihar, ``The builders need to get their act together in some areas. Buying fresh vegetables in Palam Vihar some years ago was impossible and shopping for supplies had to be done in Delhi which was quite inconvenient. Today, though many shops have opened up, groceries and vegetables continue to be more expensive here "

The complaints pour in from other Palam Vihar residents. The infrastructural problems refuse to go away. Says Inder Kochhar, businessman, ``If you are not mobile, then getting to town can be quite a bother. The buses coming into the colony are overcrowded and in very bad shape, besides which the timings don't quite suit every professional "

But despite all these problems and glitches, the exodus from Delhi continues. Unspoilt surroundings, away from the urban hustle, and acres and acres of idyllic green here lies a Delhiite's mouthful of sky. ■

AMEEN SAYANI, *the original disc jockey of Indian radio broadcasts, still casts a spell on his listeners with his unique style. Having hosted such popular shows as* **S. Kumar Ka Filmi Mukadma, Chamaktey Sitare** *and the evergreen* **Cibaca** *(then known as* **Binaca**) **Geetmala** *his voice to several ad campaigns, Sayani has earned the distinction of being called the Grand Old Man of Indian radio.*



What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Comfortable inactivity.
What is your greatest fear?
That I may die without finishing the things I want to.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My brother Hamid—eminent broadcaster and communicator who introduced me to radio and stage compering.

What makes you most depressed?

Not being able to communicate with those I want to most (such as my wife!)

What do you dislike most in others?
Insincerity.
What do you dislike most in yourself?
My inability to sing.
What is your most precious possession?
None at the moment—I've either given away or squandered away all of them!
What objects do you always carry?
Keys to let me into my office, a wallet to help me get back home by a cab.
What makes you most depressed?
Not being able to communicate with those I want to most (such as my wife!).
What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My nose (I've grown a moustache to divert attention from it).
What is your favourite word?
Doom-dhadaka.
What is your favourite journey?
Going away from work (which I haven't been able to do for the last 45 years).
What is your favourite dream?
Becoming the President of India.
What is your nightmare?
Becoming the Prime Minister.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Greer Garson and Meena Kumari (Their response to me will fortunately never be known.)
What is your source of sustenance?
Delicately tasty food—which shouldn't be either too oily or too boily!
On what occasions do you lie?
When no true suggestion of mine can help a badly produced product I'm publicising.
What is your greatest regret?
That I'm not as handsome as Errol Flynn or Dharmendra.

What has been your happiest moment?
Watching my son taking his first steps.
What brings tears to your eyes?
A phrase well rendered, a thought well communicated.
How do you relax?
Doing crosswords.
What do you envy most in others?
Their ability to converse (I'm usually dumb in groups).

How would you like to be remembered?
As a man who could have saved the world (if he only knew how to).
How would you like to die?
In a flash—without lingering.

FAVOURITE

THE INTERNATIONAL

STATUTORY WARNING CHEWING TOBACCO IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

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8 DECEMBER 1996

POST MORTEM

The New Phoolan

■ The cover story on Phoolan Devi was really nice ('Guns and Poses' October 13). It is hard to believe that the name which was once abhorred and struck terror in the hearts of people, should now be a respected figure in society.

It's also a reflection of the progress society has made that it has not rejected a woman like her who went through hell in life; in the hands of those who abducted her and then later on trying to erase the murky chapters from life

Even after having absorbed life's most unsavoury experiences she had the courage and the will power to bounce back to normal life. Hats off to her!

Kunal Mehta,
Calcutta

■ Considering what Poolan Devi went through in life, no one would have expected her to remain sane. But there is a thing called the purity of the soul which can never be ravaged. And it is this perhaps which has helped her to return to society and resume 'normal' life.

Bharati Dey,
Calcutta

Phoolan Devi: Guns no more; It's domestic duties now

■ What is so great about Phoolan Devi becoming an MP? In an era of corruption, anything goes. Look at the state of our government where every other day some minister or the other is being hauled up for fraudulent practices. Sukh Ram is a case in point. Taslimuddin had to go because of his dark credentials.

Phoolan Devi is being dubbed as the champion of the masses and so she gets elected to Parliament. Apart from having a long record of crime, what has she done? But in times like these, even a killer is revered as a hero.

Indranil Bhattacharya,
Naihati (W.B.)

■ Phoolan Devi is a creation of politicians and the media. She has been pampered and awarded with a plum post for the benefit of a few politicians.

Vinay Asawa,
Calcutta

■ It is high time Phoolan Devi is tried for her heinous crimes. Now that the judiciary has become aggressive and wants to purge the nation of corruption as in the case of P.V Narasimha Rao, it should also look into the crime records of MPs.

Prahlad Agarwala,
Nadia (W.B.)

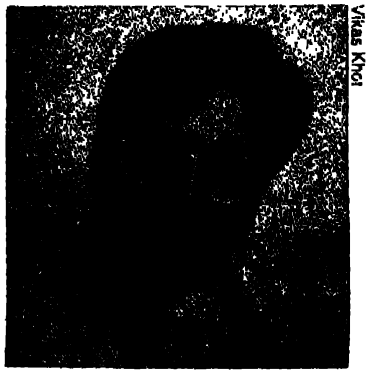
Pony Tale

■ I read with interest 'Animals Come First', (November 3). I would like to clarify that our organisation, Friends of Dogs, was the first animal welfare body to work with the ponies and carriage horses around Victoria Memorial. The project was started in 1991 and it continues till today.

The leftover food from RCTC which is given to the horses is sometimes stale and causes colic problems among them. If fresh food could be supplied, it would be beneficial.

Sona Murshed,
Calcutta

INSIDE



Vikas Khot

PAGE 4

JAAVED JAAFERI, started off as a dancer in films.. Today, he is the most-loved VJ on the box. A profile of the funny man

PAGE 28

WITH THEIR beautiful coral islands, palm-fringed white beaches and lush greenery, the Andaman islands are bewitching

Jaaved Jaaferi

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
26 MUSIC
28 TRAVEL
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover Vikas Khot

COVER STORY

FUNNY FACE

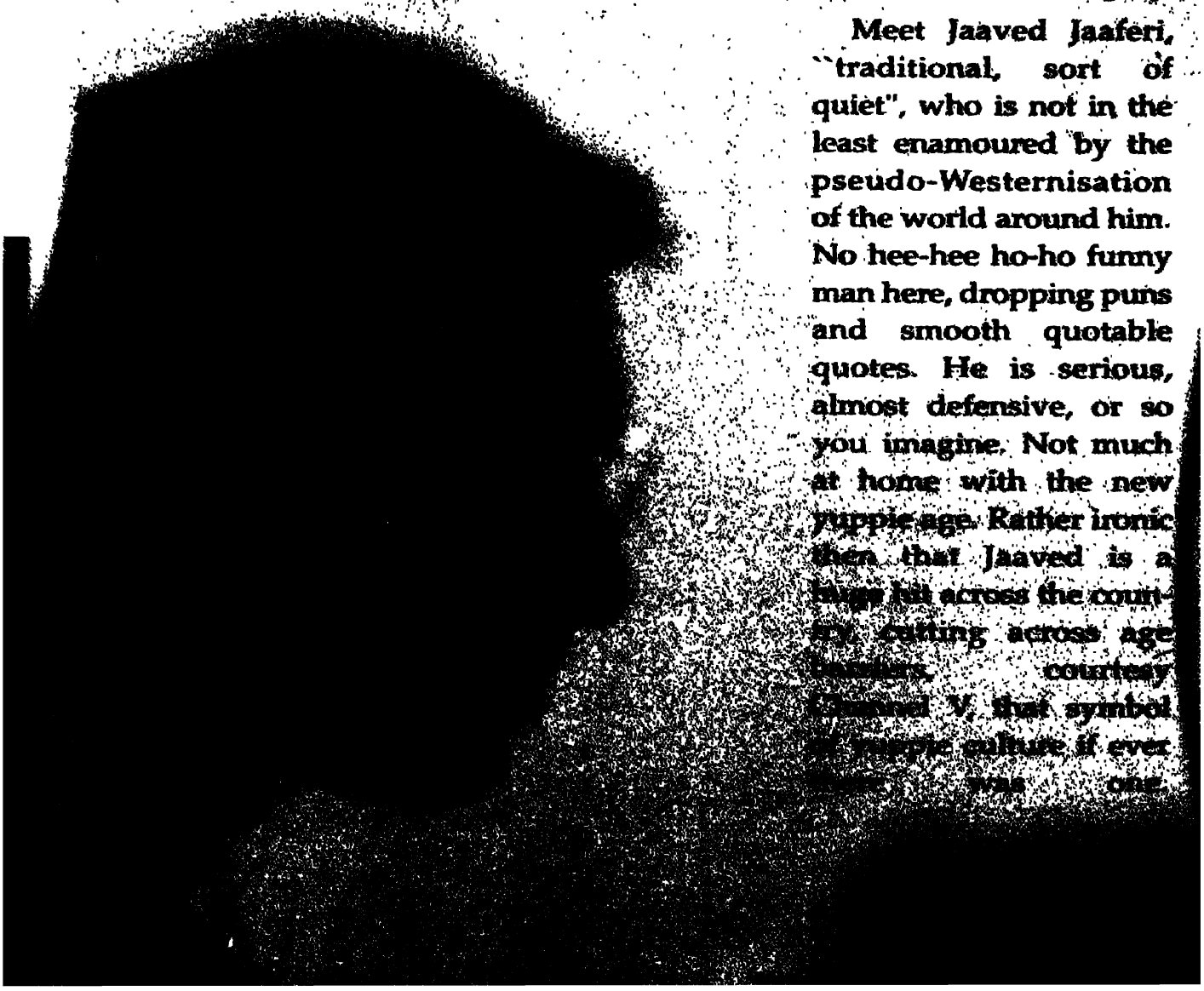
Jaaved Jaaferi has everyone cracking up with his performances on Channel V But ***Anita George*** *found a serious man behind the one-liners*

Jaaved Jaaferi From films to television

JAAVED JAAFERI SITS IN HIS BLACK, WHITE AND GREY LIV[illegible] that he designed himself, in his house in Bandra [illegible] where he grew up in. Bandra is a largely catholic [illegible] with typical images of frocky girls going to church, [illegible] walking the dog, and its many cottages where young [illegible] can be heard plonking on the piano.

This is wh[illegible] and his school or college friends would tootle aroun[illegible] their cycles [illegible] lined lanes and along the calm sea face. But like all things, the place is changing fast. Ask Jaaved about it.

``Hamburgers!" he shouts, and for a moment you are lost. ``Mobile phones! Motorbikes! Yuppies!" Pause. ``The guys are all `CRUISING'," he goes on, stressing the word sarcastically. ``Everyone's just HANGING OUT." He affects the air of the college crowd `hanging out', in sleek cars that blast music along Carter Road. ``And they're busy CHECKING OUT." Here he narrows his eyes to ``check out" an imaginary ``babe". ``That typical lingo," he says, stopping short of cursing it.



Meet Jaaved Jaaferi, ``traditional, sort of quiet", who is not in the least enamoured by the pseudo-Westernisation of the world around him. No hee-hee ho-ho funny man here, dropping puns and smooth quotable quotes. He is serious, almost defensive, or so you imagine. Not much at home with the new yuppie age. Rather ironic then that Jaaved is a huge hit across the country, cutting across age barriers, courtesy Channel V, that symbol of yuppie culture if ever there was one.

To be fair he brings to the channel an indigenous touch that is his own, that makes him stand out from the American accented cool dude and bimbette bunch and he knows it

The language I use is very local, there s no accent, I wear the clothes I want, sort of semi formal *Flashback* is kind of me really " says Jaaved

I started a totally new pattern too,' he adds A VJ is normally given the script here take this do this For *Flashback*, the idea was there, but I added the wackiness, my mind works on those lines, and over time the writer started tuning into the style It s a style that weaves in and out, with one liners puns where I laugh at myself — it evolves itself

For the son of film comedian Jagdeep who started out in Hindi

Jagdeep Popular comedian

films with *Meri Jung* and is besotted by the large screen it was television that made him a household name

Actually getting into television was a sort of come down he says of a time when television was nowhere the cultural monster it is today

Nor is television the medium th he has come home to the ideal vel he has found to express himself through No it is film all the way see myself as an actor first then th rest

Let s see what are all the thing I've been doing,' he says and run through a recap of his career 'I've acted in films, I've done dancing, choreographing, modelling actin singing in some jingles like TVS Champ, Double Cola I've written jingles too, like the one for Zapata

CHECK IT OUT!

Unlike the other VJs, Jaaved Jaaferi has an identity of his own

Luke Kenny

In the Nineties, music television brought to Indian living rooms the VJ, a person that has become as recognisable a star as those of the film industry. MTV brought in the brood first — Danny McGill and Nonie were the most popular, though neither is around on the channel anymore. Never mind that many people thought McGill, despite his knowledge of the

Sophiya Haque

music, was dreary viewing, and Nonie was absolutely irritating But the intimacy of the small screen, the novelty of music television, and its captivating imagery worked.

First the VJs were entirely *phirang*. Then the Indianisation started. First was the compromise -Asian/Indian in origin and [illegible] e, like Sophiya Haque, Kamal Siddhu to name two They typify the female VJ — former models or beauty queens, wearing clothes designed for high school girls on a picnic. All itsy bitsy, polka dotted, laced, knotted, preferably with navel showing. Mannerisms cute, definitely not all-knowing like the male VJs.

Compulsory lines are 'take it

Rahul Khanna

away' 'check it out' and 'don't go away'. The dumb doll image where none had any personality of their own, was only broken by Ruby Bhatia, who exhibited some spontaneity, wit and intelligence.

The next rung is the Indian VJ — Luke Kenny, Rahul Khanna, Anu Kapoor, darling of the teenage audience. Luke Kenny, despite his knowledge of music and

Nonie

Kajal Siddhu

unaccented English didn't quite impress. Rahul Khanna went straight to the top, with his good looks, good lines, affability — despite his inexplicably loose

Anu Kutoor, another favourite, at least with the men, is full of zing which helps to compensate for weird hair and an American accent that has been acquired overnight and drops every now and then. In the middle of all this one has seen film stars and singers come and go, each leaving nothing behind to remember them by.

Where does Jaaved stand in all

Danny McGill

this? Seemingly on his own. No cool dude in cool gear and TV lingo. He has his own identity — his clothes are his own strange semi-formal combination, his earrings belong to him, and his sense of humour is very local. No imported body language or lingo. [illegible]

which I wrote and sang too, the recent Close Up Liquifresh."

His miming abilities he puts to use in dubbing, not dubbing for people but the more specialised kind, for inanimate objects and animals. "I did the voice overs for Disney characters like Sher Khan. That was fun!" Jaaved has an ad film company called Entertainer, "but I don't consider myself a good producer, I do the scripting and directing."

Pause. He gestures at your cup of coffee on the table that has momentarily been forgotten. "Would you like it with icecream?" he enquires, deadpan. Then he blows a kiss to Neezaan, his busybee of a one-and-a-half-year-old son, who has constantly been trying to biff you with a basketball, and coaxes him into shaking hands.

During the coffee break, you take in the design of his home, that Jaaved has done up starkly in black and white. White marble floor, black furniture, including a polished granite coffee table, a rockery and plants in one corner. Full length grey satin curtains backed by black, and a chandelier made of silvery-grey tinted bulbs.

Graphic elements abound, in the wrought iron candlestands, framed black line sketches on one wall, and an arrangement of mirrors opposite. Grey velvety sofas with, of course, black and white cushions, and the occasional red one for contrast. Formal and rather designer. One somehow expected cane and wood and plump cushions, lots of books and music around. You look at him questioningly. "Life in black and white," he offers cheerily. "With shades of grey."

It has been shades of grey at least where his ambitions in film have been concerned. Unfortunately, and he has said this many times before, things haven't worked out the way he wanted. "I just got branded as a dancer. I have all the requisites for a movie actor — personality, voice, and you don't really need chocolatey looks for a hero. What I did lack was PR. It's not enough to be talented. And maybe I came too early," he adds after a moment's thought. "Because today, if you look at say, Prabhudeva, he gets roles in films." There have been parallels in Hollywood, like Travolta, and Patrick Swayze. "Yeah, but they had to wait a long long time," he says a trifle bleakly.

And he will wait for that break till it comes his way. "Film is forever, it's not like TV where you see it 'in bulk' so to speak. You see a film and you remember it." Only problem here being a dearth of good films. The actors he likes are very few, they include Naseerudin Shah and Kamalahasan. As for actresses, there is a long silence. "Well, Shabana Azmi is among the last lot I liked. And in the younger lot, I think Pooja Bhatt has the talent to make it."

Vikas Khot

FLASHBACK

Though Jaaved Jaaferi made his debut as a villain in Meri Jung, *it is as a dancer that people remember him*

The nameplate of the Jaaferi home simply says Jagdeep. So, it was perhaps natural that Jaaved Jaaferi should follow his father Jagdeep, *aka* Soorma Bhopali, the popular Hindi film comedian, and join Hindi films. He made his debut as a dancer-villain in *Meri Jung*, the Shubhash Ghai hit of 1984.

Though the role gave him the opportunity he wanted, to play a villain, it was his talent as a dancer that stuck in the minds of people as well as the industry. Other films that Jaaved appeared in include *100 Days*, *Lal Pari* and *Karm Yodha*.

His success in television followed an episode in *Superhit Muqabla*, the Hindi film music countdown show, and an appearance on *Zaban Sambhal Ke*, where he took on the role of a Gujarati from London, speaking in rap. Jaaved's ability to mimic caught people's attention and it also helped him make up his mind about a future in television, even though it was something of a comedown from his first love, the movies.

Then he was approached to do the *Flashback* show, and he took it on since he was offered the freedom to do his own thing. "My mind operates on wacky lines", he says, and that is what gave the programme its shape. What could have been a typically sentimental or adulatory trip through the past turned into a hilarious programme that cut across age and cultural barriers, and had everyone raving, including the producers.

One of his biggest successes next on television was *Timex Timepass*, where the screen is peopled by 14 separated brothers, all played by Jaaved, who take turns anchoring the programme. These characters are creations of Jaaved's — people with names like Queenie Singh, Analysis Anandan, Hip Hop Hingorani, Abdul Cutpiece and VJ Saxena, who is called Succee because he sucks a lollipop. Rather naive as Hindi film humour often is, but a roaring success.

Last year, Ketan Mehta cast Jaaved as the son of a don in *Oh Darling, Yeh Hai India*, where he starred along with Shah Rukh Khan, Deepa Sahi and Amrish Puri. Though it was expected to give him the boost he needed as a film hero, the film didn't do as well as was hoped. But Jaaved isn't disheartened, he believes he will eventually be an actor or director or both.

Dance, meanwhile, which had taken something of a backseat, and for which he has won many awards, is working its way back into his agenda. He hosts and performs in shows in India and abroad — most recently with Shah Rukh Khan, and with Amitabh Bhachchan — and describes his shows as being different from the usual, where he uses gags as in a stand-up comic act. "Dance is a hobby, I love it but I can't make a career of it. I would love to eventually do a film where I can use dance, like *West Side Story*!"

For now, the 33-year-old star is working on his own show called *Myself Jaaved*, which will most probably be shown on Channel V. That, and his music album which he is working on with music director Raju Singh, are the focus for the next several months.

Neither is television his idea of great entertainment.
"Everything is too film-based so I watch Discovery and the BBC!" he says, laughing at the contradiction. "What I would really like to do is a serial like *The Fall Guy*, and some of the Pakistani dramas are quite good. I did Kashmakash, though, which was slightly above average. In television we have a long way to go, specially where fiction is concerned."

And he echoes the common complaint: "Writing is the weakest spot. The same goes for our films. They aren't doing so well as they used to in the past when every other film celebrated a jubilee!"

"If I do direct a film, which I want to, it would be a film that says something. It should have some kind of a message," says Jaaferi. If that sounds almost missionary, Jaaved is pretty serious about things that matter to him.

He will expound on religion, and its role in his life; on how he studied the scriptures of various religions when he was in his twenties, and chose Islam, which he follows devoutly. On the work he does, which he looks at with a critical eye. All his observations punctured by comical gestures -- rolling his eyes, or wiggling hips signifying the 'tik tik tik tik' dancing in films, answering a string of calls and bemoaning the lack of a secretary.

There are plans and more plans, including a dance composition with Mallika Sarabhai, and, one day, some day, an opportunity to use dance in film like one of his all-time favourites Gene Kelly. Was the change in the spelling of his name, supposedly for astrological reasons, intended to turn his luck for him, to make things come true?

"Not really," he says, and offers a phonetic reason. "People I meet abroad pronounce Javed to rhyme with David or 'saved'. I thought I should set it right!" But, he points out that soon after he changed the way his name was spelt, he got married, took his parents on the Haj, and became a father within a year of his marriage. "Things were working out! So who knows?"

Meanwhile, there are two definite projects in the pipeline. One is a television show called *Myself, Javed*, probably for Channel V. And one, which will be worth waiting for, is Jaaved the Singer! He has been chewing over an album of songs for some time now. "I'm concentrating on these two projects for the moment and that's it." What's the album going to be like, coming from this avid listener of new age music and the Sixties and Seventies sound, of old film music, of big band jazz, Pink Floyd? No comments yet, except that it will have rhythms, probably some Egyptian, Arabic and other percussion.

But one thing is for sure. "These songs will talk about life, nature, the world. None of this *My Dil Goes Boom Boom or Dole Dole!*"

Time to strike poses for the camera, so he changes into a beige silk kurta and squats on the floor. "Oh my earrings!" he exclaims and rushes off. Ears laden, he returns, and proceeds to pull faces for the photographer. A friend walks in saying "hello". Jaaved Jaaferi greets him back with a nasal twang: "Hello hello, want a jello?" Now if THAT isn't familiar! ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says the week of the new moon favours contacts, contracts, communications, journey and trip and most certainly money pours in, and that's always welcome. Your mood will be inspirational, your manoeuvres spectacular and your lifestyle truly royal. This is the time to move fast.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

A grand week for long-distance connections, loans and funds. There will be meets, conferences and group activities of any sort, a bit of fun and games despite pressures and pulls. Feel free to go all out in the pursuit of pleasure and happiness. It is time to take care of the health of elders.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

A business bench pays dividends. Romance and joy will be yours. If you like, you may bend the rules a bit at work and play. But don't overdo it. On the home front expect a few fireworks, literally and otherwise. Couples should make future plans this week. A special invitation keeps you in good humour.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Promotion, perks and publicity are the three things that are in store. You will have the power to do things and make amends. Be true and straight in your dealings with people. Your efforts will come to a head and result in positive appreciation from your boss and superiors. You will have time for love.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

Time to be romantic and yet rational, a contradiction indeed. But, you can do it, being a Leon. There will be many demands upon your heart and purse strings and both deserve to be satisfied fully. Travel is a possibility. In your work area you come through with flying colours. Do not overlook minor details.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

The home and the outside world finally meet now. That means you will be working hard at both these levels and that could fray your nerves. But it will be worth the pain. You will be loved and appreciated. Children and loved ones give sweet satisfaction. That is the positive aspect of the week.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Time to reach out to people and places. Time also to look after the homefront. Many of you will be in for buying, selling, renovating, decorating of property, be it house, office, shop, godown or warehouse. This is almost certain. You will be in the limelight. Ganesha says this is a week of work and fun.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

Law of averages work for you and that means success, money and loving care for you. You will reciprocate fully. Meeting with loved ones, advisers, counsellors, people in authority will definitely help you. You will be able to make money. New opportunities will come your way. Travel is fated.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

The new moon gives you the steam to finish pending jobs and the energy to launch new ones. Therefore, you will have a winning streak. December 12-13 shows the way to power and pelf. But in all of this jumble, it is important that you find yourself and meditate a bit. Time to travel and socialise.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

Though you will feel lonely you will not be lost or forsaken. Time to shed old skin and attitudes and to move on with your life. News from afar will please you. You will benefit from a friend's thoughtfulness and care. Also, it is journeytime and rendezvous. Get yourself prepared for it.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

To avoid bedlam as too many things will happen too fast, make a plan and as far as possible stick to it despite all chops and changes. That is the way to get maximum mileage out of this week and the next 27 days. Self discipline will bring in a lot of gains. Love will flower. Take care of your health.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

The right time to switch jobs or sweet hearts, that is, if interested. Otherwise, old faithfuls will do splendidly at least for some time to come. Family matters and domestic needs will be paramount. Extra duties may clash with pleasures and entertainment but that is the way it goes with you.

BIRTHDAYS

December 8: Moon trine Jupiter lead to energy and good luck. This will result in the achievement of cherished desires. Be bold.

December 9: Venus sextile Jupiter-Mars conjunction signifies a year of great prosperity and joy. It could mean personal progress and marriage of children.

December 10: The new moon turns particularly favourable on and after January 22, and so the next year should be particularly rewarding.

December 11: Moon square Saturn means only a little caution in matters of the heart will help. Also, financially you should play it safe. Children and grandchildren will give a hard time.

December 12: Moon conjunction Mercury-Jupiter is excellent for lawyers, managers, teachers, administrators, filmmakers, actors and editors.

December 13: Moon sextile Venus will lead to success for those who are in the beauty business. Salesmen and businessmen will also do well.

December 14: Sun square Mars, Venus sextile Neptune may cause accidents if you are not careful. On the personal side, headway on the workfront is absolutely certain.

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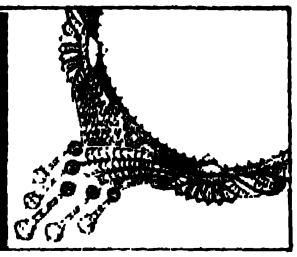


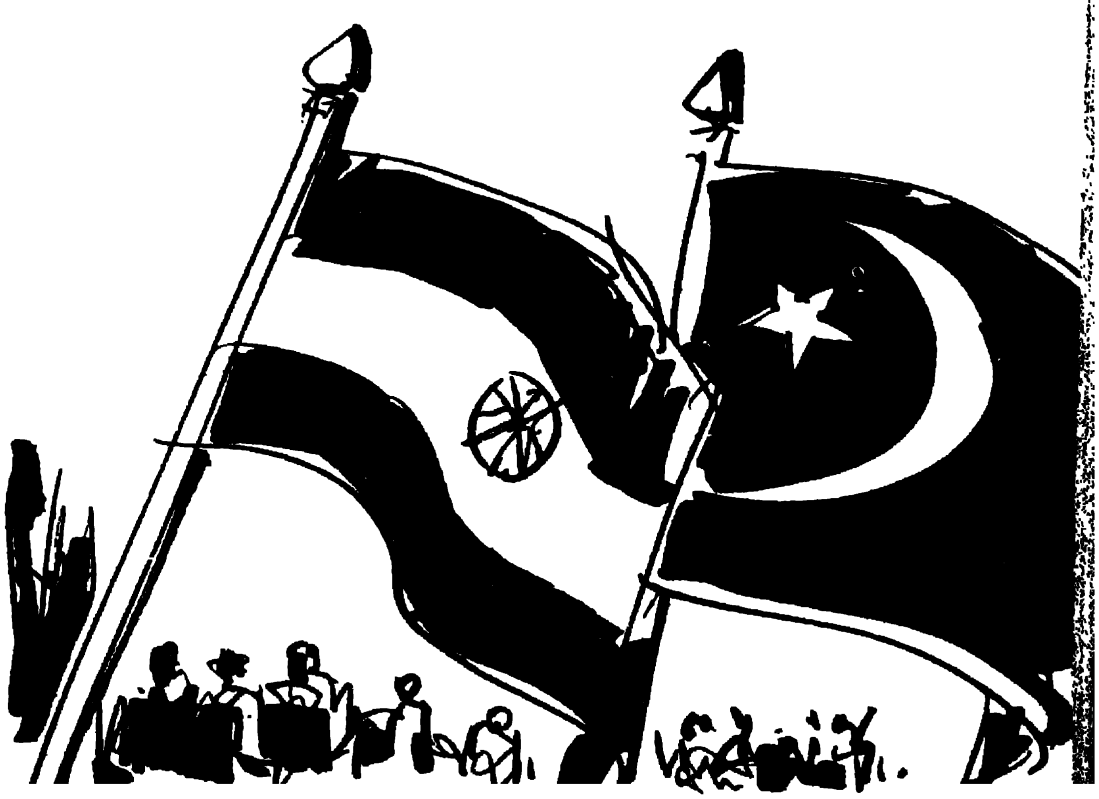
EXTRACT

The Brunt of ATTACKS

An extract from ***Jeelani Bano****'s new book,* A Hail of Stones

Mastan's wild act to kill Venkat was not an ordinary thing. Malesham was a lawyer. He raised a hue and cry which was heard as far away as Hyderabad. Honourable men of the village agreed with Malesham's theory that Venkat's murder was the outcome of a conspiracy hatched by the Itihad-e-Musalmeen with the help of Dilawar Ali Khan. Otherwise, how could a petty farmhead, be driven all of a sudden to kill a person who had been feeding him for 20 years! "The time has come for all the Hindus of the village to put their heads together and think how to curb these Muslim *goondas*. Long enough have we lived under the Nizam's threat. Now, the Congress is about to form a government." The villagers strated keeping strict watch on the farmhands who were ordered not to step out of the village. The cars of Murad Ali Khan, Chhote Nawab, Malesham and all other landlords started frequenting the village. Whispering campaign could be heard everywhere

After a few days the Tricolour was to be hoisted over the Red Fort. His Majesty's fate hung in balance. People from the villages who went to attend meetings held by the Itihad-e-Musalmeen returned quite agitated. There was a cry of Islam in danger and expression of loyalty to His Majesty. People from the city started touring villages to enrol Rizakars. Small children, donning military uniform, could be seen



Extracted from *A Hail of Stones* ***By Jeelani Bano. Translated by Rajinder Singh Verma Published by Sterling Paperbacks Price Rs80***

parading in front of mosques after the prayer hours. They started practising fencing and shooting. Viewing all this Hindu families, got panicky Swami Ramanand Tirath had started delivering fiery speeches in Hyderabad. What was going to happen? That is what people thought when they sat together.

All of a sudden, Sabir Mian, the caretaker of Chuppe Shah's Durgah, gained importance He became president of the Itihad-e-Musalmeen branch at Chekatpalli. People of Hyderabad advised him to get a mosque built in his village. A delegation of Muslim inhabitants approached Dilawar Khan who readily donated a piece of land near his fields for this purpose. Ownership of this land had been in dispute for a long time Chunnu Nawab claimed that it belonged to his maternal grandfather while Dilawar Khan asserted that it was his grandfather's property. But when it came to building a mosque on it both kept quiet. A contribution of four *annas* was collected from every house. Boys and girls, both Muslim and Hindu, joined hands in building the mosque which was a noble act. One day at sunset when Malesham and Kushiya Tiwari went for a stroll in the fields they saw the building material gathered at the mosque site. They spoke to each other in whispers

One morning as Maulv Sahib was going to the fields with a mug of water in his hand he saw a reddish thing lying in the dugout foundation of the mosque He bent, lifted the thing and viewed it closely It was a tiny broken image of Goddess Lakshmi, dyed in vermillion Out of fear he replaced it hurriedly.

"Well, sir, what are you doing here?" Hearing the sound of someone's footsteps Maulvi Sahib found Malega standing before him. Malega was a cropsharer of Venkat but also a self appointed general of the village. Involved in a quarrel he was always ready to kill or die. The whole village was scared of him. Maulvi Sahib spoke very gently to everybody for God had entrusted him with the duty of bringing everybody to the right path. It was he who had taught the young and the old how to say *namaz* and observe fast He never told a lie nor stretched his hand before anybody. That was why the poor thing lay coughing under his broken thatched roof.

"What have you thrown here, Maulvi Sahib?" asked Malega in a light tone.

"Well, Malli, I can't see properly in the dark. You please check up," replied Maulvi Sahib nervously.

Malega picked up the thing and observing it in the light shouted, "Good God! It is Goddess Lakshmi's image. It has emerged from the earth. Probably it belongs here."

"You don't mean it?" said Maulvi Sahib. "You please go and tell Pantalu." His heart started beating fast. He was a man of weak faith. He believed in the miracles . .as well as feared the wrath of Poshamma and Lord Venkateshwar Out of terror his voice was faltering as he went to give the call for prayers. Next morning as the news of the image emerging from the foundation of the mosque spread, the whole village was taken by storm. Sabir Mian insisted that it was the mischief of some Hindu boy. How could there have been a temple of Lakshmi at a place which had been the property of Muslim landlords for seven generations? On the other hand, Malesham related to every Hindu the story he had heard from his mother that once there stood a temple of Lakshmi. He asserted that the Hindus would stake their lives to prevent the building of a mosque here. And this did happen Urchins schooled by Sabir Mian built a pedestal overnight and hoisted over it the green flag of Ghausul Azam. As Malega saw the flag, he hurled it down with a kick. That was the limit. People tutored by Malesham came forward Muslim boys were highly agitated on hearing the speeches of Qasim Rizvi They welcomed this opportunity to teach the katirs a lesson They beat one another badly. Saleem was the worst hit. His back began to bleed and his shirt got drenched in blood As he returned home bathed in blood, Ahmed Bi and his sisters and brothers started crying Murad, swearing at him again and again, remarked: "This boy wouldn't let us exist Had any Muslim fought against any Hindu in this village? What grudge do we bear the Hindu mothers, you had better despatch this chap to materni grandmother's place. I can't settle his disputes."

"You do it," shouted Saleem, "must all our family members slave for the Reddis all their lives?"

"....Shut up, you...." Murad looked at him surprised Then he started looking helplessly at his mother and said. "Mother, what has gone wrong with him? Didn't you see the fate of Narsaya day before? Do you two like to be taken round the village on ass back with your *face blackened?" Murad was at a loss to understand how to make him* see sense.

"Oh! I've seen many who can blacken my face. But which fool would come here to get his face blackened? The driver of the bus bound for Waqarabad tells me that a lorry cleaner in the city gets Rs 25 plus free food. I"ll be sending Rs 5 to mother every month," said Saleem, spitting blood on the wall.

"Five rupees every month?" his mother started looking at him in utter surprise.

"And who will be doing your job here? Malesham will kill me. He had made it clear that now the entire family has to work on his fields."

"Why do you people drudge here? Let all of us go to the city together."

"What? Shall we run to the city deserting our village?" Murad's hands stopped chopping fodder and he shouted, "Will you shut up, lad?"

Ahmed Bi beat her forehead She exclaimed, "If someone hears all this we shall be doomed The wretch has been beaten badly. Blood is still oozing from his wounds Cut to size, he is now thinking of going away to the city" Murad looked at him and, turning to his wife, said "Bring quickly some filtered sods. Saleem is still bleeding." If dust falls on the wounds of a townie he gets tetanus. But a farmer's frame rises from dust

and ultimately returns to it. That is why his wounds too heal if earth is applied to them. But Saleem had been badly hurt. The news of Muslim boys being beaten up reached Hyderabad and some workers rushed to the village. They spoke to the villagers, ``Brothers! In the reign of Asafia dynasty we Muslims are being subjected to such tyranny. Now these kafirs have the cheek to beat up our youngsters. Muslims, where is your self respect gone? Break the hands that tries to reach you. *Naara-e-takbiri* (God is great!)."

Slogan, cries and wails of women and children could be heard in the adjoining villages. Smoke rising from Chekatpalli could be seen four villages away.

``Muslims are going to attack the village tonight." As soon as this news spread in the village bankers and other rich men sat in their houses holding guns Ranga Reddy was awfully upset He had two young daughters and one daughter-in-law with him. There were small kids and lots of gold buried in the house So he engaged a lorry from the city, collected all his belongings and along with his family went to his brother living in Nalganda. While departing, he handed over the keys of his house to Abu Khan Abu Khan was Murad's uncle and, like Murad, he had been bonded to Ranga for the past two generations Now he knew only one thing, that Ranga was his master, lord of his bread. By his grace alone his children survived. So he cried bitterly. But Ranga soothed him. In his shed were cows, buf faloes and chickens. In his sitting-room was installed the image of Lord Venkateshwar before which Ranga's mother lit a lamp everyday at dusk. Henceforth all these duties were to be performed by Abu Khan. So Abu Khan brought his elder son and brother as well to help him. To safeguard the house was now his responsibility—the house where the honour of his forefathers was mortgaged. He believed that the precious clothes and jewellery of his grandmother were kept in Ranga's coffers and the mortgage documents of his house and fields were also preserved in the boxes lying inside.

Abu took a pledge to safeguard the house. His son and brother, with *lathis* in his hands, kept bearing the brunt of Muslim attacks on the house. Then Muslim hooligans brought out luggage from the houses of Hindu bankers and made a bonfire of it in front of their houses When they broke into Ranga's house and tried to lift an iron box, Abu held it with all his might and appealed to them: ``Don't, pray don't burn this box. I touch your feet."

``Hurl this bloody fool as well into the fire." So one of them lifted him by the waist and flung him into the fire.

``Save, save my son!" Abu's mother shouted, beating her breast. But no villager came forward to face the city hooligans.

``Abu, Abu," calling him out, Abu's mother jumped into the blazing fire. Next morning people tried hard to tell apart the remaining bones of the two or both of them had been reduced to ashes.

` It augured well that the charred bodies of Abu and his mother couldn't be traced. Otherwise who would have joined the funeral rites of these fools who burnt themselves while trying to save the house of a Hindu?" observed Naulvi Ahquar Shah Sahib, who was an activist and who often came from the city to provoke Muslims against Hindus. While departing, he addressed the Muslims and declared that the blood of martyrs would not go in vain and the kafirs would be made to pay through their nose. ``God willing."

It was the first communal riot in Chekatpalli. So all the people were scared. They observed: ``What critical times we are living in! Never before were Muslims and Hindus reported to have fought against each other. It is said that Muslims have burnt temples. Gosh! What a sin they have committed."

Next day the daily *Saheefa* flashed a news item reporting a com-

munal riot in a village of Waqarabad. "Mother and son burnt alive," it said. Malesham went round the village shouting: "All this was the handiwork of Dilwar Khan. I'll teach him a lesson. Anyday the Tricolour is to be hoisted in Delhi. I'll trample these bloody Muslims under my feet."

All the elders impressed upon him the need to be quiet. This is the age of Rizakars. "Beware! They will kill all of us. They say that in Nalganda military and Rizakars together are spelling disaster. Communists too are raising hell against the Nizam. Now lawyers are being sent to every village. Farmers and farmhands will get a fair deal."

This news upset everybody. Sabir Mian, Dilawar Khan, Chunnu Nawab, Malesham, Ranga Reddy and all the nawabs, kunbis, bankers and Deshmukhs of the village were terrified. They exclaimed, "Good gracious! These *goondas* have already grabbed Nalganda. Who knows what will be the fate of our village?"

On the other hand, Abu's brother Yusuf went round the village shouting: "They burnt down my brother and my mother. I'll destroy all of them." He would cry bitterly and faint. When he regained consciousness he would start striking his head against the walls. All his near and dear ones as well as neighbours were upset. Murad and Saleem would sit holding him. But he would fight and run away.

"What bad times have fallen on us, oh God! Unheard of things are happening!" exclaimed Ahmed Bi holding her head in her hands.

Mastan's case was due to be taken up next month. Malesham claimed that he would be hanged. Hearing this Ahmed Bi and her children would burst into tears.

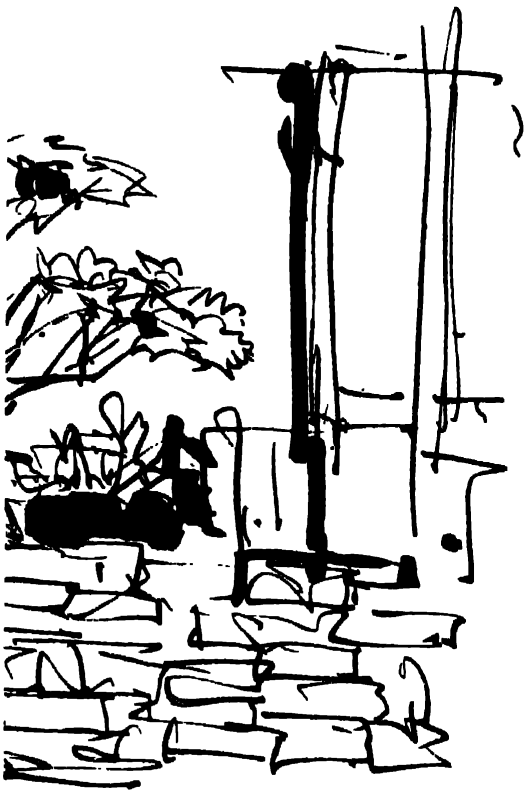
Sabir Mian's brother went round the village shouting: "As long as I have not set the entire village on fire, wouldn't take rest." He went out of the village. He went up to Hyderabad. He contacted influential people and then suddenly disappeared. They say he joined Dallam, the guerrillas.

News of these happenings had cast terror over King Kothi. These had been kept secret from His Majesty. He shouted angrily: "Catch the hooligans and bring them unto me. I will deal with them sternly. But what was left in the huts now? Rebel boys carrying guns were roaming in jungles and on hills. Government subedars and tehsildars sent to the village did nothing except to get hold of lovely girls and good chicken. While leaving they would secure tins of pure ghee, baskets of chickens and eggs, bundles of sugarcane and bananas. Government issued an ordinance that all tehsildars and taluqdars should stay at their headquarters and the rebellion of farmers should be put down with an iron hand.

All this augured ill for the daughters and daughters-in-law of the village for, after drinking, these tehsildars could not sleep without women. So police patels and tehsil peons weaned children from their mothers and took mothers to the tehsildars.

One night a tehsil peon went to the house of Narsaya, Murad's neighbour. Narsaya was Murad's bosom friend. Since childhood they had played together, grew up together and studied together at school up to the eighth standard.

Narsaya's brother Ramaya had got married only last month. One morning the tehsildar Sahib, along with Malesham, went out for a stroll. He noticed a black beauty carrying a bundle of grass on her head. The tehsildar was reminded of a poem of Josh Malee habadi in which he said that when you touch such a sturdy maiden you run the risk of bruising your fingers. Wiping the spittle falling on his sherwani, he told Malesham that he was tempted to bruise his fingers. Malesham at once summoned all his servants and ordered that the girl be procured immediately. At about 10 pm, Malega reached the doorstep of Ramaya. If any tehsildar, taluqdar or landlord took fancy to any girl it was the duty of the village folk to quietly offer her to him. Nobody should get wind of it. Otherwise menfolk at that house would get a shoe beating from the banker. By chance, Narsaya, keeping a lamp before him, was reading a book. As he saw Malesham whispering something to



Ramaya he put aside his book and got up He addressed Malega:
"What's the matter? What are you whispering to my brother? Tell me what you want."

"When I shall come to fetch your wife I'll certainly consult you," said Malega gleefully

"Shut up you. .." Narsaya uttered a filthy abuse. But by then Malega had dragged Rangi by the hand as she stood in a corner, saying: "Bloody fool! Will you go with me willingly or should I take you binding your hands and feet?"

For quite some time Murad and Saleem heard the hue and cry raised by Narsaya's people They thought that both the brothers were quarelling Then Murad came out and behind him Saleem and then all the neighbours emerged from their houses. Lost in the darkness of the moonless night several boys, holding glittering sickles in their hands, were seen running towards the tehsildar's bungalow.

"Why are you going, Saleem? Will you let us live or not?" barked Ahmed Bi.

"Huh! What has gone wrong with these lads? How will they be able to face such big people?" observed Ramaya's old grandmother who was crying and beating her breast. These big people had a claim upon his daughter-in-law. She knew that till that day none—her husband, her father-in-law, father and forefathers—had ever dared open his lips on such occasions. Whoever expressed resentment was found murdered in the fields next day.

Rangi had hardly reached the tehsildar's room when three to four boys carrying sickles and *lathis* appeared on the scene. They dealt a heavy blow on the head of Malega, who fainted and fell down. Rangi's hand was released from his grip. Hearing the hue and cry, the police patel, Gudo Sahib, and peon all got up, to teach a lesson to the boys meddling in official matters. But, viewing the fate of Malega, they paused. Narsaya stepped forward and held Rangi's hand. All of them returned to their houses. Silence fell all around. The tehsildar had bolted his room from inside. The hush of the dark night of Chekatpalli seemed to be a lull before the storm which rocked the whole village The elders kept vigil. Every young woman's heart was held in suspense. It was not an ordinary thing to snatch the morsel of prey from the tehsildar's mouth. After all, the chastity of woman is not so precious that for its sake the entire village be plunged into disaster. This offspring of Mastan was yet to bring God knows what more calamities. And first of all, Narsaya had rushed out with a sickle in his hand. If the tehsildar too had come out with his loaded gun, then?

In their heart of hearts all the villages were scolding Narsaya and Murad for they had unnecessarily made a mountain of a molehill. Offspring of Dheers! How they are getting spoilt! Next morning the village folk woke up scared and, before saying their morning prayers, started going to the jungle with mugs of water in their hands Saleem too woke up. Breaking his daily routine, he neither took ablutions nor said his namaz Nor did he go to the jungle with Murad. Sitting near the hearth he kept smoking a *biri* Ahmed Bi and Gauri Bi were plying the handmill Bi Jani was lighting the fireplace. The whole house was filled with the smoke of smouldering dungcakes. Even small kids got up and hurriedly went to say namaz Then Saleem rose to his feet. He spat at the base of the gulmohur tree growing in the courtyard and picking his *lathi* went to the fields.

The call for prayers had just concluded in the mosque. People with mugs in their hands were going to the fields when they noticed a cloud of dust rising on the *pucca* road. There were two men riding black mares. One was Malesham, clad in a white dhoti, and the other was the tehsildar wearing a black sherwani, turkish cap and narrow-legged trousers. His black shoes shown from a distance. Following him were a tehsil peon, the police patel and Malega. Challenging the people going to the fields they shouted, "Come hither, all of you. Have word with the tehsildar sahib." All got startled Those sitting in the fields to evacuate rose to their feet in exasperation.

Ramaya and Narsaya confined themselves to their house out of fear. But when they heard the angry shouts of Malega they too rushed to the fields. They were now convinced that Malesham and the tehsildar would not spare Narsaya's life.

"Where are those boys who had raised a hue and cry last night?" Malega, with his head bandaged, shouted

Hearing this, Saleem put his *lathi* on his shoulder and went forward. Then some other farmhands stepped forward though on the previous night they had been in their houses Viewing this scuffle near their fields some elderly farmers too came, coughing, leaning on their walking sticks Their hearts were beating fast. The tehsildar's mare was hopping and neighing and his whip was swaving in the air. Then Narsaya plucked up courage. He stepped forward, stood beside the tehsildar and spoke. "Yes, sir, what do you want to say to us?"

Seeing this, Malega came forward and, pushing Narsaya back with his lathi, barked: "You bastard! Why are you rushing forward? Talk with your head bent downwards." And holding Narsaya's neck he lowered it all with his might

"You dare call me a bastard! You son of a swine!" Narsaya shouted in Telugu and, snatching Saleem's *lathi* rushed to hit Malega. The situation was taking an ugly turn So the peo and the police patel pushed Malega back But Narsaya seemed too possessed at that moment

"Get down, sahib. Have a word with us. I too like your wife Would you mind sparing her for me for or night?"

"What did you say?" All those present shuddered, Malesham, Malega, and the police patel were raining shoes on Narsaya's head. B the tehsildar's mare stopped jumping The swishing whip in his hand stood still. His mouth, full of betel, stopped chewing. He felt as if all t revolving earth had stopped short He looked around He felt as if all the folk of the village were mount his head. ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: *① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY*

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible]	IC 742	1015	[illegible]
[illegible]	0840	4 [illegible]	IC 742	1205	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 744	1305	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 744	1500	1 3 4 5 6 7
AHMEDABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY 145/301	1900	1 2 4
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC-716	2150	1 5 7
AIZAWL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	1 [illegible] 6	PF 302	1525	[illegible]
			PF 302	1615	[illegible]
BAGDOGRA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 722	1205	1 3 4 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D2-101	1100	[illegible]
BANGALORE					
[illegible]	0930	daily	IC 771	1110	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	daily	9W 617	2150	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 774	2240	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 7[illegible]	2050	2 4 6
DELHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY-[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6E-901	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 4[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W-9[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
			[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
DIBRUGARH					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0600	1 3 5 7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	D[illegible]13	[illegible]	2 4 6 7
DIMAPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1550	2 4 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4 [illegible]
GUWAHATI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 7[illegible]	1200	1 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC 714	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
HYDERABAD					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9W 7[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IMPHAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	1250	1 [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAIPUR					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	MY [illegible]	[illegible]	1 2 4
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
JAMMU					
MY 504/119	0850	2 4	MY-128/301	1900	1, 2 3, 4 5, 6
JORHAT					
CD 257	1145	2 4 6 7	CD 257	1550	2 4 6, 7
9W 621	1010	3 5	9W-622	1320	3 5
LILABARI					
PF 301/301	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 3 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1540	1 3 5	IC-811	1915	1 3 5
CHENNAI (MADRAS)					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC 965	0615	1 [illegible] 4 5 6
IC 966	0905	1, 2 4 5 6	CD 543	1750	1 3 5
CD 542	1110	1 3 5	CD 541	1030	1, 3 5
CD 544	1830	1 3 [illegible]	D2 171	1150	daily
D2 172	1640	1 3 5	D5 401	1230	[illegible]
D2 171	1705	2 4, 6 7	IC 760	2020	daily
IC [illegible]	1730	daily			
MUMBAI (BOMBAY)					
			IC 6[illegible]	0820	daily
9W 202	0315	daily	D2-101	0830	daily
IC 6[illegible]	0730	daily	9W-201	0915	daily
D2 102	0920	daily			
IC [illegible]	0950	2 4 [illegible]	IC [illegible]	1615	[illegible] 4 6
IC [illegible]	1020	1 5 [illegible]	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	1 5 [illegible]
AI 488	1940	6	AI-4[illegible]	1730	5
9W 21[illegible]	2000	daily	IC 774	[illegible]	daily
IC [illegible]	1945	daily	9W 213	[illegible]	daily
D2-101	2005	daily	D2 103	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	2000	[illegible] 1 [illegible]
PATNA					
IC 7[illegible]	0900	2 4 6	IC-726	1615	2 4 6
D2 406	1530	1 5	D5-406	1630	1
IC 812	1530	1 2 5	IC-811	1915	[illegible] 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
CD 285	0830	1 3 5	CD 286	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
IC 7[illegible]	0950	2 4 6	IC-726	1615	2 4, 6
SILCHAR					
IC [illegible]	1600	3 6	IC 254	1040	3 6 7
IC [illegible]	0830	1 4 5	IC 255	1250	1 4 5
TEZPUR					
IC 212	1140	2 5	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D2 402	1330	1 5	D5-406	1635	1 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5-402	0700	4 6	CD 541	1040	1 3 5
CD 542	1110	1 [illegible] 5	D5 401	1230	1 5

FLIGHTS — INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
[illegible]	[illegible]	4	RJ 184	[illegible]	4
AMSTERDAM					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KL-8[illegible]	0130	7
BANGKOK					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB 106	1620	7
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	KB-108	1240	5
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	IG 3[illegible]	1240	1 [illegible] 6
			IC 732	1410	2 5
IC 855	1105	4 [illegible]	IC 856	1730	4 7
TG 311	1355	1 [illegible] 6			
AI-466	1410	5	AI 309	1625	6
BUCHAREST					
RO-076	2200	5 7	RO-075	1200	5 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	1130	3 7	IC-226	1350	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2, 5	BG-697	1655	2, 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4, 5	BG-091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1150	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	BG-091	1110	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
IC-723	1300	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	IC-724	1520	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
BG 094	1905	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG 093	1880	4
BG 096	2100	1, 5	BG-095	2020	1, 5
[illegible]					
Q7-061	1430	6	Q7 060	1130	6
[illegible]					
BI-107	2100	6	BI-108	0730	7
[illegible]					
IC-747	1315	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	IC-748	1615	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
LONDON					
BA-142	2115	3, 7	BA-141	1515	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
SU-538	2100	4	SU-537	0930	4
[illegible]					
KB 106	1105	7	KB-105	0810	2
KB 106	1345	5	KB 105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 108	0830	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ-415	2345	2, 5	SQ-416	2230	2, 5
[illegible]					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ 503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI-306	1910	5	AI-309	182	6
[illegible]					
IC-227	1530	4, 7	IC-228	1955	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **CD** Alliance Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 15	2312
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	7-35	3006
[illegible]	20 00	**Mumbai Mail** via Allahabad	13-15	3004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues, Wed & Sat	16-15	2382
[illegible]	6 15	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tue Fri & Sat Arr Mon Thurs Fri & Sun	16-15	2304
[illegible]	20 30	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tue Thurs Fri & Sun	10 45	2302
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Sun Arr Wed & Sat	9 50	2306
[illegible]	23 30	**Jodhpur Express**	4-30	2308
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday	21 10	2020
[illegible]	23 00	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Bi Wkly Dep Tues Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11 35	3074
[illegible]	22 20	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep Tues Wed & Sat Arr Tues Fri & Sat	12 25	3046
[illegible]	23 00	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep & Arr Thursday	11 35	5050
[illegible]	13 00	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Sun Mon Wed & Fri	4 15	5048
[illegible]	20-30	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
[illegible]	9-45	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 10	3008
[illegible]	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5 15	3040
[illegible]	11 10	**Amritsar Express**	15 40	3040
[illegible]	21 50	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	4020
[illegible]	16 00	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5 00	3022
[illegible]	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 40	5660
[illegible]	6-15	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	3318
[illegible]	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10-30	3030
[illegible]	16 20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
[illegible]	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3252
[illegible]	22-30	**Jamalpur Express**	5-10	3072
[illegible]	4 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
[illegible]	5 45	**Rampurhat Express**	23-45	3018
[illegible]	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon, Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
[illegible]	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep Wed Sat & Sun, Arr Sun, Wed & Sat	7 55	9306
[illegible]	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 30	3328
[illegible]	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri Arr Tues	7 55	1182

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
[illegible]	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 35	3142
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Darjeeling Mail**	6-45	3144
[illegible]	20-15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
[illegible]	6 25	**Kanchanjunga** (Lundhing) Express	20 35	5658
[illegible]	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
[illegible]	20 00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
[illegible]	1 45	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
[illegible]	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SHG Loop	12 30	3134
[illegible]	18 50	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
[illegible]	12 40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues, Thurs & Sat	4-25	5286

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 15	**Madras Mail**	6 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Mumbai Mail** via Nagpur	8-20	8001
2860	17 25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 30	2859
2021	6-00	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	21 00	2022
8034	20-30	**Ahmedabad Express**	5-40	8033
8030	10-45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16-20	8029
2841	14 00	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 20	2842
7003	7 50	**Fulaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19-40	7004
6511	22-30	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	13-45	6512
8013	17-30	**Tata Steel Express**	10-20	8014
8011	6-50	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	21 35	8012
8005	20-40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5-00	8006
8015	21 35	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6-20	8016
8007	22-00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5-30	8008
8409	19 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8-40	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22-05	2822
8045	10 15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15-20	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12-05	8018
8079	23 30	**Tirupati Express**	4-15	8080
1030	15-45	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep Sunday Arr Friday	5-15	1029
2421	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah, Sunday only	16 10	2421
2422	11 05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah, Saturday only	10 45	2422
6322	22 35	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	22-15	-
	14 10	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13 45	6321
	14 15	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 15	
6324	22-35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep & Arr Tuesday	13-45	6323
6316	22 35	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	22 15	
-	14-10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2208545-54 for in-coming trains; 2203535-44 for all other information. For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3508536/37.
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

INTERVIEW

A LAST TESTAMENT

Love, sex, marriage, good wine, the shortcomings of the Bengali character, the superiority of Bengali women over their Punjabi sisters, the moral cowardice of Salman Rushdie, the decline of England — Nirad C. Chaudhuri holds forth on these and other topics with characteristic gusto in this interview with ***Suman Bhuchar*** *and* ***Amit Roy***

Outside the semi-detached house in Oxford, it is a bright, crisp November morning. The garden, which had once been the owner's joy, is now overgrown as winter sets in. Autumn leaves lie in thick piles in Lathbury Road. The polished brass nameplate by the door, "Nirad C Chaudhuri", has about it a touch of permanence.

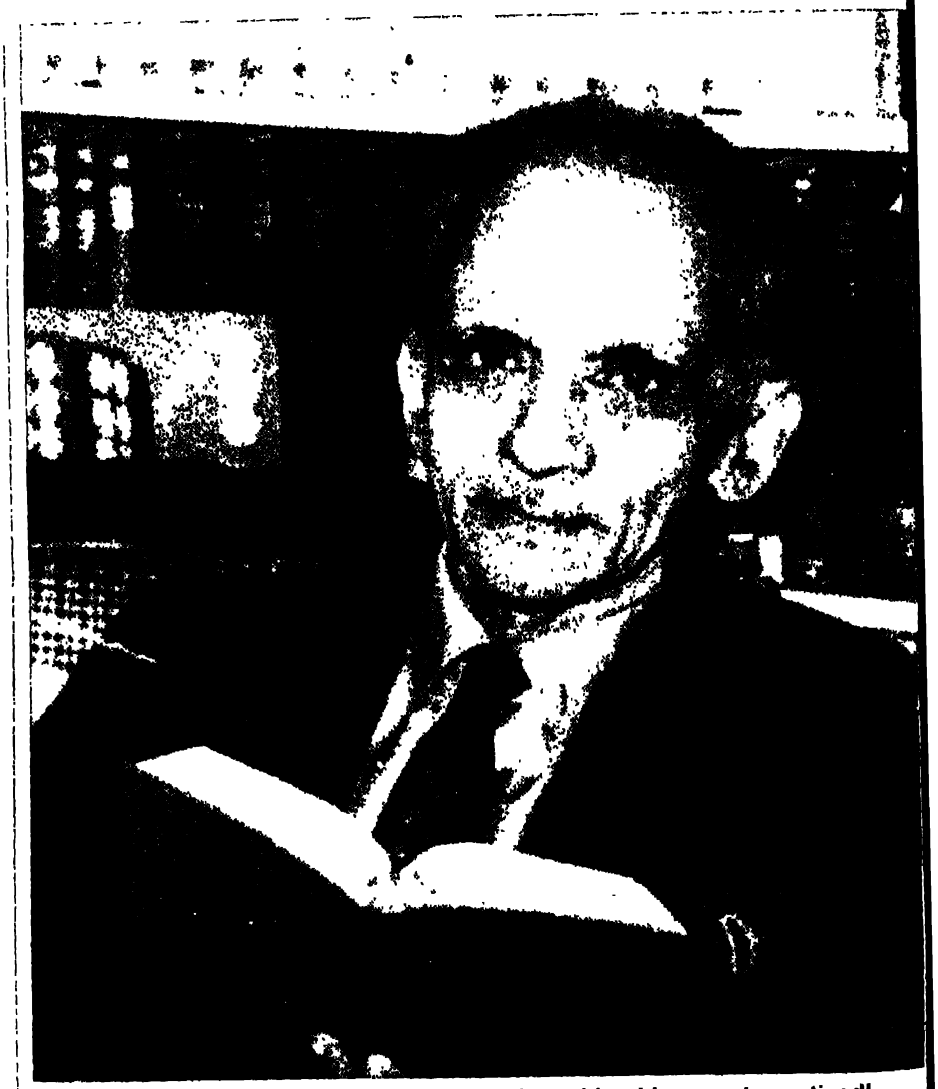
But the author of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* knows he does not have too much time. In any case, passing time is marked in his sitting room, cluttered with precious books, paintings and a large collection of European music, by a clock — English, not Swiss — chiming sweetly.

Nirad*babu*'s exclusive interview celebrates his transition to his 100th year on November 23. It is reassuring to note that age has not dimmed either his tremendous zest for life or his mischievous, even malicious, sense of humour.

He recalls how an Italian girl, young and beautiful, naturally, had once kissed him out of gratitude for his literary genius. Now, young Bengali women, who were reading him in Bengali, were apparently ready to do the same.

With a high-pitched cackle, he jokes: "But I am petrified what effect any kissing will have on me." The grand old man of Indian letters has an important announcement: his new work, a "testmament" predicting the end of civilisation within 200 to 400 years, will be published in India next March by Oxford University Press.

Nirad*babu* has lived alone since his wife, Amiya, died on September 17, 1994, after 62 years of a very happy marriage. He is coping well though he avoids the cold emptiness of their bedroom. There is a photograph of her in an Oxford park feeding the ducks.



Nirad C. Chaudhuri: 'I have never preached anything I have not practised'

Though he will not admit it, he has had a go at making *begun bhaaja* (fried aubergine) and *shiddho bhaath* (boiled rice), according to his 63-year-old eldest son, Dhruva, who occasionally comes over from Delhi.

He has bought his father a microwave so that the old man can warm his own packaged supermarket meals. Nirad*babu* manages on a modest pension though he has not lost his taste for fine wine. A cleaning lady, provided by the local council, does the housework.

Behind his barbs aimed at the

Bengalis, there appears to be an underlying affection "I live as an authentic Bengali," he insists. "I am the only Indian who wears nothing but *dhoti* and *paanjabi* at home."

When he goes out, however, he is dressed in a smart suit and transformed into the perfect English gentleman. His head will be covered in one of the six hats he keeps in a neat line in his hallway. It causes him anguish that the England which drew him to Oxford and which inspired him to write *A Passage to England* has been replaced by a harsher, more brutal society.

Recently, he received a letter from the police warning him to be on the lookout for muggers who prey on old people. Now so frail that he has had to give up his daily walks, the tiny figure of Nirad*babu* is clearly an easy target He says his eyesight is so bad that he is "half blind".

"Can you tell me the English people are civilised when you cannot go from here to there without the risk of being murdered?" he asks angrily "That great nation should become so degenerate I could not forsee even in 1970," he reflects

By the front door are piled copies of *The Times* which Nirad*babu* continues to take for an odd reason "I want to know how degenerate English people can be *The Times* is the most degraded paper today It writes in English which is not used by even the *News of the World*."

His deepest admiration had once been reserved for the British Parliament, which he now calls "contemptible" and the Church of England, which he dismisses as "corrupt".

The nature of the book business in Britain is such that publishers have to hype their "products", sell their authors to newspapers and television and promote each major work by taking the writer on a whirlwind PR trip round the country. Even many of the Indian students at Oxford are probably unaware of Nirad*babu*'s presence. In the country at large, he has a low profile. In any case, Nirad*babu* now writes mostly in Bengali, for such publications, as the Puja numbers of *Desh* in Calcutta.

His scholarship, which has allowed him to master English, Bengali, Sanskrit and French, remains formidable. He gets by in Greek and Latin. He is forever diving into books, many of them his own — *Hinduism, The Continent of Circe* which won him the Duff Cooper prize, *Scholar Extraordinary*, a biography of Max Mueller, *Clive of India* and *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*

He used to write on a manual typewriter but now has a word processor though he does not make much use of it. As with human beings he divides writers into two classes — *paagal* (mad) and *chhaagal* (goats). He reckons he belongs to the first.

His opinion of the current crop of celebrity Indian writers is not flattering.

"Coward! Living under police protection," he says contemptuously of Salman Rushdie whose motivation, Nirad*babu* claims, was to make money. "Then when he found himself in a tight corner he squealed. One thing I dislike about writers is cowardice and this is a damned coward. What does he write? Rubbish."

Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry and the others, he adds, "write in the current literary jargon which gets out of date every six months almost."

Arundhati Roy merits, a "Who?"

His opinion is: "If we are not born English and want to write English we should write the English which has been good English for at least 200 years. Otherwise we will date in six months. I have read every bit of good English prose from the 16th century to 1920. I know what I am saying."

Literary critics in Britain say that although Nirad C. Chaudhuri now attracts a small but erudite following, his place as a writer is assured.

One familiar with what people read today is Ronald Warwick, a lecturer and writer who was "wowed" by *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* — this emerges as Nirad*babu*'s most popular book.

Pointing out that N.C. Chaudhuri is listed behind Chaucer in the *Cambridge University Guide to Literature in English*, Warwick says, "He has chosen not to write in a popular genre like a novel. His kind of writing goes back to Chesterton and Belloc — social commentary and

His wife, Amiya, and sons: 12 years his junior, Amiya Chaudhuri died in 1994 after a long and happy marriage of 62 years

historical observation. His interests and prejudices are not commonplace ones which conspire to make him a less well known writer than he ought to be or deserves to be."

Suggesting that the Indian has "the way of a gadfly", Warwick argues, "he has a tremendously combativorm of intellect. The truth is got at by arguing things out. We have lost it He has got it He has no one to argue with him now."

Warwick, who used to work at the Commonwealth Institute Library in London, forecasts, "He is going to be a far more important figure in years to come. He writes English with enormous style, great beauty and clarity. No word is there accidentally."

The TV presenter, Clive James, who recently publised a novel about Bombay, *The Silver Castle*, read Nirad*babu* for background and was "blown away".

John Bayley, 71, who was Warren professor of English literature at Oxford from 1973 to 1993 states, " As a writer in English he is very remarkable and right up there in the front rank."

The distinguished columnist and author, John Grigg, 72, who first met Nirad*babu* in Delhi nearly 50 years ago, believes *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* will stand the test time. "In my eyes, he has a very high standing, though his habit of making mischief gets the better of his judgment at times."

His former editor at Chatto & Windus, Jeremy Lewis, reveals that although *Th y Hand, Great Anarch!* was over 1,000 pages long, at Nirad*babu*'s say not a word was cut. The book was written by the author without the help of notes or a diary, "straight out of Nirad Chaudhuri's head".

Lewis would often visit the author whom he found a "self-absorbed man, a great man not remotely interested in others". But the two volumes of his autobiography, emphasises Lewis, "constitute one of the great autobiographies in the language, and one of the few contemporay works one can imagine people reading in two hundred years time."

On Nirad*babu*'s shelves is a book, given by an admirer — an autographed copy of *A Second Paradise* by Naveen Patnaik presented by the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis who sought him out and took him to lunch at the Ritz in London.

Nirad*babu*'s own view of his role is simple: "I consider myself a corrective to my people. Bengalis are extremely narrow and they have accepted defeat and resorted to escapism. They resent being told thay are not fit for anything. All the Bengali vices proceed from weakness, never from bad disposition. Even if a tiger comes

into their garden, they will say it is a cat."

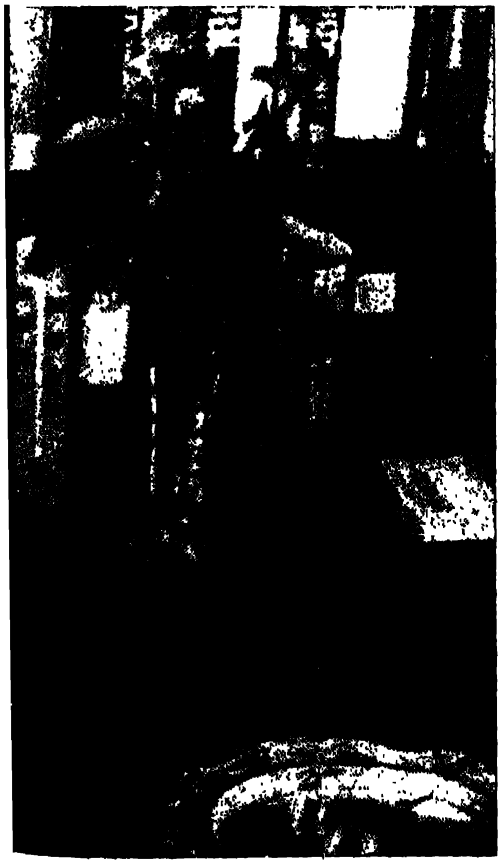
He feels — wrongly perhaps — that he has not received critical acclaim from his countrymen, "In more than 70 years of writing in English, I have never heard or read any Indian praising my English. Why? They neither understand nor appreciate the English which is English."

He says that in the 26 years he has lived in Oxford, only two Bengali families have been intimate with him and now even they have dropped off. "They feel an alienation."

In contrast, Oxford University, gave him an honorary degree in 1990. And when he was awarded an honorary CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in 1992 from the Queen, the citation described him as "one of the great writers in this century in the English language."

He pulls out the *New York Times* review of *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* and reads out the line which reduces himself to almost uncontrollable mirth: "Nirad C Chaudhuri is a fiction created by the Indian writer of the same name." He says, this observation by David Lelyveld, is the "most accurate estimate of me by a Westerner."

He remembers the *Hindustan Times* review of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* had said "the book is only lavatory writing."



He remembers, too, his 28 years in Delhi, when he had encountered mostly Punjabi women. He found 50 per cent of them extremely handsome while another 25 per cent "purely judging by features," were really beautiful.

"But I have never felt attracted to any Punjabi girl," he confesses. "A Punjabi girl will rub me all over and will not produce any sensation. Their limitation is that they are 'mindless'."

As for Bengali women, "10 per cent will not be beautiful but I can hardly resist a Bengali girl". He was 34 when he married his wife, Amiya, nearly 12 years his junior.

"In my whole life I have not had a physical relationship with any woman except her," he emphasises "I tell these *haramzada* English, how many men can boast you had no physical relations with a woman till his 34th year? How many can boast a physical relationship with one woman in your whole life? I can say that. I have the right to preach. I have never preached anything I have not practised."

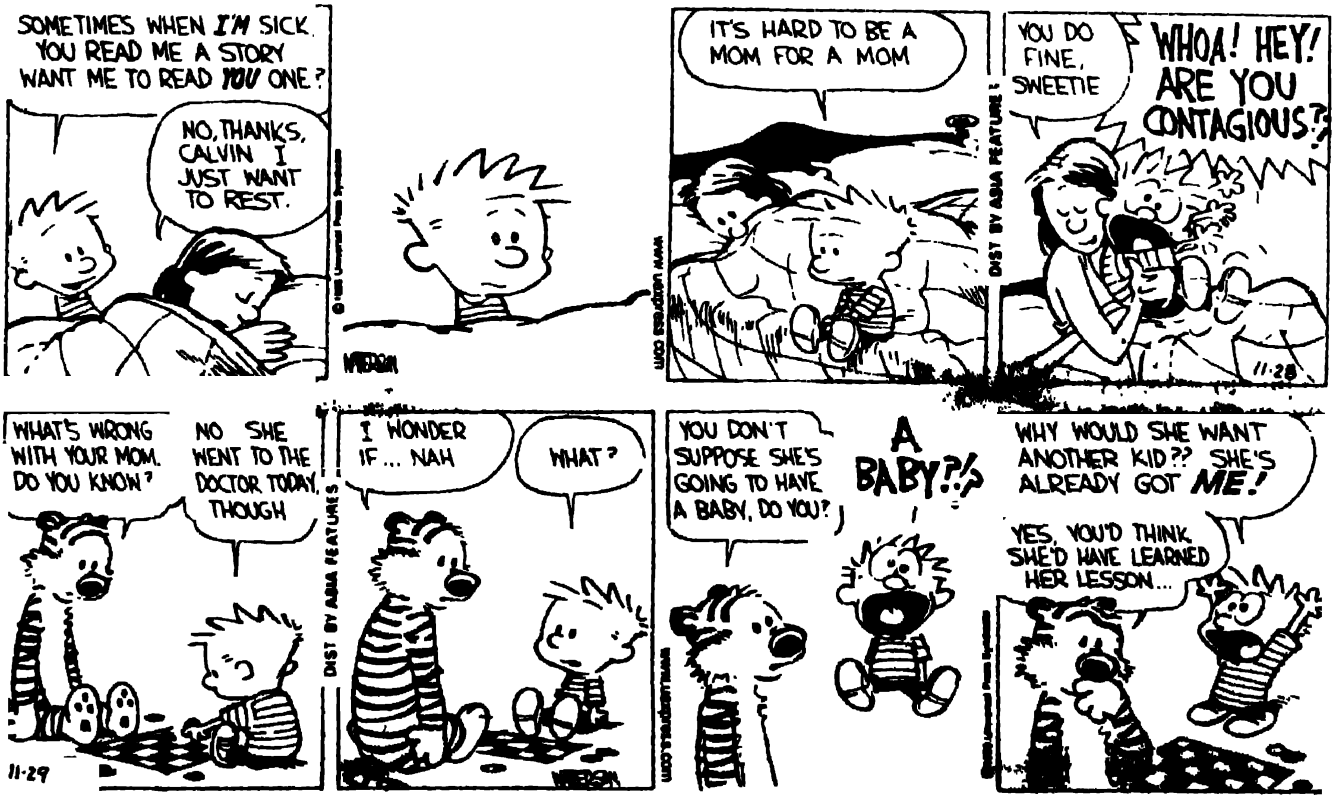
He calls his life "the survival of the unfittest". Although he abandoned belief in a God at the age of 20, he is of the conviction that there is "some mercy in the universe which takes care of precisely those who are least fit to take care of themselves. Religion says you cross the cosmos I say I am carried along the cosmos."

He is not in the mood to pontificate or offer unwanted advice. "Old men give good advice," he cackles, "because they cannot set a bad example." ■

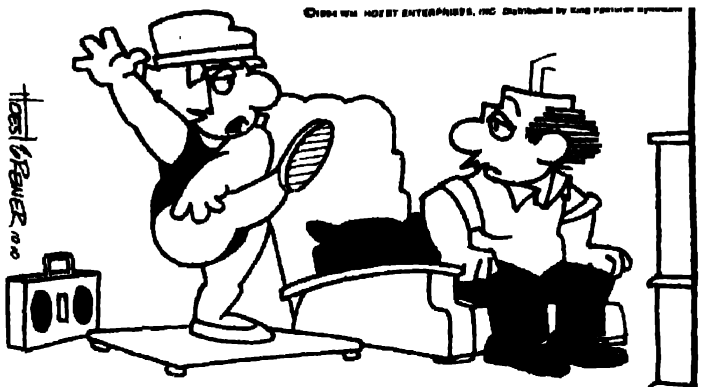
COMICS

ARCHIE

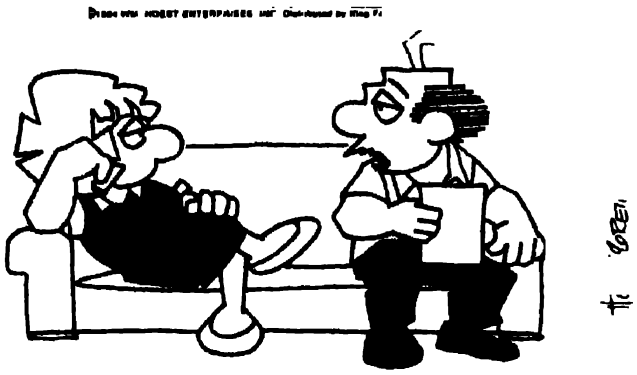
CALVIN AND HOBBES WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS

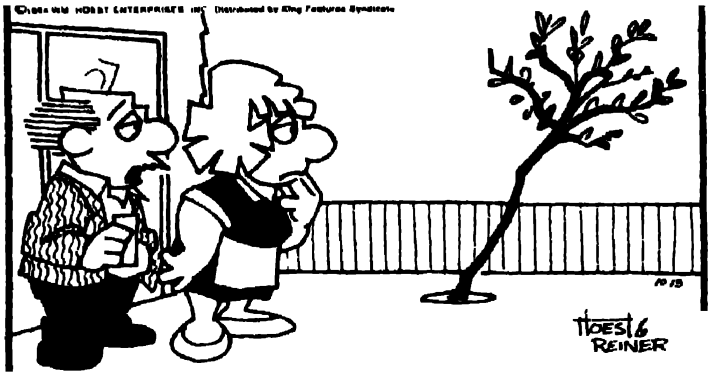


"JUST PRETEND I'M NOT HERE, LEROY."



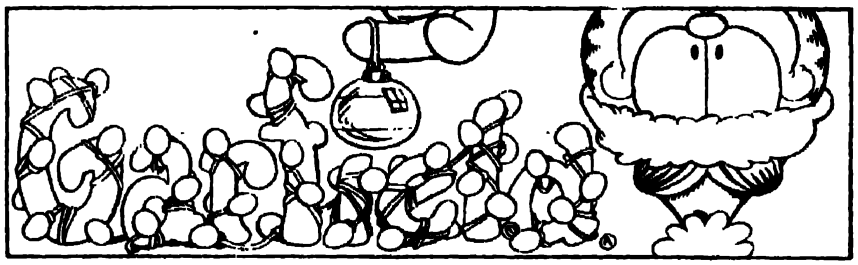
"HOW CAN YOU SAY WE NEVER GO ANYWHERE, LORETTA? WE'VE GONE INTO DEBT."

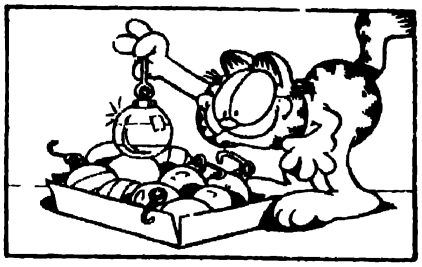
"LEROY HAS HIS BAD DAYS AND HIS WORSE DAYS."

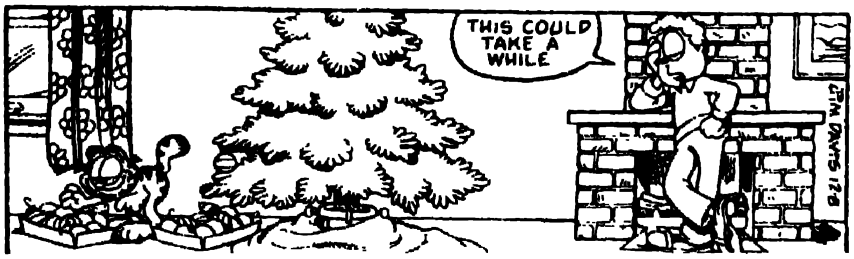


"WELL, SO MUCH FOR YOUR BROTHER IN THE LANDSCAPING BUSINESS."

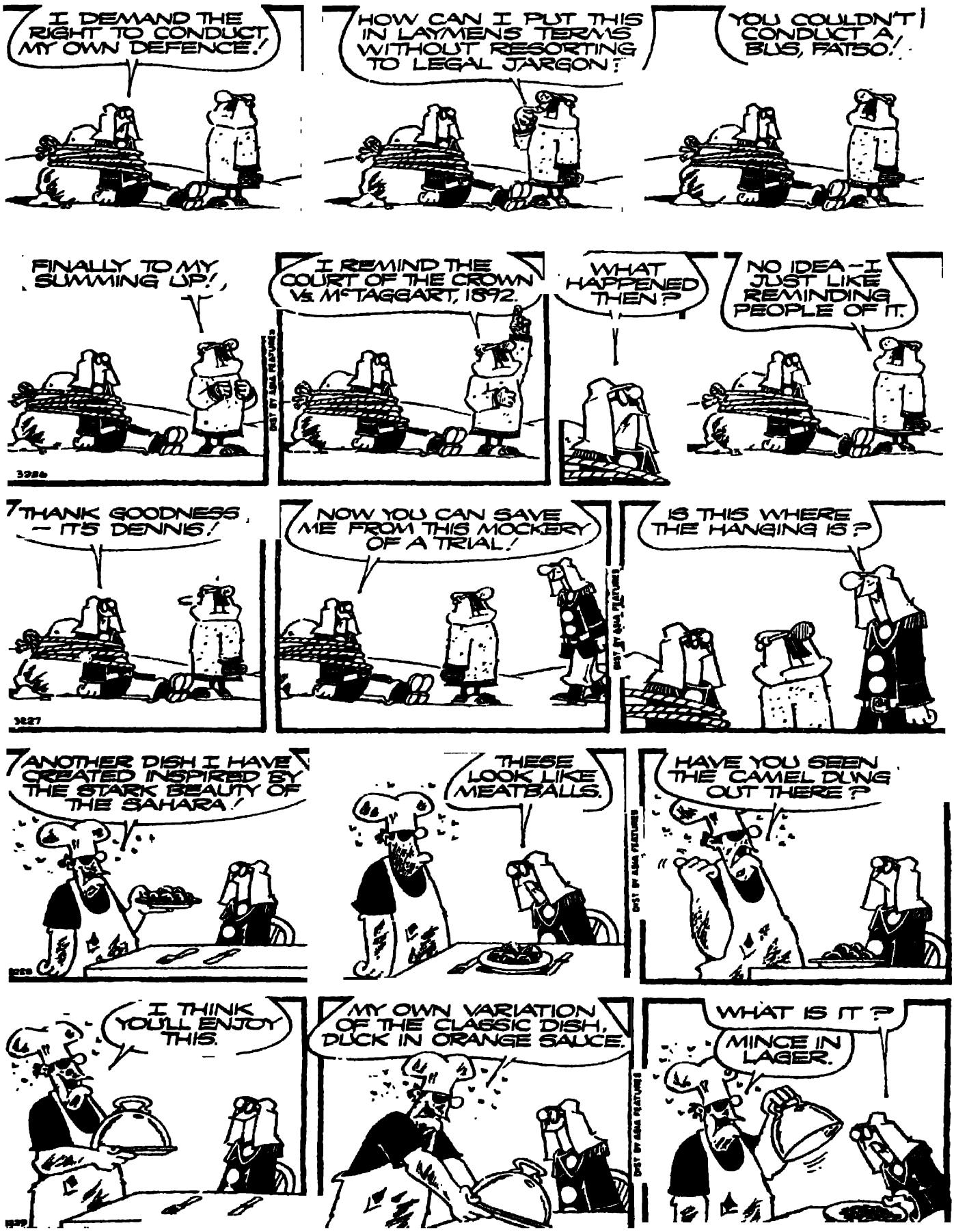
GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

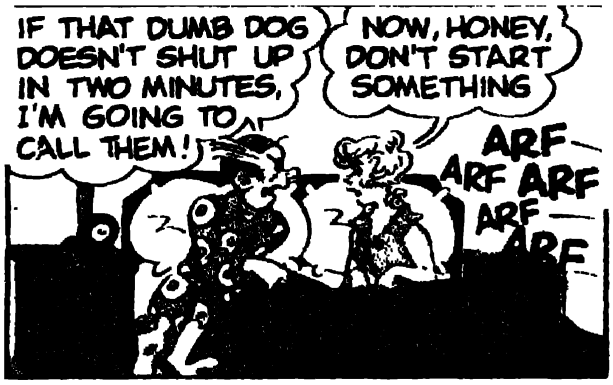






THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP





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SUNEETA SENORITA

***Vaishali Honawar** meets Suneeta Rao, who has just released her new album,* Talaash

It's easy to read Suneeta Rao through the expressions that flit across her face. Her eyes dance as she talks about her new album, *Talaash*, released just days ago by Asha Bhonsle; a smile lights up her face when she says that music is the greatest love of her life; a shutter comes down at a personal query.

But she's feeling good about life in general—you can see that as she snuggles into a chair on the terrace of her flat in suburban Bombay overlooking the sea. The response to her video, *Dehka Dehka*, which is being aired over Channel V and MTV, has been "tremendous" and that could mean the album's already a hit.

It's been four years since *Paree*, Rao's first and perhaps only big hit, was released. Over seven years since her first pop album, *Senorita*, and nearly 14 years since she started out as a songstress in theatre musicals. It's been a long time but Suneeta Rao shows no signs of wear.

In fact, she looks much younger than her 29 years. And even in a loose nightie with her face scrubbed clean of make-up, she resembles the swan-like, flamboyant, energetic beauty that she is on stage. "I've always been a performer—right from my childhood," she says. "I would walk into a room and announce my arrival, create an audience from my family and perform for them. Performing comes very naturally to me."

Not surprising then that she started acting in theatre musicals while still at college. During her five years at St Xaviers' she did five musicals, including *Evita*, *Grease* and *Bottoms Up*.

And she did brilliantly in academics, too. "I was something of a mugpot," she laughs. "I would learn whole chapters by heart and recite them word for word. It still works today when I have to learn my dance steps!"

After graduating with economics in 1988, Rao opted for a career she had always dreamed about: singing. Her first pop album, *Senorita*, was released in 1989—among the first of its kind in the country.

Suneeta Rao: Energetic beauty

Those were the days before Channel V and MTV had revolutionised the music scene in India and there weren't too many takers for Hindi pop. *Senorita*, however, did well—"it sold 75,000 copies which was quite a good number". But even if it hadn't, there would have been no turning back for the girl who grew up listening to Barbra Streisand, Whitney Houston, Billy Joel, Aretha Franklin, Asha Bhonsle and R.D. Burman, wanting to be one of them.

One of the greatest moments in her life, she says, was when Asha Bhonsle released *Talaash*. "She listened to my songs and said she liked them!" says Rao happily. "The release was in a disco and she said it was the first time she'd been inside one. And I told her that her voice had entered the disco long before she had!"

Her own love for music, says Suneeta, is ingrained. "Coming from a south Indian family, music and dance were always part of my life." Also, her mother, Kamla Sista, has been a yesteryear playback singer.

Suneeta trained in Bharatanatyam and in both Hindustani and Carnatic music and admits that this stands her in good stead when she sings pop today. "I still try to be a good girl and do my *riyaaz* everyday despite my erratic schedule," she laughs.

Erratic, maybe, but her schedule must certainly be a busy one. Her years in the music world have seen her do many things, including playback in Hindi films, ad jingles and numerous live shows.

She's also got four albums under her belt, including *Dhuaan* and a compilation. And while she has so far turned out fewer hits than many others of her genre—"Some have said I'm a one-song wonder," she laughs—Rao has no regrets. "I would like to make music that stays with people for a long, long time." Besides she's been maturing as a singer by the day and that alone makes it worth her while.

"Music," she says thoughtfully, "has three functions—it has to either make people want to boogey, cry or calm them. It also has to communicate and touch hearts. If my music can do any of these, I would think I have achieved something."

Paree, perhaps, gave her that sense of fulfilment. The haunting video made by Ram Madhvani tells the story of a schoolgirl's crush on her teacher. But no, it was not autobiographical, says Suneeta.

"It was completely Ram's interpretation—he saw a sensual element there, and an innocence. It had nothing to do with my life, really, though I am sure that at some point in my childhood I must have had a crush on one of my teachers," she says.

Dehka Dehka is more Suneeta Rao, a vibrant fusion of dance and music. In the video she has indulged her

love for experimentation with the various dance forms, using Daksha Seth's dancers and their unusual combination of Kalaripayattu and Chhau. The video, incidentally, has been made by Suneeta's sister, Aarti Rao Shetty, who runs a filmmaking unit along with her husband, Sunil Shetty, in Bangalore.

Talaash, says Suneeta, has something for everyone. "It's extremely groovy, melodious, ethnic and folky in parts. *Talaash* is a ghazal, *Dekha Dekha* is a grinding, earthy tune, while *Kesariya*, which will be my next video, is a rap-techno tune that everbody loves already."

It's taken her a year-and-a-half to come out with *Talaash* and she's involved herself in every aspect of it. She has composed the music along with Ranjit Barot. The lyrics are by Shyam Anuragi but Suneeta stresses that she would make it a point to sit down with him and tell him "just what I wanted".

Being such a perfectionist herself, does she approve of the dozens of music albums and videos being churned out by pop artistes overnight?

"Well, it's good that there's some competition today," she says. "It'll do the business a lot of good." But, she adds, in the long run it is the best talent that will stay while the rest fall by the wayside.

" It is a very different scene today from the days I came out with *Senorita*," she recalls. "At the time there was no competition and no opportunities either. Luckily, Doordarshan introduced this programme called *Pop Time* around the time *Senorita* was released and some of us on the scene then got a chance to make videos and air them."

Today, she says, you could be a total newcomer but 53 countries will watch your video. "It is terrific! And for someone like me who already has all this experience, such a platform is a tremendous thing. At last we may have a parallel pop industry to rival the Hindi film industry."

Posing with Daksha Seth's dancers while shooting for *Dekha Dekha*

But while one cannot dispute that the audio-visual revolution has been a boon to Indian singers, it has also led to the video being given an equal and sometimes higher place than the song itself. Can this not be frustrating for a singer who may often find his/her song eclipsed by the pretty picture on screen?

No, says Suneeta. For her, the visual element has an important role to play in a song. "Every time one hears a song, one forms a picture in one's mind or associates it with an event in his/her life," she says " To make a song into a video or to perform it on stage enhances it and gives one more audio-visual fulfilment."

Besides, she says, if a song is "really good, it will click no matter how good or bad the video is. And if the video is terrific, it will help the sales of the song."

As for some new groups today which cash in on their looks rather than their talent for singing, "it is totally a marketing strategy and if it pays off, that's good for them. But for myself, music is the most important thing and all the things I do to glamorise it, on stage and in my videos, are simply accessories."

To illustrate her point, Rao cites Madonna "who's given some classic hits, is a good performer, a great looker, and whose music is very cleverly and fantastically written. At the same time, it's music you can boogey to. She's also one performer who can just pick up a guitar and entertain an audience. How good she and her videos look do not distract one from her music."'

She admits, though, that a pop singer has to do so much more today than just sing. One has to be able to dance, act, do promotional and social campaigns, veejay...

Oh, she's not complaining. It's fun, so long as it doesn't intrude on her music. But she has no second thoughts before turning down offers to compere shows— game shows and music shows— "because I see that as a different profession altogether and not something I would like to get involved with"

Suneeta's not planning any personal involvements either, in the near future. No, there's no one special and no, she's not waiting for Mr Right. "Love and marriage will happen when they have to. I am just getting on with my life and my music," she says firmly.

Besides, she has her piano lessons keeping her hands full. And then she loves to read, watch movies, dance .. Every day in Suneeta Rao's life is "different". And she'll have it no other way. |

With Asha Bhonsle who released her new album, *Talaash*

BAYWATCH

The Andaman islands, with their white beaches, beautiful corals and emerald forests, offer an ideal vacation for those who love nature, reports ***Susmita Banerjee***

As the Boeing 737 hovers over the hill-ringed Port Blair airport, passengers gasp at the breathtaking sight of the shimmering landscape beneath -- visible to the eye in varying hues of unbelievable purple, turquoise and green through a smokescreen of mists and wispy clouds As the plane lands, the sun ducks behind an ominous spread of grey and you experience the first heavy shower of a tropical island.

But as the car meanders through the undulating, snaky roads into the emerald island, a searing sun greets you and you are told by the hotel guide that it never rains uniformly on the island. If South Point was experiencing a heavy shower, Wandoor, an hour's drive away, would be having warm sunny weather

As there are very few vehicles on the road, drivers take liberties with their speedometers while traffic policemen at instersections stand more like mannequins, posted there to complete the pictorial canvas. White and yellow cottages and glass-paned wooden bungalows atop hills peer from behind luxurious foliage and bring back nostalgic memories of Darjeeling in its prime, as neatly attired little brats with rucksacks on their back, saunter to schools.

It takes time for the visitor from the mainland to get used to the idyllic beauty and calm of the island. Apart from the occasional roar of aeroplanes either taking off or landing and the murmer of the sea, there is no sound to disturb the tranquillity of this paradise.

Although the islanders are full of tales of the indigenous Jarawa, Ongi and Sentinalese tribes, there are very few chances of accosting any of these people as they are screened off from the public, living in reserved settlements where no one is allowed to intrude, except with special permits.

With the smell of the sea in the air, the scent of a strange flower intoxicating you, and the sky a brilliant shade of blue, you fall irrevocably in love with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at first sight.

Ashoke Chakrabarty

A panoramic view of the blue-green sea of the Andaman islands

The Island Development Authority keeps a strict vigil on tourists descending on the island to ensure that the archipelago's delicate ecosystem of priceless corals, rain forests, white beaches and crystal clear waters is not damaged. And so instead of aiming at mass-market tourism, it encourages a limited number of up-market tourists to visit the islands. No wonder the islands have an unspoilt, untouched look about them, unravaged by human marauders.

Accommodation varies from the cheap dormitories to the very expensive like the Welcomgroup's Bay Island hotel. But for the tourist on his maiden visit who would like to take back indelible images of the sea, the Sinclairs Bay View would be an ideal economical choice. The conical snow-white roof of the hotel is unmistakable from a distance and once you check into any one of its 30 tastefully furnished rooms and make a beeline for the verandah, you feel as if you are sailing on a ship! The sea, gently caressing the shore, is right under your nose with only a garden acting as a divide; the blue stretches interminably before you till it meets the sky somewhere in the indefinable horizon; palm-dotted islands look like minuscule ikebana arrangements in the distance and there is not a soul to trample on your privacy or spoil your midday reverie save the gentle knock of the waiter.

The hotel is fashioned in such a way that all the 30 rooms offer a spectacular view of the sea from

dawn to dusk. If you opt for the modified American plan, it would include a well-appointed AC room, bed-tea, special Sinclairs breakfast and one major meal for Rs 2,090 (double) and Rs 1,449 (single).

Some may opt for the American plan (AC room, bed-tea, breakfast, lunch, evening tea and dinner) for Rs 2,600 (double) and Rs 1,700 (single). There is also the Continental plan (room, bed-tea and breakfast only) for Rs 1,690 (double) and Rs 1,245 (single). Yet others may prefer the European plan (room only) for Rs 1,400 (double) and Rs 1,100 (single). The well-heeled tourist may prefer the luxury suite (European plan) for Rs 2,000. All non-AC accommodation costs less.

The modified American plan suits most budgets. Picture this: you wake up to the song of the winds and the unperturbed cadance of the waves, and then enjoy a warm cup of tea lazying on your bed. Then after a quick hot shower you can stroll into the garden or sprint down the stone steps that lead to the lagoon, where the hotel has constructed a swimming pool which traps the waters of the sea during high tide by locking the sluice gates. So, you get the privacy of a secluded beach plus the constant water level of a swimming pool.

The hotel site is awash in memories of the British Raj and it is even rumoured that the flamboyant liquor baron Vijay Mallya was one of the top bidders for this hotel. You will chance upon five Japanese bunkers at the base of the hotel and also a

The Sinclairs Bay View, Port Blair

All the rooms at Sinclairs offer this spectacular view of the sea

Japanese canon! Incidentally, the island was under Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 and there are stories galore of Japanese treasures lying hidden somewhere on the island and the existence of a secret tunnel under the sea linking Port Blair and Ross Island which is stashed with gold!

The multi-cuisine restaurant, The Palms, on the second floor, offers a panoramic view of the sea. Don't miss the delectable Tiger prawns and the local *Surmai* fish cooked in mustard sauce. The weekends are Tandoori nights; so dinner should include some sizzling chicken tandooris. The banquet hall on the second floor is ideal for hosting marriage receptions and seminars with the sea as the backdrop.

There is no night life in Port Blair, people tend to retire after 7.30 in the evening; but once the open-air discotheque and roof-top restaurant comes up early next year at Sinclairs, the young, yuppy crowd will have somewhere to go.

There are a number of enchanting island cruises and city tours which the visitor should not miss: trips to historic Ross Island, Viper Island, the coral islands (Jolly Buoy or Red Skin). Jolly Buoy, an hour's cruise from Wandoor jetty through a forest-fringed blue-green sea, will introduce the visitor to an amazing world of underwater coral life seen through glass-bottomed boats. If you want a closer look at the corals, you could hire snorkelling and scuba diving equipment. At Sinclairs you could even seek the assistance of Manvi Thakkar, the water sports expert from Mumbai, who will teach you scuba diving.

The notorious Cellular Jail is a must on the city tour itinerary. A Scottish couple, Mr and Mrs Dunthorne, inspecting the gallows where once innumerable Indian freedom fighters were hanged, cried out in horror, "Oh, how could they!" Apparently, they didn't know about this place being a British penal settlement till they came here. "We only read about the coral islands in the *Lonely Planet*," they said.

A light and sound show is held on the premises in the evening to recapture the mood of the Independence movement and the guide takes pride in pointing out that the film *Sazaa-e-Kaalapaani* was shot here.

Going round the city, you will discover the roads are immaculately clean, because thanks to the administration, they are washed every night and nowhere will you encounter a pothole; local buses look spic and span, all public places have a brand new look about them: the inhabitants, forming a cross-cultural matrix of Bengalis, North Indians, Tamils, Telugus and Malyalis, are either thriving businessmen or well-placed government servants.

Seduced as you are, the moment when you have to say adieu to the paradise is painful. Apart from the few mementoes you pick up from the local Aberdeen Bazaar, there's nothing you can really bring back that will remind you of this memorable holiday. And you cannot smuggle any corals into your baggage because it will be subject to check at the airport and if you are caught... ■

SONALI RATHOD *shot into the limelight with the release ... more albums including* Bhajan Kailash, Dil-Kash, Khazana-85, Bhajan *followed within a short span of three years. She has sung light* Jaan-E-Alam, Bahadurshah Zafar *and* Gufteg*u. The former ... married to ghazal singer, Roopkumar Rathod.*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be able to create harmonious music along with my husband and daughter.

What is your greatest fear?
No comments.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My first guru Pandit Hridaynath Mangeshkar and all the great musicians of our country.

What do you dislike most in others?
Untidiness and people who are not punctual.

What do you dislike most in yourself?
I am very hypersensitive and a steadfast person at that.

What is your most precious possession?
My old *tanpura*.

What objects do you always carry?
A photograph.

How would you like to die?

During one of my concerts

What is your source of sustenance?
Riyaz—spending fruitful hours with my ustadji, Khan Saheb Ustad Niyaz Ahmed.

On what occasions do you lie?
When I don't want to meet people during my *riyaz*.

What is your greatest ... could no ... my most favourite singers, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali and Ustad Amir Khan in person.

What has been your happiest moment?
The birth of our daughter Sanchita.

What things turn in your favour?
[illegible]

Your ...
[illegible]

Here do you relax?
[illegible]

What do you most want to achieve?
[illegible]

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
[illegible]

What is your greatest fear?
[illegible]

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
[illegible]

What do you dislike most in others?
[illegible]

What do you dislike most in yourself?
[illegible]

What is your most precious possession?
[illegible]

What objects do you always carry?
[illegible]

What is your most precious possession?

My old *tanpura*

[illegible]

of ... of Shruti and harmony too.

What makes you most depressed?
Being alone on a rainy day.

What ... you dislike most on your appearance?
I am not too fussy about my appearance.

What is your favourite food?
Chole Bhi Kul.

What is your favourite journey?
To the mountains.

What is your favourite dream?
To be with my beloved on top of the world.

What is your nightmare?
Not being able to sing.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
[illegible]

Saharsh

FOR MEN

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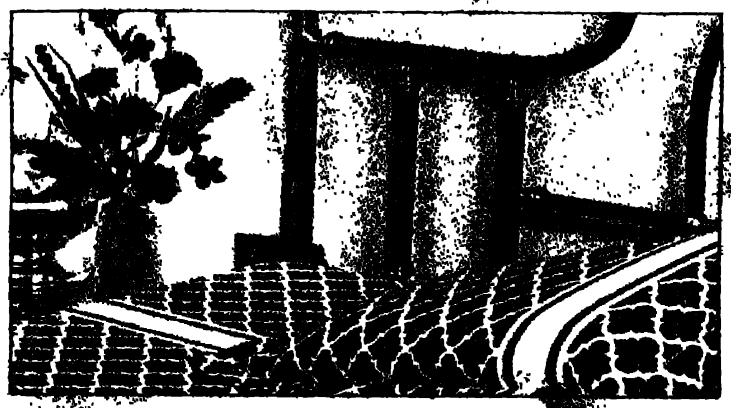

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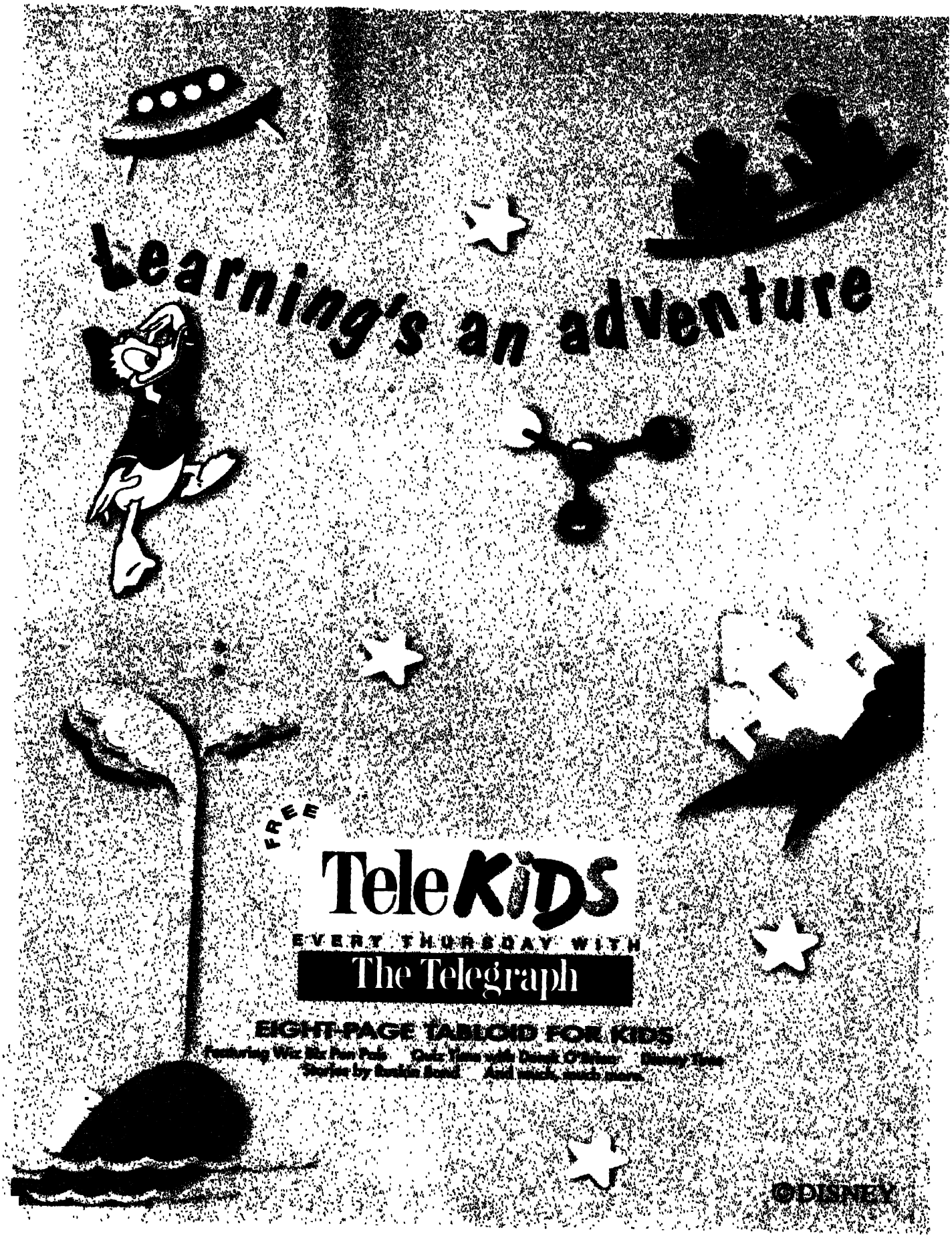
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POST MORTEM

Nandy and Internet

■ The cover story on Pritish Nandy was interesting ('Spaced Out', October 20). Although a bit of a drifter, moving from one profession to another, Nandy will always be remembered for his sensational exposes in print.

He was identified as a fearless investigative journalist who would keep pursuing truth.

His success in television, however, did not echo his success in the print media. He looked too opinionated and pompous as an anchorperson

The cyber revolution has many prospects in India. The electronic media is the 'in' thing and Nandy, with his penchant for the Net, should get the spotlight back on him.
Siddhartha Bhattacharjee,
Calcutta

■ Kudos to Nandy for his ever-changing image. But it is always as a journalist that he will be better known. We still remember his tirade against the Orissa chief minister, J.B. Patnaik, which led to Nandy's office being searched by the Orissa police.
Arta Mishra,
Cuttack

■ Nandy is a man of many parts. If he was a ruthless journalist, he was also the soft, romantic poet of sensitive emotions. And this found expression in his concern for the environment. Now, Nandy has developed a fettish for the Net. He's clearly a man always on the move.
Subrata Saha,
Calcutta

Why single out Miss World; the protestors should first criticise Bollywood films

AB Babies

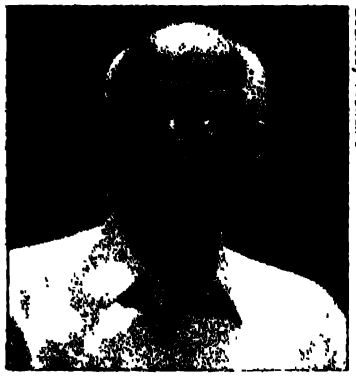
■ 'Feminists or Feminazis?', (November 10) rightly says that the women's organisations protesting against the Miss World contest in Bangalore are no different from the Taliban forces in Afghanistan.

Feminism does not advocate militancy, it is a school of thought which questions certain norms of patriarchy, which have reduced women to objects of sex.

Feminisn expects, but does not force, women to find their own mode of self-expression. So the agitators cannot be termed feminists.
Sarbani Bose,
Calcutta

■ Can the protestors censure the Bombay film industry which is getting from bad to worse because of the obscenity being displayed on screen?
Anjana Banerjee
Calcutta

INSIDE



Courtesy Frontline

PAGE 4

R.K. NARAYAN, the grand old man of fiction, turned 90 recently. An interview with the writer on his life, his literary works and his myriad experiences in life

PAGE 26

THERE'S MORE to Singapore than the shopping plazas.

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan

SECTIONS

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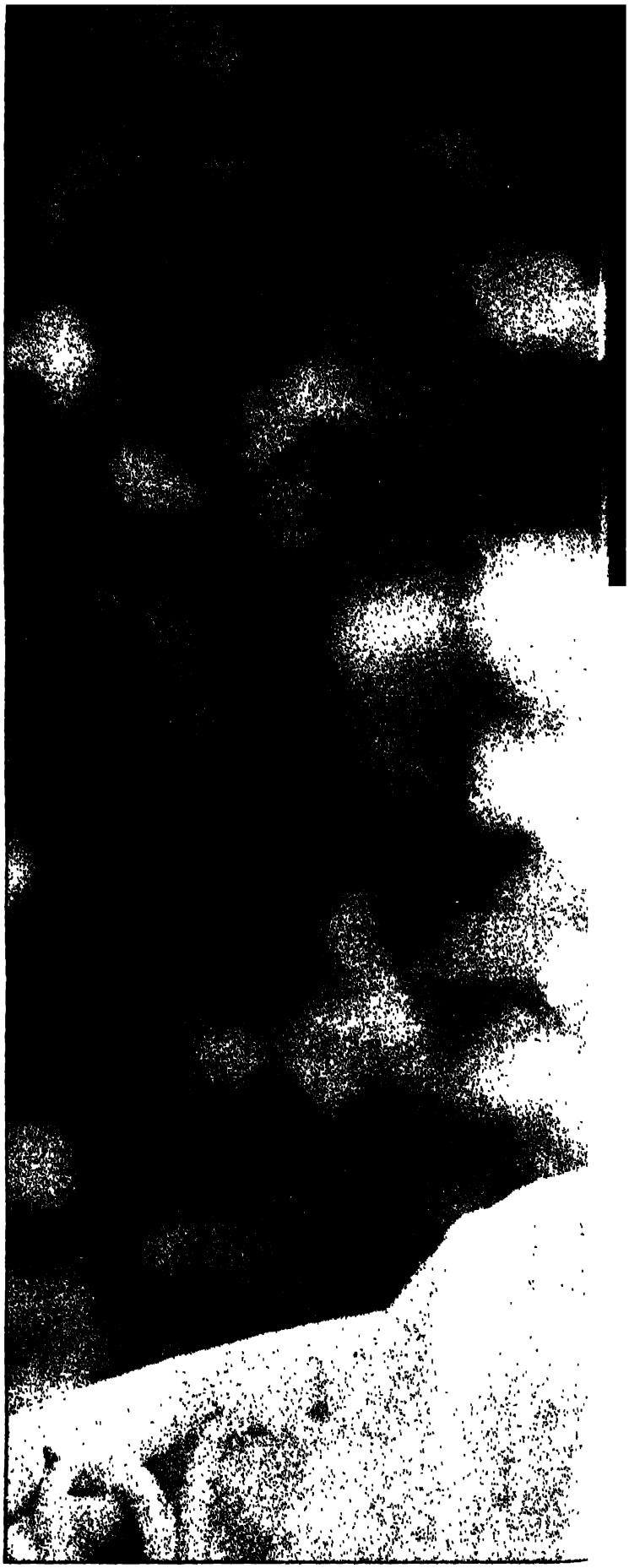
Cover R.K Narayan with his great-granddaughter, photograph courtesy Frontline

COVER STORY

THE WRITE CHOICE

R.K. Narayan's facility with words has stood him in good stead throughout his life. ***Sudha G. Tilak*** *meets the writer, who recently turned 90*



Courtesy Frontline

"SCIENTIFIC HOAXES WOULD MAKE FOR A good movie," says R.K. Narayan. A warm mid-morning chat session has turned to Ramar Pillai, the wannabe scientist who insists that he can make herbal petrol. Narayan is dismissive of such charlatans. But he is quick to agree that such tricks are pretty commonplace in India.

He recollects, with a gleeful laugh, the day when he was relaxing in his porch in Mysore and a mendicant came along. "He poured *vibhuthi* from his sleeve and told me that he could do more such miracles and asked for some money. I told him that I could perform better tricks and after watching me he left discouraged."

It is such everyday moments that enliven Narayan's writing as well. The regular turn of events; little forgettable incidents; sleepy towns; the humour and gentle pathos of his people; all of these coalesce to make his fiction special and unique.

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan: Enjoying his sunset years and the freedom to write as he pleases

Courtesy Frontline

'At my age I want to get along with the business of living peacefully'

And also the fact that, as biographer, Susan Ram, says, "He is most non-judgmental and gentle even with non-respectable people." Narayan approaches his characters with a dignified gentleness, and presents their actions — or even the world — from their point of view

He had served as a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1989, and on three occasions, he had demanded the abolition of the heavy and burdensome school satchels for school children

He had also raised the issue of making children welt in the sun posing as cheerleaders for visiting VIPs "The sun would be immensely hot in Delhi and these children would be lined up to wave the flags Utter cruelty," he recalls

He reads out a letter written to him by school children With childlike appreciation they scrawl how *Swami and Friends* has been an inspiring text for them "Isn't this charming? I will reply to them," says Narayan.

The girl child also occupies a special place in his heart. "Foeticide is a horrible practice", he says As a member of Parliament, Narayan wanted a Bill to be passed against the foeticide of the female child. "Health clinics in the name of sex determination also go ahead with this abhorrent practice and illiterate women are more often the victims", he says.

Narayan has observed closely the pain that goes with being a woman in traditional Indian society. The tragic cruelty they face is dealt with in *The Dark Room*, held by critics as a book much ahead of its times. Published in 1938, it showcases the angst of a traditional Indian woman pitted against a cruel husband, but unable to rebel.

Narayan began his life as a full-time writer, having decided not to hold such jobs as that of a teacher or a

Susan Ram, academician, and husband N. Ram, journalist and editor, have come up with what can be called a perfect birthday gift. An exhaustive and well-researched biography of R.K. Narayan, their friend of many years.

What is striking about this labour of love is how the Rams treat the subject of their work. The duo adopts an academic approach in tracing Narayan's creative output over 60-odd years; is perceptive in unravelling the germ of the writer's many works; even as they regard their subject with what can best be described as friendly detachment. They have succeeded in elaborating and delineating the social and economic backdrop to Narayan's early life. And their work is bound to help us understand the forces that shaped Narayan, the writer.

As R.K. Laxman, brother of the writer and one of India's leading cartoonists, described it to Narayan, this is a book "that is written with much affection". And one that has successfully avoided the common pitfall of the biographer's t

For Susan Ram, who was working on a research project on South India in the 1970s, R.K. Narayan's works "revealed much about the internal life of the Tamils". As she says, "It opened this society and made it comprehensible for outsiders like me." And gradually, what started as admiration of the evasive Narayan gradually became a solid

clerk. After a few false starts — Narayan says his writing was often moony and sentimental — he finally developed his own style and began to shape up as a writer. Malgudi was formed in his mind's eye and the characters and situations flowed from his pen.

Swami and Friends and *Bachelor of Arts* were published soon. Narayan's dear friend, Purna, had helped cement a friendship between Graham Greene and Narayan. At Greene's suggestion, Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan reduced his name for print to R.K. Narayan.

The author was dealt a harsh blow by fate when his wife, Rajam, died of typhoid in 1939. The two had met in Coimbatore, when Rajam was drawing water from a street tap, and soon after Narayan had befriended her father. The romance between the two was sweet, quaint and unconventional at the same time and culminated in marriage. "No one in our social condition could dare to proceed in the manner I had done," Narayan recalls in his autobiography.

After his wife's death Narayan had to tend to his three-year-old daughter and went into "the most shattering period of his life", in Susan Ram's words. He gave up writing for almost seven years and had some psychic experiences which made him feel his wife's presence as a palpable force.

He soon reverted to his creative self, though, and published his third novel, *The English Teacher*, described by him as the most autobiographical of his works. After that, Narayan went on to produce more than 12 novels, four collections of short stories, two travel books and four compilations of essays.

Not everything he wrote got published, though. Now and again, Narayan would burn many of his manuscripts. As he says, "I have so much of paper stored up that now and then I destroy them". This includes a couple of his handwritten manuscripts destroyed after his wife's

HIS STORY

N. Ram and his wife Susan's biography of R.K. Narayan is a tribute to an old friend

idea for working on a biography.

Says N. Ram, "Narayan is the only writer in India to make a full-time career of writing alone for 64 years which no other Indian writer has done so far." Long years of association between Narayan and *The Hindu* also threw Ram in the writer's company frequently, which helped the biographer get as close a view of the author as possible.

More than 11 years have been spent by the Rams in tracing the letters between Narayan and Graham Greene, Narayan's unpublished works, manuscripts, and most poignant of all, the private jottings of Narayan after his wife's death which he made available to the Rams. Old photographs of Narayan and family have also been restored for publishing in the book.

The Rams: A perfect birthday gift to a friend of many years

While readers could have learnt a lot about Narayan through his books, his nature essays and his autobiography, *My Days*, there was a need for a biography as well. And with *My Days* as a major framework, this book fills the basic need to contextualise Narayan's works.

The history of Narayan's early years is leavened with details of his school — Pursawalkam in Madras where Narayan's first 15 years were spent — the process that turned him into a writer, and the friends who helped him along. This was possible only after intensive travels across India, and in the USA and England, where Narayan's manuscripts are preserved in universities.

The biographers traced all important letters specially those between Narayan and Graham Greene, numbering around 150. A literary association that matured into a friendship lasting over 60 years; the relationship between Narayan and Greene has few parallels in contemporary literature; and receives much attention in both Narayan's autobiography and biography.

The biography, which was the result of many conversations that Susan and Ram had with Narayan, his close relatives and his friends; and, of course, copious research, was released on Narayan's birthday on October 10. But this only brings us up to 1945; the second volume which will deal with the later years should make for even more interesting reading.

IN CONVERSATION

R.K. Narayan on his life and times

Narayan doesn't give interviews. "What is there to say? It's all there in my works," he will hedge. Interviews are tiresome. And he is averse to photographers. So, it is always better to just chat with the venerable writer.

He laughs easily, is interested in knowing people without being curious, and his assessments are more rational than sentimental. He recollects incidents and anecdotes with a bit of play-acting thrown in for good measure, puckering his face in imitation or crossing his arms in a relaxed mood.

This correspondent spent two days conversing with Narayan touching upon things personal, anecdotes, his views on current issues, and his pet peeves and likes. Some excerpts:

"Life at 90 should be free of worries. I have had enough of many things: writing, travelling and others. I have b gun to relax my grip on many things, like sanctioning copyright permissions easily. At my age I do not want to be bothered about mundanities, but to get along with the business of living peacefully without upsetting my health or my routine.

"I have never handled money with ease. I hate all sorts of account-keeping and book-keeping. Nowadays my son-in-law or my granddaughter give me money whenever I want. My wants have become minimal. I only want to buy my medicines and my scented areca nuts. That's all.

"I can live alone at my home in Mysore but taking care of myself needs a support system now and the family is a help in these times. Being a part of a family definitely helps.

"My life is an open book, with no place for privacy at all. It is there all in my books. I follow a leisurely pace. I get up late. Write in long hand when I please and read what interests me at the moment.

"I didn't feel the necessity to learn a skill which could help me get a job at any point in my life. All my life I wanted the freedom to come in as I pleased and leave a work spot when I wanted. That is why I didn't take up a job.

Courtesy: Frontline

"I have been helped by friends at unforseen times. Graham Greene, Purna and little known friends. Being a vegetarian is a problem for many abroad. But during one of my tours to the US, a friend, Sugavanam, would cook my meals in my flat and vanish thereafter for the day. Another friend would help with accommodation while another would take me around. I have been lucky with friends in life

"Modern Indian fiction suffers from a lack of originality. Most young writers want to fit into a specific groove and write with that aim. There is also a general lack of ideas which comes from limited experience and from looking at things from a narrow perspective. Pulp doesn't carry much weight or meaning. Art in all forms has to follow certain norms.

"Protests for wrong issues has become the norm these days. Women in India and feminists must concentrate more on genuine issues. There is little idealism left in people now and they want to make use of protests and *dharnas* for all the wrong causes. Much of the so-called protests are politically motivated or aimed at publicity than for any real benefit.

"Disciplining our country on issues like clean politics, education is a difficult task. For a small country like Singapore administration is easy. Ours is a country with a large variety of people, from various strata with varying educational levels. Conditioning our country will be a difficult task. We will continue to grow in spurts.

"I wanted to be a playwright and dramatist at first. But after writing *Prince Yazid* (1930), I decided against it. Recently my literary agent recovered it from rejected manuscripts and asked me what to do with it. I told him to burn it.

"Coffee saved my life. When I was four or so, I fell seriously ill with pneumonia or something else. The memory that I still have is the doctor who gave up on me and told my grandmother to feed me anything I wanted in the last hours. Since the word I had known at the age was *kapi*, I asked for it and was fed spoonfuls of it. Surprisingly, just after that I bounced back and am around on my 90th year."

death and also a manuscript consigned to the flames by compliant literary agents.

These days, Narayan is enjoying his sunset years and the freedom of writing as he pleases, meeting whom he wishes. Of course, life still has its ups and downs. Age and lack of space have put an end to the long walks by the Marina which helped him as a fledgling writer, and later after his wife's death. His daughter's death (of cancer) recently has been a blow that he has had to deal with.

Nonetheless, there are still no full stops in Narayan's literary life. His 16th novel is progressing at its own pace, as is his personal life, considerably enlivened as it is with the presence of his great-granddaughter, cousins, nephews, nieces, granchildren, and friends. And Malgudi's maker carries on with the business of meeting each day as it comes. ■

EXTRACT

Adventures and EXPLORATIONS

An extract from ***Susan and N.Ram's*** *biography of R.K. Narayan,* The Early Years, *1906-1945*

After the C.R.C., my uncle got me admitted to the Christian College High School, using his influence as an old student. I felt proudof my new school. I left home with a lunch pack early morning by tramcar to George Town, nearly four miles away, through crowds and traffic into the heart of the city. I had been suddenly let loose into a larger world. Purasawalkam, to which I returned in the evening, seemed a backwood. Christian College was practically the first buildng on the Esplanade, and beyond it was a road skirting the beach. From the college terrace one had a view of a blue sea and steamers on the skyline, and a salty air blew in all day Our masters were well dressed, kind and reasonable men, the students very different from the crowd I had known at the Lutheran Mission and the C.R.C. High School. Spacious corridors, a Gothic tower with a bell, a chapel, well-lit classrooms and halls, and an accessible library. At lunchtime, I carried my packet of rice and curd to a bookshop nearby and ate it behind the enormous shelves. It was one of the oldest bookshops in Madras, importing books from all parts of the world. I cannot explain why I was supposed to go there to eat my lunch, except that the proprietor was related to my uncle, who wanted to make sure that I ate my lunch in peace and privacy. After lunch, I browsed through the book titles in the shelves until I heard the booming bell at the college tower. Some days, if there was a longer recess, I crossed the road, hopped over the railings, and wandered

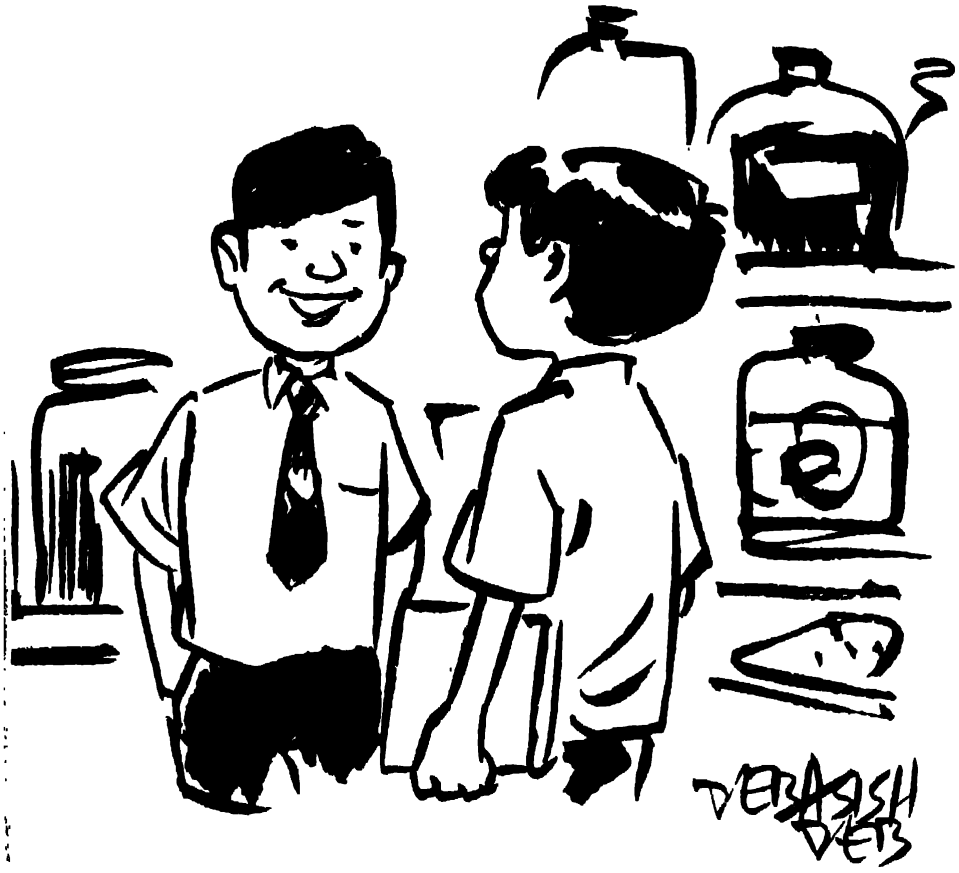
Extracted from
The Early Years, 1906-1945
By
Susan and N. Ram
Published by Viking Publishers
Price Rs495

through the enormous corridors of the High Court (the same place that had received a knock from *Emden* years before), making myself inconspicuous so that the sergeant who prowled around crying, "Hush, silence, silence," could have nothing against me. At the end of the day, I raced along with some of my class fellows to the Beach Station, clambered on an electric train, and got off at Egmore, the station nearest my home, saving thus the one-way tram-fare I never bought a ticket for this journey, but on the advice of experienced friends, jumped off at Egmore and scampered through the coal-yard. I continued this practice until I bragged about it one day at home and was severely reprimanded by my uncle, who warned me that I might find myself in jail for this adventure.

The Christian College was, however, a shortlived glory At the end of the first term, when we had Michaelmas holidays, I was sent off to Mysore, where my father was now transferred as the headmaster of Maharaja s Collegiate High School ('Collegiate' meant that it had a university entrance class) My father had no good impression of my earlier schools, was on the whole prejudiced against Madras schools, and decided to keep me in Mysore. Dr Anderson, my headmaster at the Christian Collge, wrote him a personal appeal to send me back, and my uncle also pleaded with him to let me continue in a school where admission itself was an honour. But my father said, "My school is good enough. Travelling every day in a tramcar is a risk, it is not safe.. "

Thus ended one phase of my life as a man of Madras; I became a Mysorean thenceforth At first, naturally, I missed the life at Madras—the companions, the streets and the noise, and above all the snobbish glow of belonging to the Christian College But soon I began to appreciate Mysore. It has an elevation of over 2,000 feet and that makes the climate cool. Unlike Madras, where even a shirt on one's back proves irksome, here one could dress properly—coat, cap and footwear, which my father insisted on, both as a headmaster and as a father. The hilly roads of the city , seeming to go up and down fascinated me, and the outline of Chamundi Hill illuminated at night had an air of shimmering mystery. The sky seemed to be more colourful and intimate, and the great number of trees all along the roads made passage to the school each day a delightful experience. I enjoyed the crowd at home too. I had now two more brothers to complete our family picture. My elder sister was married and had gone away to her husband' s home at Coimbatore. My father himself seemed mellowed and ready to practise a philosophy of live and let live. His routine was the same as it had been elsewhere—school, club, and home; and he had now a much larger number of students and teachers to manage.

Soon I realised the advantage of studying in a school where one's father was headmaster. One got more people seeking one's friendship. The teachers were on the whole more gentle—except one troublesome botany teacher who fretted against the headmaster as well as his son, and who would go on saying: "I don't care if someone is the headmaster's son. I'll throw him out if he doesn't come to class with coloured



crayons." It might be crayons one day or a slightly awry outline of a paripinnate leaf on my drawing sheet, or a blunt pencil or the snapping sound of a clip-board—anything that 50 others in our class might be guilty of. But the teacher focused his attention on me and would begin a long peroration on how he would deal with sons of headmasters. At that moment the whole class would turn in my direction and grin But I had become less sensitive to such situations, and grin ned back, which would infuriate the teacher further. He would put aside the drooping plant in his hand and say firmly, "I would not hesitate to send him out, even if he is headmster's son. This is no laughing matter Beware!" His eyes rolled in anger I don't know how my father treated him officially—no means of verifying, as my father never discussed school matters at home But my suspicion was that the botany teacher was no favourite of his. My father was as strict with the teachers as with the boys, and treated both alike. Voices were hushed when he passed by the Common Room Still, a few teachers suppressed their resentment and got on with him, and were anxious that the headmaster's son should not disgrace himself through bad performance. Hence I was often advised by one or the other of them, "If you have any doubts, come to me without hesitation." Where was any room for doubts? Doubts arise only with at least partial understanding. If I could have had a definite notion of the measure of my ignorance, I could have specified the solutions as well. I used to feel embarrassed when such an offer was made , and I would say rather sheepishly, "Never mind, sir," or, "It doesn't matter, sir.. " Our zoology teacher was the one who persistently tried to improve my understanding; he would retort. "What do you mean, it doesn't matter? It does matter. Don't you want to learn and pass?"

"I don't want to trouble you."

He was a very short teacher, about four and a half feet tall From a distance, one could easily mistake him for an overgrown baby but for his suit and turban. He sketched the anatomy of insects in so many colours that his fingers were always stained with chalk Sometimes one side of his nose would also be streaked pink or green, and one could not help a smile while facing him, and he would smile back innocently. His initials were M.M. and we called him Millimeter. Unlike the botany teacher, this man was very cautious and never called me to account as the headmaster's son, but he had a persistent habit of cornering me in order to clear my doubts. We had practical zoology on Saturday mornings, and we were allowed to ply our scalpels on the carcass of some creature stretched on a board. I felt no doubt proud and important, like a surgeon in the making, and the scent of carbolic lotion was for us an exclusive perfume. I went through the motions of dissection with a lot of conceit, but with no intelligence whatever. I did what my neighbour did and came out of the class when the bell rang. And now there was no use questioning me about my 'doubts' How could I tell the teacher, after he had lectured to us a whole morning, that I existed under a whole cloud of unknowing? My trouble was absolute abstraction from my surroundings. My mind was busy elsewhere—watching through the large windows the cows grazing the fields.

Next to religion, education was the most compulsive force in a family like ours My outlook on education never fitted in with the accepted code at home. I instinctively rejected both education and examinations, with their unwarranted seriousness and esoteric suggestions. Since revolt was unpractical I went through it all without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction. Going to school seemed to be a never-ending nuisance each day, to be borne because of my years. At Madras, in my Lutheran Mission days, my uncle was strict and would not allow me to stay home, however much I tried. When I lay in bed groaning with a real or feigned headache, he would merely say. "Get up, get up. I'll myself take you to the school and speak to the taecher to treat you lightly." At my father's school in Mysore, it became even harder—a headmaster's son faces a headmaster at school and a father at home. Though my father was generally uninterfering, he was addicted to watching the entries in the Attendance Register (the most unsightly volume in the world) Even in the classroom, where he was supposed to take an hour a week of English prose, he constantly paused during his lectures to snatch up the register and pick out the absentees

between last week and this and demand an explanation. This was such a routine that he never got beyond the opening lines of a Lamb essay. "The elders with whom I was brought up were of a nature not likely to let slip a sacred observance, and ringing in the New Year. " At this point he would turn his attention on someone and demand, "Scared observance—can you explain what is a sacred observance? Oh you! Where were you last week? Urgent business, I suppose; let us see how much urgent business you generally have, from time to time. Get the register." With a father and headmaster of this temperament, you were not likely to let slip a day. He would unhesitatingly make you stand up, and then declare the punishment, and, further, summon you to his room at home to say what a disgrace you were So at high school, I maintained a hundred per cent attendance, although I had constantly to overcome the temptation to dawdle around a nearby nursery garden or a tiny lily pond outside, overshadowed by immense trees and studded with little brick monuments on its banks for the dear departed of a century ago I resolutely absented myself from such felicities and got into my class with the first bell, otherwise the gates would be locked and latecomers shut out, until the headmaster arrived and let each one in with a proper admonition and warning

Before actually entering the university for my B.A , I had a whole year's reprieve by failing in the university entrance examination held in the high school. I had expected to fare ill in physics and chemistry, both of which had defied my understanding. I never understood what I was expected to do with the 'data' provided with the so-called problems, the relevance of 'atmospheric pressure' or 'atomic weight', or what to do with logarithm tables, or the why or how of a 'normal' solution. These points never became clear to me either through my own efforts or through our teacher's explanations. I had been certain of failure in these two subjects, but, as if by a miracle, I had somehow passed in them, though not with flying colours On the contrary, I had failed where I was most confident—English. I failed so miserably and so completely that everyone wondered if I was literate at all. My father, in spite of his strict attitudes in school matters, had one very pleasant quality—he never bothered about the examination results. He always displayed sympathy for a fallen candidate; he had no faith in the examination system at all But even he was forced to exclaim in surprise, "Stupid fellow, you have failed in English! Why?" Proficiency in English being a social hallmark, I remained silent without offering any explanation, though I knew why. One of our English texts was a grey-bound book of chilling dullness called *Explorations and Discoveries*, pages full of Mungo Park's expeditions and so forth. In my whole career I have not come across any book to match its unreadability I found it impossible, and totally abolished it from my universe, deciding to depend upon other questions in the examination from *Oliver Twist* or *Political Selections*. But I found in the examination hall that four out of six questions were based on *Explorations*—that horrible man, the question-setter seemed to have been an abnormal explorationist. I gave up, left the examination hall in half an hour, and sat in contemplation on one of the brick monuments beside the lily pond

My outlook on education has not really improved with the years. A few years ago when my daughter in exasperation threw up her studies, crying, "Why should I bother about arithmetic?" I let her drop without a word. Thereby she found more time at home for books and music. Now when my grandson shows any disinclination for school, I always support his cause, but of course his parents take a different view As a grandfather I view his unseen masters as complicated, sinister beings who cannot be trusted. I keep my ears to the ground to find out if there has been any incident at his school. I was opposed to the system of being prescribed a set of books by an anonymous soulless body of textbooks-prescribers, and being stamped good or bad as a result of such studies. My natural aversion to academic education was further strengthened when I came across an essay by Rabindranath Tagore on education It confirmed my own precocious conclusion on the subject. I liked to be free to read what I pleased and not be examined at all ■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says, the fair sex should help you and that help will stand you in good stead. Journey and collaboration, tours, travel, pilgrimages are foretold. You will be in a generous mood and thus people will flock to you. Expect visitors. Also, expect moments of great inspiration and joy. Money will come.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Friends and well-wishers will help you all the way. Couples will be happily making future plans. Both cultural interests and job pursuits continue at a merry pace. But all this will take a health toll and therefore periodic rest is essential. Do not overwork even if pressure piles up.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Partnerships and work interests are hugely activated. Differences may come out in the open. Little things might vex you more than they should, but you will get over it in a day or two and therefore, it's best not to pay heed to it. It is certain that monetary issues will predominate.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

Once again, job, work, payment and a feeling of satisfaction for Cancerians are on the cards. You will be trusted with some confidential information. As a lover you will be in tune. Contacts now stand you in good stead and people, by and large, will help you. December 19-22 will be outstanding for you.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

The result of a private business talk or conference or meet will please you. Sweep aside personal feelings and concerns however difficult it might seem. You are clever and in need of some good advice. As new opportunities will be knocking at your door, be alert to seize them enthusiastically.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Love, home, children, and the big bad world outside all find you ready and willing to take chances. That is the spirit. A business deal or a personal settlement or both should please you. Your creative thinking assures you of happiness, which is more than mere success. This week will lead to happiness.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Use all media of publicity, advertisement, transport, communication to gain your ends, bids Ganesha. A change in the nature and scope of your work is possible, and that will be to your advantage. Whether a parent or not, you will have much to do with children. Those who are salesmen, will do well.

Scorpio
October 23 — November 22

You should be making deals, negotiating, maybe bargaining for position, says Ganesha. You should come through splendidly from it all. Despite workload you will have time to feel glad, frolic about, gamble a bit if you like. Talks with seniors will yield good results. The trick is to have confidence in yourself.

Sagittarius
November 23 — December 20

It would be best to take chances, specially if you have a gut feeling about any particular issue or idea, an enterprise or person. Your thinking too will be sharp and on target. This is most certainly a newsy week, be it through letters, calls, fax, ads or posters. Take care of the health of elders.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

It is not your doing or fault, but a super-sensitive person could misinterpret what you say or write. Therefore, be gentle as well as precise. Like Sagittarians, you too, should use all the tools of information and publicity to put your ideas and messages across. And yes, you will succeed in doing it.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

Friends and well-wishers will rally round you and that will make you feel loved and important. Your sources of income will multiply. You will be launching a project and reaching completion of another. By February the picture clears up for you. Romance blooms despite numerous irons in the fire.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

This is the right time to take decisions, dear Pisceans. December 19-22 is the time for it. Also, it is important that you devote some time to yourself for meditation, study and prayers. Couples and partners will be preparing very eagerly and wholeheartedly for the future. Time to fuse work and joy.

BIRTHDAYS

December 15: Moon sun sextile is a placing which confers benefits, honours and riches. You will have the help of influential people.

December 16: Moon sextile Mercury placing favours teachers, writers, astrologers, physicists, artists and those who live by their intuition and imagination.

December 17: Venus trine Saturn indicates your undoubted creativity will set the stage for your deserved success, whatsoever be your field of endeavour.

December 18: Moon square Mercury means you should be cautious in negotiating settlements and lawsuits. Children and creativity will be the happy features of the year. In work and personal life, a little extra care is essential.

December 19: Venus sextile Uranus indicates you will succeed in research, computers, electronics and newly devised systems. Love is on the cards.

December 20: Venus conjunction Pluto means extra power and thrust. The year 1997 should bring you gains as well as gaiety. People will look up to you and love you.

December 21: Moon trine JupiterNeptune promises success, glory whatever you may be or your line of work. You will be making a lot of money.

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SKETCHES

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A better look at the better halves

This Week: Parmeshwar (Adi) Godrej

In the news for Most recently, the Miss World Pageant, an event which Godrej — the company, as distinct from the glamorous consort— sponsored. Parmeshwar flew down to Bangalore for the contest, and then flew back Miss Greece, the newly-crowned Miss World, to her beach-front home in Bombay for a week of festivities But, in vintage Godrej style, she managed to combine business and pleasure the beauty queen also shot an ad campaign for Cinthol

So, you mean she's not just a party girl?: Oh sure, Parmesh (as she is known to friends) enjoys a good blow-out just as much as the next person, but there's more to the lady than champagne and caviar, though these are staples of the menu whenever she entertains And don't be fooled by the bluff, slightly loud exterior — at heart Godrej is the typical shy Cancerian, as anyone who saw her ill-at-ease appearance on the stage at the Miss World Pageant will gladly attest to But she tries hard to play the perfect hostess, and as always, she succeeds

Parmeshwar Adi Godrej at the Miss World pageant in Bangalore

Her day job However, is what defines her Well, day jobs actually As an invaluable part of the family business, Parmesh oversees the Godrej ad campaigns And her's is a hands-on job, right from deciding the concept, to choosing the models, to selecting the clothes, and even supervising the shoot
And to Parmeshwar goes the credit of popularising several Godrej brands like Cinthol and Crowning Glory by getting both national and international celebrities to endorse them Names that leap immediately to mind are Bombay film stars Vinod Khanna, Dimple Kapadia, Pakistani hunk Imran Khan, and now, of course, the current Miss World

In her own right Parmeshwar has been anything from a fashion designer, interior decorator and real estate developer She began her career by opening an up-market boutique in Bombay, with the rather evocative name of Dancing Silks. This was before the fashion revolution had come to India, and to Godrej went the credit of initiating the design boom in her own little way

In addition, Parmeshwar began designing wardrobes for such film stars as Zeenat Aman, both for their real and reel lives And since Godrej's personal style was unparalleled in its wit and panache, she soon had them queueing up to be part of her clientele

Personal style?: That's one thing that Parmeshwar has never been short of

A patron of both Indian and Western *couture*, she probably has the best wardrobe this side of Seventh Avenue. For a long time, her personal favourite appeared to be the Italian fashion designer, Valentino, though these days she seems to be partial to Herve Leger.

In India, she is often seen in Shahab Durazi jackets and suits. For these she buys the fabric abroad and brings them home to have them tailored by Durazi And since Shahab is a brilliant cutter in the Azzedine Alaia mould, Godrej cuts a svelte, trim figure.

For Indian clothes, Parmeshwar swears by The Boys, as the designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla are popularly known. Here too, the jersey fabric for her blouses is imported, and then embroidered on to create an opulent, Oriental look for formal evenings At the Miss World Pageant, for instance, Godrej was resplendent in an Abu-Sandeep creation

Interior decoration: Was the next logical step from her interest in fashion design Parmeshwar teamed up with Sunita Pitamber to form Inner Spaces, and the duo designed several posh Bombay homes, popularising the leather, glass and chrome look that is best epitomised by their most well-known showcase, China Garden, an up-market Chinese restaurant in the Kemps Corner area of Bombay.

The partnership broke up soon after, however, and Godrej went solo. In this incarnation, she designed the interior of Khyber, and then Casbah, which has now become the favourite party haunt of Bombay's chi-chi crowd.

Her latest incarnation Is that of real estate developer. There are several Godrej properties in Bombay, which are being developed in collaboration with an American company, and Parmeshwar is in charge of this project.

Her own woman: Despite the general misconception that Parmeshwar married well and went up in life, the truth is that she is now independently wealthy; with her fees from her interior decoration business alone, she could qualify as a millionairess

And finally, she has gained recognition as a businesswoman of note, in which mode she attends the World Economic Forum in Davos. She is one of the few women in

Adi Godrej: The industrialist Parmeshwar fell in love with

attendance who are invited in their own right, rather than as spouses of their rich and powerful husbands

Was her's a rags to riches story?. Not really, despite the mythology that has grown around her. Parmeshwar comes from good, solid, Sikh middle-class stock Her father was an army officer, and the family was comfortably well-off, though — as she would be the first to admit — they were never rich Parmeshwar signed up as an air-hostess with Air India once she was through with her studies But she didn't fly for very long, instead she met, fell in love with, and married Adi Godrej.

The new Miss World is the current model for Cinthol

And they lived happily ever after?: Eventually, yes Initially, however, there was some opposition to the match from the Godrejs. No, they were not objecting to Parmeshwar, *per se*, they just weren't very happy with the fact that Adi was marrying outside the Parsi community But, as is usual with most families, they soon reconciled to the match, and now Parmeshwar is regarded as the backbone of the family

Everyone loves a good wedding: And now, it's the turn of Parmesh's daughter, Tanya, who will soon be marrying Arvind Dubash, the scion of another prominent Parsi business family Parmeshwar is already busy organising the festivities, and this promises to be the wedding of the year — if not the decade — in Bombay. ■

[illegible] TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

[illegible] FLIGHTS [illegible] DOMESTIC

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
IC-741	0750	1 3 5 6	IC 742	1015	5
D5-609	0600	4 5 7	IC 742	1205	1 4 7
IC 743	0945	2	IC 744	1205	2
IC-743	1300	1 2 4 5 6 7	IC 744	1520	1 3 4 5, 6 7
[illegible]					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9-145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC 715	1620	1, 5 7	IC-716	2150	1 5, 7
[illegible]					
PF 301	0645	1 2 3 4 5 6	PF 302	1555	2 4 5
			PF-302	1635	1 3 6
[illegible]					
IC 721	0935	1 3 4 5 7	IC 722	1205	1 2 4 5 7
D2 181	1330	1, 3 5	D2 182	1600	1 3 5
[illegible]					
IC-771	0600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	[illegible]	daily
IC 773	1625	3 5 7	IC 774	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
D5-402	0700	4 6	D5 401	1130	3 5
CD-544	1340	1 3 5	CD 543	[illegible]	1 3 5
IC-769	1615	2 4 6	IC 770	[illegible]	2 4 6
[illegible]					
IC-263	0700	daily	M9 303	[illegible]	daily
9W-902	0845	daily	9W 901	[illegible]	daily
M9 304	0850	daily	AI 776	[illegible]	1
IC-402	1715	daily	IC 855	[illegible]	4
IC-856	1830	4 7	IC 401	[illegible]	daily
M9-302	1935	daily	M9 301	1400	daily
9W 312	1950	daily	9W 311	[illegible]	daily
			IC [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]					
D2-162	1225	4 6 7	IC 702	[illegible]	1 3 5 7
IC-761	1240	1 2 5 7	D2 162	[illegible]	2 4 6 7
[illegible]					
CD 257	1145	2 4 6 7	CD 258	[illegible]	2 4 6 7
PF 301/305	0645	2 4 5	PF 302/306	[illegible]	1 [illegible]
[illegible]					
IC 703	0750	1 4 7	IC 704	1900	1 4 6
D5 601	0630	1 2 3 4	IC [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
PF-301	0830	1 2 7	AI 1	1210	daily
IC-229	1005	daily	PF [illegible]	[illegible]	daily
9W-611	1020	daily	[illegible] 713	[illegible]	3 7
IC 712	1130	3 7	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]					
9W 511	1400	daily	IC-776	[illegible]	3 5 7
IC 777	1620	3 5, 7	[illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 6
IC 769	1615	2 4 6	9W 512	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]					
IC 255	0800	1 4 5	IC 256	[illegible]	1 4 5
IC 213	1145	[illegible]	IC 214	[illegible]	2 [illegible]
IC 712	1130	3 7	[illegible]	[illegible]	7
[illegible]					
M9 304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9-145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC-715	1620	[illegible]	IC 716	[illegible]	[illegible]

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
[illegible]					
M9-304/119	0850	2 4	M9 128/301	1900	1 2 3 4 5 6
[illegible]					
CD 257	1145	2 4 6 7	CD 258	1550	2 4, 6, 7
9W 621	1010	3, 5	9W 622	1320	3 5
[illegible]					
PF-301/303	0645	1 3 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 3 6
[illegible]					
IC 812	1530	1, 3 5	IC 811	1915	1 3 5
[illegible] CHENNAI (MADRAS)					
D5-402	0700	4 6	IC 965	0815	1 2 4 5 6
IC-966	0905	1 2 4 5 6	CD 543	1750	1 3 5
CD 542	1110	[illegible]	CD 541	1035	[illegible]
CD 544	1830	[illegible]	CD 543	[illegible]	daily
[illegible]	1530	[illegible]	[illegible] 301	1250	[illegible]
[illegible]	1705	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 762	1750	daily			
MUMBAI (BOMBAY)					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
9W 702	0715	daily	[illegible] 101	0950	daily
[illegible] 676	0730	daily	9W 201	0835	daily
[illegible] 762	[illegible]	[illegible]			
[illegible] 225	0850	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] 775	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1150	[illegible]
AI 520	1000	6	AI 546	[illegible]	5
9W 312	2000	daily	[illegible] 274	1950	daily
[illegible] 274	1945	daily	9W 311	[illegible]	daily
[illegible] 184	2005	daily	[illegible]	[illegible]	daily
NAGPUR					
[illegible]	1615	[illegible]	[illegible]	2050	2 4 6
PATNA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1615	2 4 6
[illegible] 409	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] 612	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 611	1915	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
[illegible]	0630	1 5	CD 256	1100	2 4 6
RANCHI					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
SILCHAR					
[illegible] 253	0800	[illegible]	[illegible] 254	1040	3 6 7
[illegible]	0800	1 4 5	IC 256	1250	1 4 5
TEZPUR					
IC 213	1140	2, [illegible]	IC-213	1540	2 5
VARANASI					
D5-406	1330	[illegible]	D5-405	1835	4 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5 402	0700	4 6	CD 541	1030	1 3 5
CD 54[illegible]	1110	[illegible]	D5-401	1230	3 5

[illegible] FLIGHTS [illegible] INTERNATIONAL

[illegible]					
RJ 185	1445	4	RJ 181	0705	4
[illegible]					
KL-876	0325	7	KL 875	0140	7
[illegible]					
KB-105	0655	2	KB 106	1020	7
KB-105	1255	4	KB 106	1240	5
IC-731	0800	2, 5	IG 313	1240	1 [illegible]
			IC 732	1410	2 5
IC 895	1105	4 7	IC 896	1730	4, 7
IG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI 408	1910	5	AI 309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2000	5 7	RO-075	1200	5 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC 225	1140	3 7	IC-226	1350	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG 698	1735	2 5	BG-697	1655	2 5
[illegible]					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0810	4, 5
BG-092	1115	1 2, 3 6, 7	BG 091	1110	1, 2 3, 6 7
IC 721	1300	1, 2, 3 6, 7	IC-721	1520	1 2 3 6 7
BG-094	1905	1 2, 3 5 6 7	BG-093	1825	1 2 3 5 6, 7
BG 094	1910	1	BG 093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG-095	2040	1 5
DOHA					
Q7-003	1430	6	Q7 000	1330	6
DUBAI					
BI-107	2100	6	BI 108	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
IC-747	1315	1 2 4 5 6	IC 748	1645	1 2 4, 5 6
LONDON					
BA-117	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	3 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU-538	2100	4	SU 537	0930	4
PARIS					
KB 106	1105	7	KB 105	0810	2
KB-106	1425	5	KB-105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 108	0630	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ 415	[illegible]	[illegible]	SQ 416	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1550	4	LZ 503	1620	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	5	AI 305	1820	6
YANGON					
IC-227	1530	4 7	IC 228	1055	4, 7

AI Air India • **BA** British Airways • **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines • **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines • **CD** Alliance Airlines • **D2** Skyline NEPC • **D5** NEPC Airlines • **IC** Indian Airlines • **KB** Druk-Air • **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines • **LZ** Balkan Airlines • **M9** ModiLuft • **PF** Vayudoot • **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines • **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines • **RO** Tarom Air Transport • **SQ** Singapore Airlines • **SU** Aeroflot • **TG** Thai Airways International • **9W** Jet Airways • **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	19 [illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	7 35	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Mumbai Mail** via [illegible]	13 15	3001
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep. Aug. [illegible] Arr. Tue. Wed. & Sat.	16 15	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via [illegible] Dep. [illegible] Arr. Mon. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep. [illegible] Arr. Mon. [illegible]	[illegible]	2307
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via [illegible] Dep. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep. [illegible] Wed. & Sat. Arr. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep. & Arr. Thursday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Sun. Mon. Wed. & Fri.	4 15	5048
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 45	**Udyan Abha Toofan Express** via Main Line	18 10	3008
[illegible]	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5 15	3040
3049	13-10	**Amritsar Express**	15-30	3050
3019	21 50	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16 00	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5059	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
[illegible]	6 15	**Black Diamond Express**	21-25	3318
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10 20	3030
3035	18-20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
[illegible]	21-05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3232
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 15	3072
3015	9 55	**Santhiliatan Express**	15 40	3016
3017	5-45	**Rampurhat Express**	21 45	3018
1150	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep. Mon. Tue. & Thurs. Arr. Mon. Thurs. & Fri.	7-55	1160
9305	15 25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep. Wed. Sat. & Sun. Arr. Sun. Wed. & Sat.	[illegible] 55	9306
[illegible]	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4 [illegible]	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep. Fri. Arr. Tues.	7 55	1162

Sealdah

Up	Time	Sealdah	Time	Dn
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6 [illegible]	3142
3143	19 15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8-45	3144
3111	20 15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
5657	6 25	**Kanchenjunga** (Darjeeling) Express	20-35	5658
[illegible]	22 00	**Gour Express**	5 15	3154
[illegible]	20 00	**Katihar Express**	4-15	5664
[illegible]	11 45	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15-50	3152
3133	20 55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via CRB Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18 50	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5285	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep. & Arr. Tues., Thurs. & Sat.	4 25	5286

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Departure Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Arrival Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Madras Mail**	[illegible]	[illegible]
8002	19 [illegible]	**Mumbai Mail** via Nagpur	[illegible]	[illegible]
2860	12 [illegible]	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 20	2859
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Saturday	21 00	2023
5654	[illegible]	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 40	8033
8030	16 45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8029
2841	14 00	**Coromandal (Madras) Express** via [illegible]	12 20	2842
7002	[illegible]	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	[illegible]	7004
6511	[illegible]	**Bangalore Express** Dep. Sunday Arr. Sunday	[illegible]	6512
8013	[illegible]	**Tata Steel Express**	[illegible]	8014
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	[illegible]	8012
8005	[illegible]	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	[illegible]	8006
8015	[illegible]	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 20	8016
8005	[illegible]	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	[illegible]	8008
8401	19 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	[illegible]	8416
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	[illegible]	2822
[illegible]	[illegible]	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 20	8046
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Purulia Express** Dep. Except Saturday Arr. Except Sunday	[illegible]	3018
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Tirupati Express**	4 15	9062
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep. Sunday Arr. Friday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	16 40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** via Howrah, Sunday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** via Howrah, Saturday only	10 45	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	22 15	
	[illegible]	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Thursday only	[illegible]	[illegible]
6314	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** via Howrah & Visakhapatnam Saturday only	[illegible]	
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep. & Arr. Tuesday	[illegible]	[illegible]
6316	[illegible]	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** via Visakhapatnam & Howrah Dep. & Arr. Friday	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack, Monday only	[illegible]	-
-	14-10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** via Howrah & Cuttack, Saturday only	13-45	2519

ENQUIRIES: For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203498-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah: 3503535/37

Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised); Dial 2203498 (manual enquiry).

PROFILE

A YOGI IN AMERICA

Bikram Chaudhuri is the resident guru of Beverly Hills, with a client list that extends to Tokyo. ***Trina Mukherjee*** *reports*

What do Bill Clinton, Richard Nixon, Shirley Maclaine, Maude Adams, Brooke Shields and Quincy Jones have in common? A natural talent to hog the limelight, a love-hate relationship with the media, and a man called Bikram Chaudhuri.

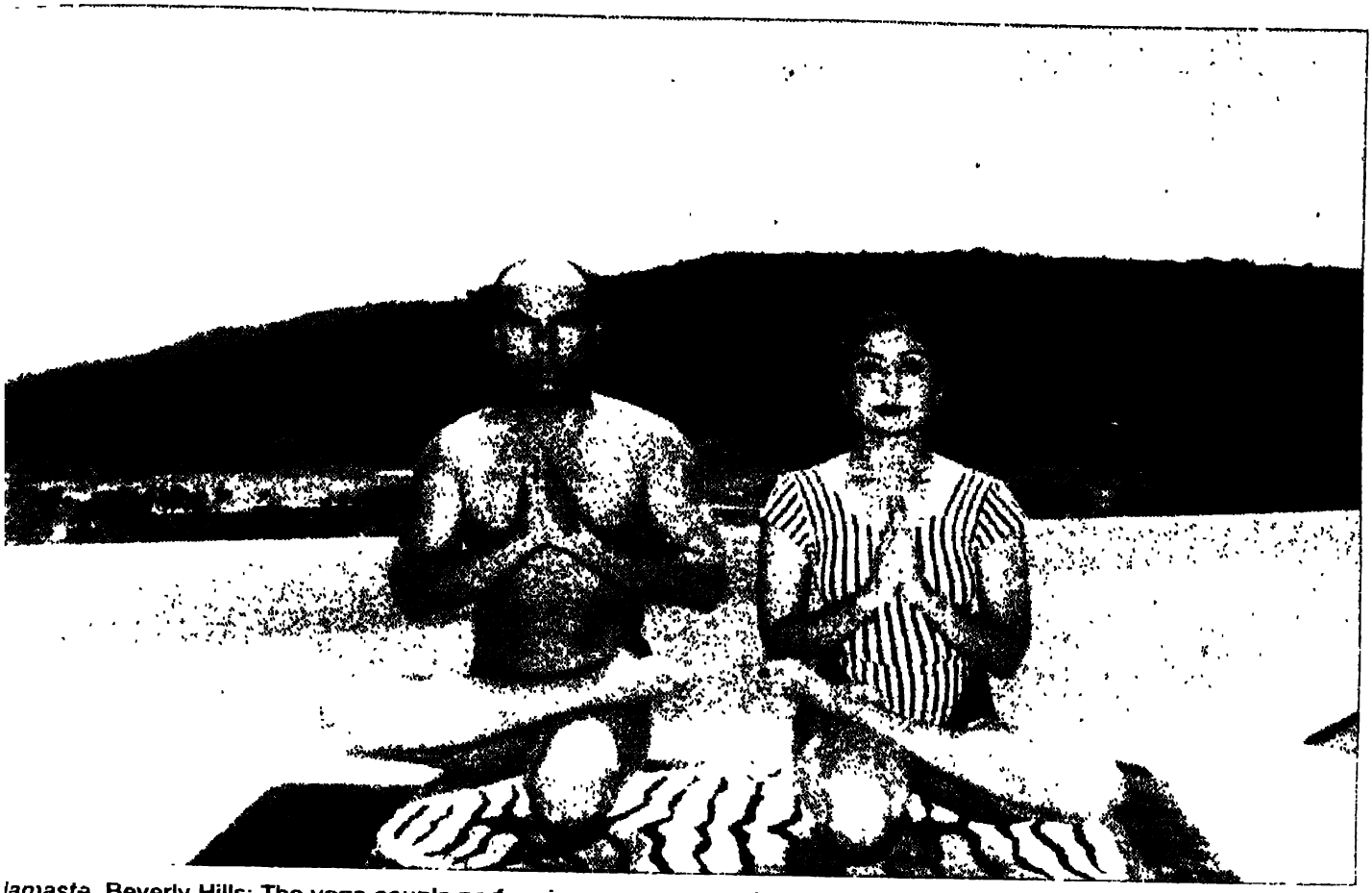
Bikram who, did you say? Well, this is the man who has all the above and many other celebrities stretching and slogging at his beck and call. No, he is not a 'Made In India' yogi or a cult guru with an unpronounceable name. Chaudhuri is a yoga instructor-cum-therapist who runs the Yoga College of India in Beverly Hills in addition to a string of yoga centres all over the States and in Tokyo

The story of his life reads like a modern day fairy tale. Too many things "just happened" to this 51-year-old man whose lithe, supple physique and unquenchable stamina would put any 20-year-old to shame. His young and pretty wife, Rajashri Chaudhuri, is a perfect better half, having won several national championship trophies in yoga

What Chaudhuri has to offer his pupils is what he learnt from his legendary teacher Bishnu Ghosh Says Chaudhuri, "My motto is —Never give up; never too late, never too bad, never too old; never too sick to start from scratch once again" And Bikram (he prefers to be called that) knows what he is talking about

Hailing from Deogarh, Bihar, he started learning yoga from the age of three After extensive training and practice under the tutelage of Bishnu

Bikram Chaudhuri wi ı wife Rajashri striking a yogic pose; (above) the yoga therapist in a more relaxed mood



namaste, Beverly Hills: The yoga couple performing an *asana* and (below) with Shirley Maclaine

Ghosh, Bikram became a champion weight lifter by the time he was 17. He also nurtured a secret desire to join the Indian Air Force but a broken knee ended his ambition of becoming a fighter pilot.

Disheartened with life, Bikram decided to leave for Bombay with a teaching assignment from his guru, Bishnu Ghosh. He was to be an instructor-therapist to the third son of S.P. Jain of *Times of India* fame, whose plush residence at Kambala Hills became the stepping stone to success for Bikram

It was there that he met members of the Birla, Bajaj, Singhania and Jalan families, he says, and rubbed shoulders with Bollywood superstars like Dilip Kumar, Madhubala and Nargis.

After several tutorial assignments from these luminaries, Bikram was invited for a lecture demonstration in Bombay on yoga therapy by the UN for a East-West meet. It was a huge success and there was no looking back after that

Before leaving Bombay, Bikram managed to establish the first of his long chain of yoga colleges in Breach Candy with Arvind Mafatlal

With Brooke Shields and (below) greeting President Bill Clinton

coming forward with the land. "I never had to spend a dime to establish my yoga colleges," says a visibly proud Bikram. "My students always come together to do so."

In order to raise funds for a hospital in Bombay which "never happened" Bikram made plans for two shows of his Guru and his pupils. It included yoga demonstrations and strange feats like lifting an elephant or burying oneself under the ground for several hours. This show caught the fancy of Fuji TV Company which planned to telecast the amazing display for a programme called *World Surprise Show*.

After a couple of such shows, the owner of an impresario company signed a contract with Bishnu Ghosh for holding 120 shows all over Japan Bikram, along with Ghosh's son, Bishwanath Ghosh, were to asssist him in this arduous task. This was also when the first offer to establish a yoga school in Tokyo cropped up. Bikram was shuttling from Bombay to Tokyo, organising the nitty gritty of the show. He also had a successful stint in Hawaii where he conducted a 10-day workshop at the East-West University Centre.

It was immediately after his seminar in Bombay that the UN came forward again with an offer to sponsor Bikram to conduct research on the possibilities of cures for chronic diseases like thyroid, diabetes and asthma through regular yoga practice. Instead of opting for any of the American universities, Bikram decided to go to Tokyo University in 1970 as it would coincide with his research study and the ongoing organisation of his Guru's show. Unfortunately, Bishnu Ghosh died before the show could begin and his students went ahead to complete the task. By then, the second Yoga School of India opened in Tokyo.

Professing to adopt a fusion method of teaching which included the "the best of East and West", Bikram's yoga classes became very popular. And soon, Bikram was teaching yoga to the rich and the famous in Japan. His first encounter with royalty occurred soon enough when he was told to treat princess Aeiko Osano, niece of Emperor Hirohito, who was not able to walk after two spinal surgeries. After attending his classes for three months, she was back on her feet again. "It was the Osano couple who became my sponsors and helped me open schools all over Japan," reminisced Bikram.

His next stop was the USA. "I

had met Hollywood performers like Shirley Maclaine in Bombay who were strange, confused creatures." Maclaine, for instance, came to India in search of "something" and was ready to give up everything, including her career, to seek peace of mind. She had met Bikram at the Bombay seminar and he told her "not to look for answers in another country but to return home and follow *Karmayoga*". The actress paid heed to his advice and left after inviting him to the States

During his stay in Tokyo, Bikram's acquaintance with the Osano family brought him closer to Emperor Hirohito and more importantly, the Japanese Prime Minister, Kakuei Tanaka The latter took him along to the US as his therapist and interpreter during Tanaka's meeting with President Richard Nixon

Nixon did not arrive for the meeting on the scheduled day Reason? A bad left leg Nixon was suffering from phlebothrombosis and was bed-ridden for the day. Tanaka volunteered to help and introduced Mrs Nixon to Bikram After a short therapy session with the yoga instructor, the President felt much better and went on to complete the entire 21-day therapy. "After that," said Bikram with a hearty laugh, "he did not even remember which leg was the bad one"

What awaited him next was a pleasant surprise in the form of a Green Card as a personal guest of the President He began by opening a new school in San Francisco and managing two health spas in Hollywood called Sanctuary. Very soon he had a large number of admirers among his students After several visits to Honolulu, Tokyo and India, Bikram finally arrived at Beverly Hills where a new school, sprawling over an area of 11,000 square feet, waited for him "I am grateful to Shirley Maclaine and all my other students who made this possible"

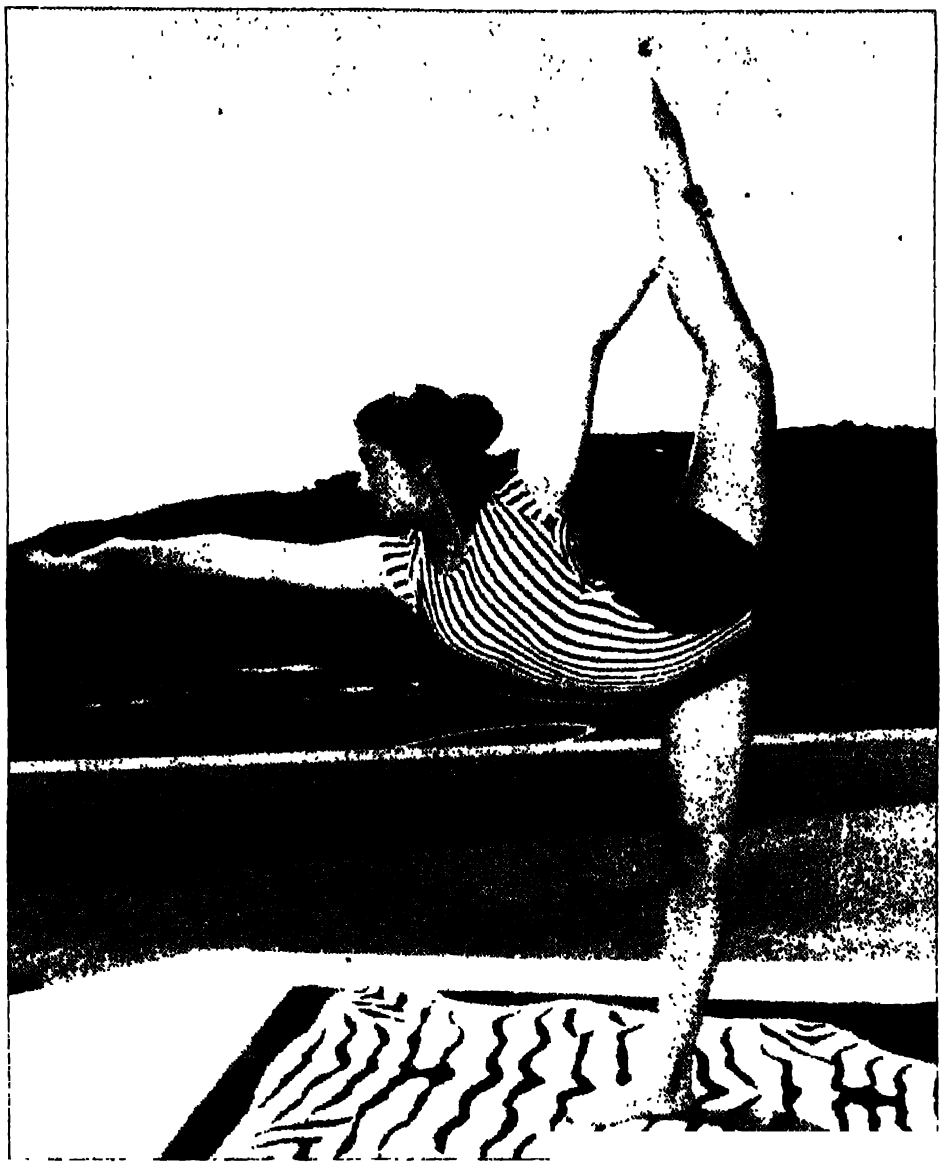
What were his celebrity students like? "Very human," says Bikram Quincy Jones was suffering from paralysis after undergoing two brain surgeries in quick succession He joined Bikram's classes and after 13 years of concentrated efforts, he is back to normal

Kareem Abdul Jabbar top ranking US basketball player, and John McEnroe were referred to him by the UCLA Medical Centre. They, along with Chris Evert, John Lloyd and many Olympic players continued to play beyond their retirement phase, thanks to the yoga therapist from India. "I think I managed to save not only their game but their body too," says Bikram

His roots and area of work reminds one of another familiar name Yes, the famous Deepak Chopra of the *Ageless Body and Timeless Mind* and Demi Moore fame What does he think of him? A pregnant silence follows. "Deepak is essentially a doctor who was responsible for popularising Ayurvedic medicine in the US." Beyond that, feels Bikram, it was a bad move on Chopra's part to venture into relatively unknown fields like yoga and meditation "One is bound to be in trouble if he constantly changes track"

What does he plan to do next? To open a new school in no, not in Riviera, but in West Bengal. Why? Because Bikram wants to train "some of our own boys and girls from India Who knows there might be another Bishnu Ghosh waiting to be discovered" Here, of course, he is facing a peculiar problem None of his students or admirers are coming up to help with a plot of land But after a short therapy session with Jyoti Basu, some years back, things are looking up

If not, there is always the call of the hills—Beverly Hills, that is with its star-spangled yoga college and a greener pasture, courtesy Bill Clinton Bikram was specially chosen as the fund raiser from NRIs for Clinton's election campaign that ended recently. With a champion sponsor in the form of a re-elected President, the sky is now the limit for this 'tough guy' from Bengal. ■

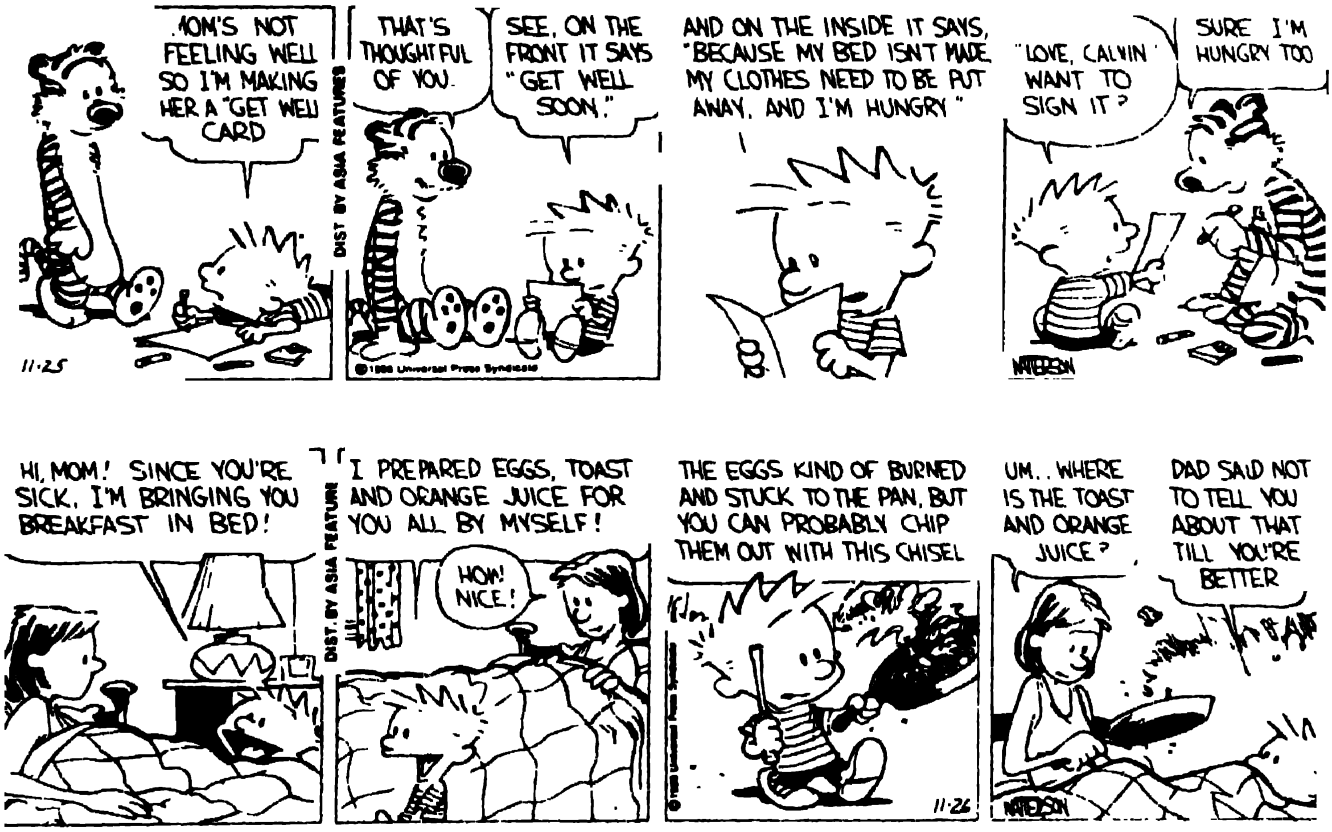


Rajashri Chaudhuri: A champion performer

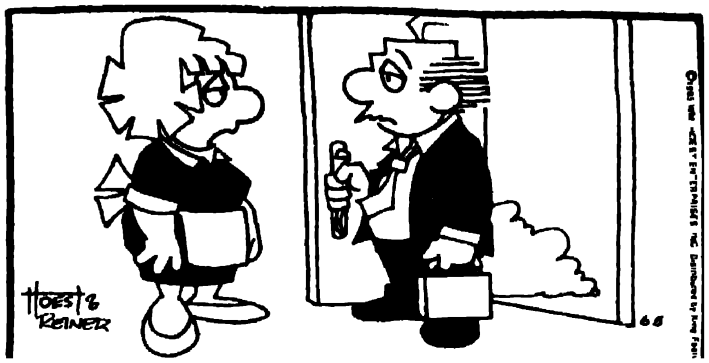
COMICS

ARCHIE

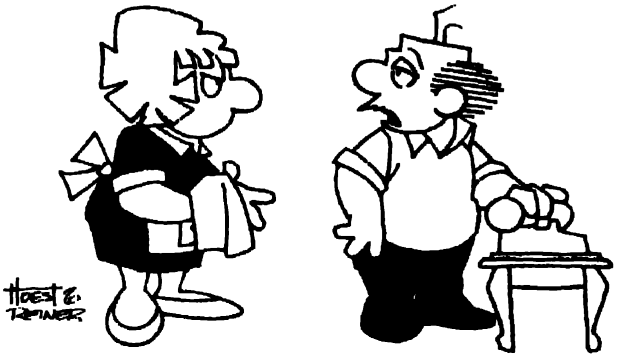
CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON



THE LOCKHORNS



"DINNER WILL BE A LITTLE LATE, LEROY ... I REARRANGED THE FURNITURE TODAY, AND NOW I CAN'T FIND THE REFRIGERATOR."

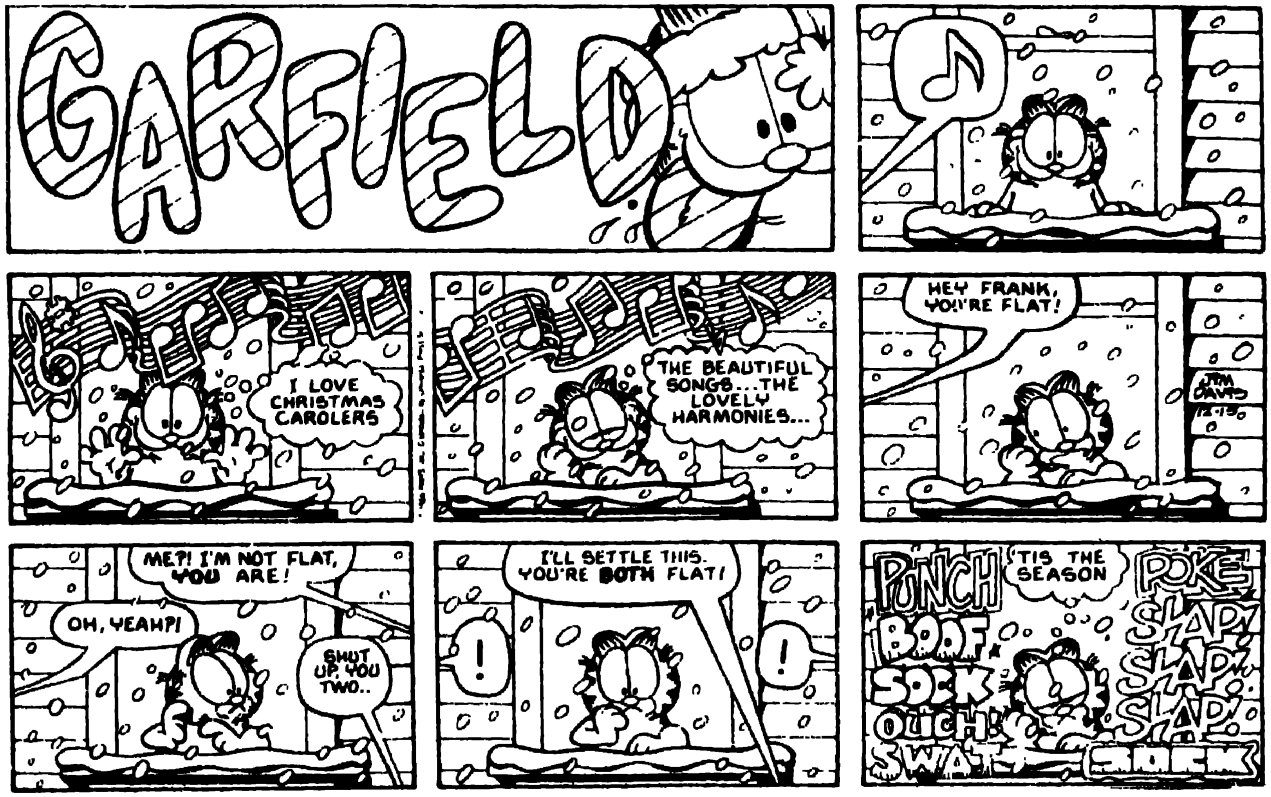


"YOUR BROTHER IS COMING TO VISIT US ... AND OUR CHECKBOOK."

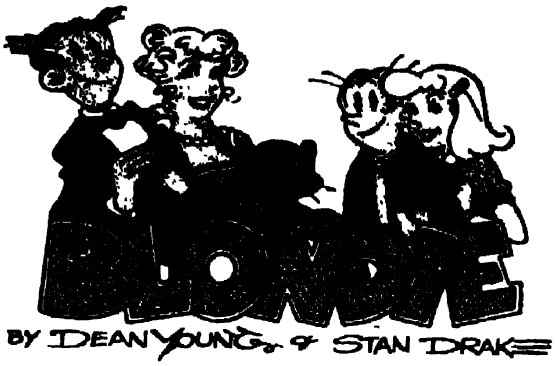
"LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE, LORETTA ... YOU WON'T LOOK AS OLD AS YOU WILL NEXT YEAR."

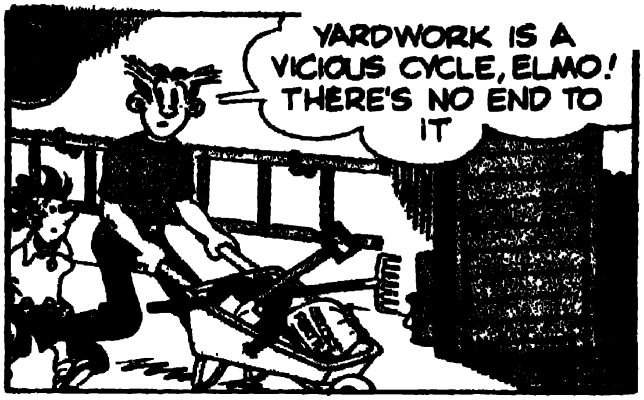
"EXCUSE ME, I HAVE TO TELL LEROY TO GET OFF THE COUCH ... HE'S VOICE ACTIVATED."

GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

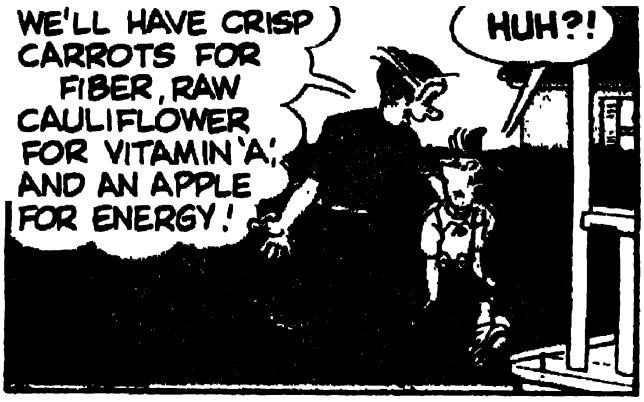


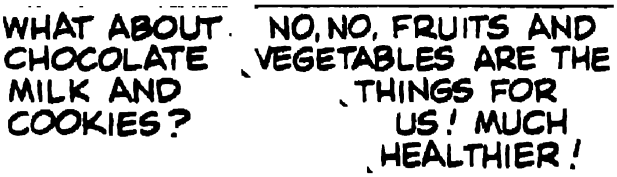
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP


BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE


YARDWORK IS A VICIOUS CYCLE, ELMO! THERE'S NO END TO IT

WELL, ELMO, LET'S KNOCK OFF AND GO INSIDE FOR A NICE SNACK
SURE, MR. BUMSTEAD!


WE'LL HAVE CRISP CARROTS FOR FIBER, RAW CAULIFLOWER FOR VITAMIN 'A', AND AN APPLE FOR ENERGY!
HUH?!


WHAT ABOUT CHOCOLATE MILK AND COOKIES?
NO, NO, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ARE THE THINGS FOR US! MUCH HEALTHIER!

I HEARD YOU TALKING OUTSIDE AND I'VE GOT YOUR SNACKS ALL READY!

CHOCOLATE MILK AND COOKIES FOR ELMO... AND CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, AND AN APPLE FOR YOU, DEAR! JUST LIKE YOU BOTH WANTED
YOUNG + DRAKE 9-1

CAN'T ANYONE AROUND HERE TELL WHEN I'M JOKING?!
HEY! I LIKE THIS NEW DEAL! IT MEANS TWICE AS MANY COOKIES FOR ME!

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

But that's not all you can do in the city state they describe as 'Surprising Singapore', says ***Seema Goswami***

Photographs by FotoFocus

Think of Singapore, and the first thing that comes to mind is: shopping. And it's not just any kind of shopping we're talking about here, but sprees of the 'shop till you drop' variety, featuring everything from diapers and duvets to digital sound systems. Small wonder then, that Indian tourists are the highest spenders in the shopping malls of Singapore, leaving even Japanese visitors—with their well-muscled yen—in the shade.

In fact, walking down the streets you get the distinct impression that Singapore is not so much a city state as a glorified shopping mall. There is a high-rise department store which ever way you turn, with every label from Escada to Esprit on sale—and some others that you might never have heard of. And there are money-changers at every hundred yards, so financing these sprees is no problem.

But even here, Indians have their own favoured haunts, where they can buy, buy and buy, without encountering any language problems or having to negotiate cultural barriers. In Singapore, they make a beeline for Mustafa's, a department store owned and managed by an Indian named Mohammed—yes, that's right!—Mustafa. Here, you can stock up on kitchen provisions, buy fitness equipment, invest in a colour television, and pick up cheap watches to give around as presents once you're back home—all at one go.

Legend has it that this store is much cheaper than most others, but quite frankly, prices are uniform all over Singapore. But since Indians are more comfortable with other Indians, this is probably the best place for them, as all the sales assistants are from this country.

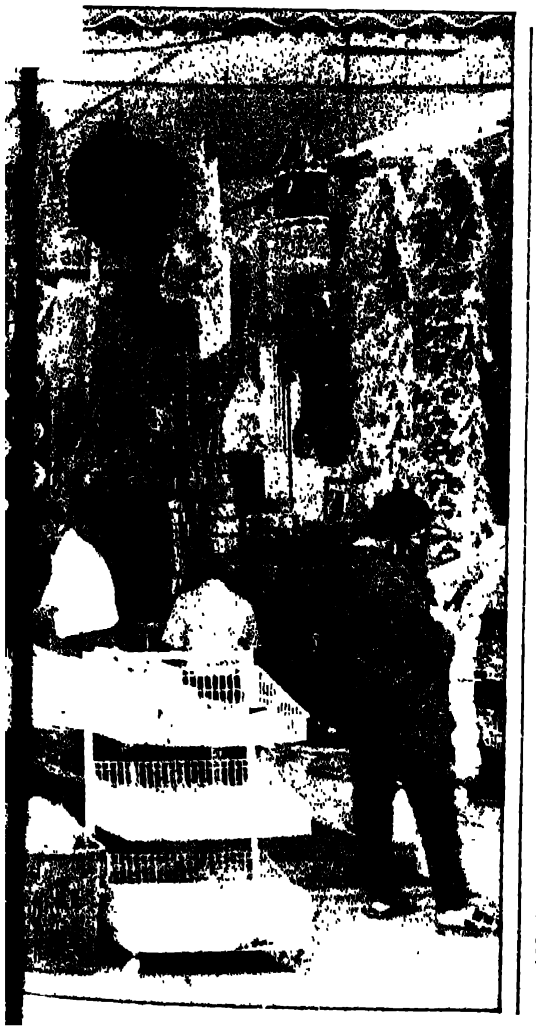
This store is situated in that one corner of Singapore that is forever India. Called Little India, this is where the expatriate Indian community—most of whom are from the south of this country—lives and works. Here you can buy Indian spices, listen to Hindi and Tamil film music, shop for traditional gold jewellery, and when you're famished after all that spending, walk into a food plaza and gorge on *dosas*, *parathas* or *biryani*, depending on what you prefer.

Little India: Gold lovers

Walk through the streets of Little India, and you'll feel that you're back home. The roads are lined with little kiosks selling fresh flowers and spices among other things, and this is one area of Singapore where the skyline is not dominated by sky-

Diwali in Little India: Tradition survives the test of time here

A food stall on Bugis Street: Serving different cuisines at a cheap rate



scrapers. Colonial architecture still survives here, and you can actually get an idea of what all of Singapore must have looked like when the first Indians, from the south of this country, began arriving on its shores.

Some things, at least, haven't changed though. Even today, most Indians seem to arrive from the southern city of Madras, from where Indian Airlines runs a flight three days of the week. The traffic on this route is quite heavy, and comprises a fair mix of tourists, businessmen, workers, and people who are visiting the Singapore-based branches of their families.

The Madras-Singapore sector is slightly longer (about four and a half hours) than the Calcutta-Singapore one, but the flight is a comfortable one. The aircraft used on this sector is the commodious A 300, where even travelling economy is not such a drag. And if you're lucky enough to be in Club, then you can avail of such special services as a south Indian style *gajra* gifted to every woman passenger as soon as she boards.

But while the majority of our countrymen are based in Little India, Indians are, by no means, victims of any kind of ghettoisation here. You will find them flourishing all over Singapore, running shops and little businesses, and Indian food— whether it is of the *kebabs* and *biryani* or *idli-vada* variety—is easily available and very popular.

Food is a major preoccupation of the residents of Singapore, anyway. The city state is dotted with food halls—housing stalls that sell different cuisines at incredibly cheap rates—restaurants and roadside kiosks selling all kinds of eatables. And visitors have been known to marvel at the fact that these are overflowing with locals who are busy satisfying their taste buds no matter what time of day it is.

Given this kind of indulgence, it is nothing short of amazing that they manage to retain their sylph-like figures. But by some miraculous process, they do. And what's more, they display them in hip-hugging jeans and short, short dresses, which do nothing for your self-esteem—specially if you've been piling on the calories during your vacation.

There are some people who find Singapore too antiseptic with its streets that are clean enough to be eaten off and self-flushing toilets that go off every couple of minutes or so (remain warned, there is a strict penalty for failing to flush after you have used a public facility). But after the shambolic mess that characterises most Indian cities in general and Calcutta in particular, the well-scrubbed look of Singapore presents

a pleasant contrast.

And it's not just litter that the city is free of; it is almost completely free of crime as well. Thus, you can walk down deserted avenues till late into the night or hail cabs without the fear of being mugged. As a taxi driver explains, the penalty for robbery is so steep, that it is simply not worth anyone's while—unless, of course, the sum involved is a million dollars or more.

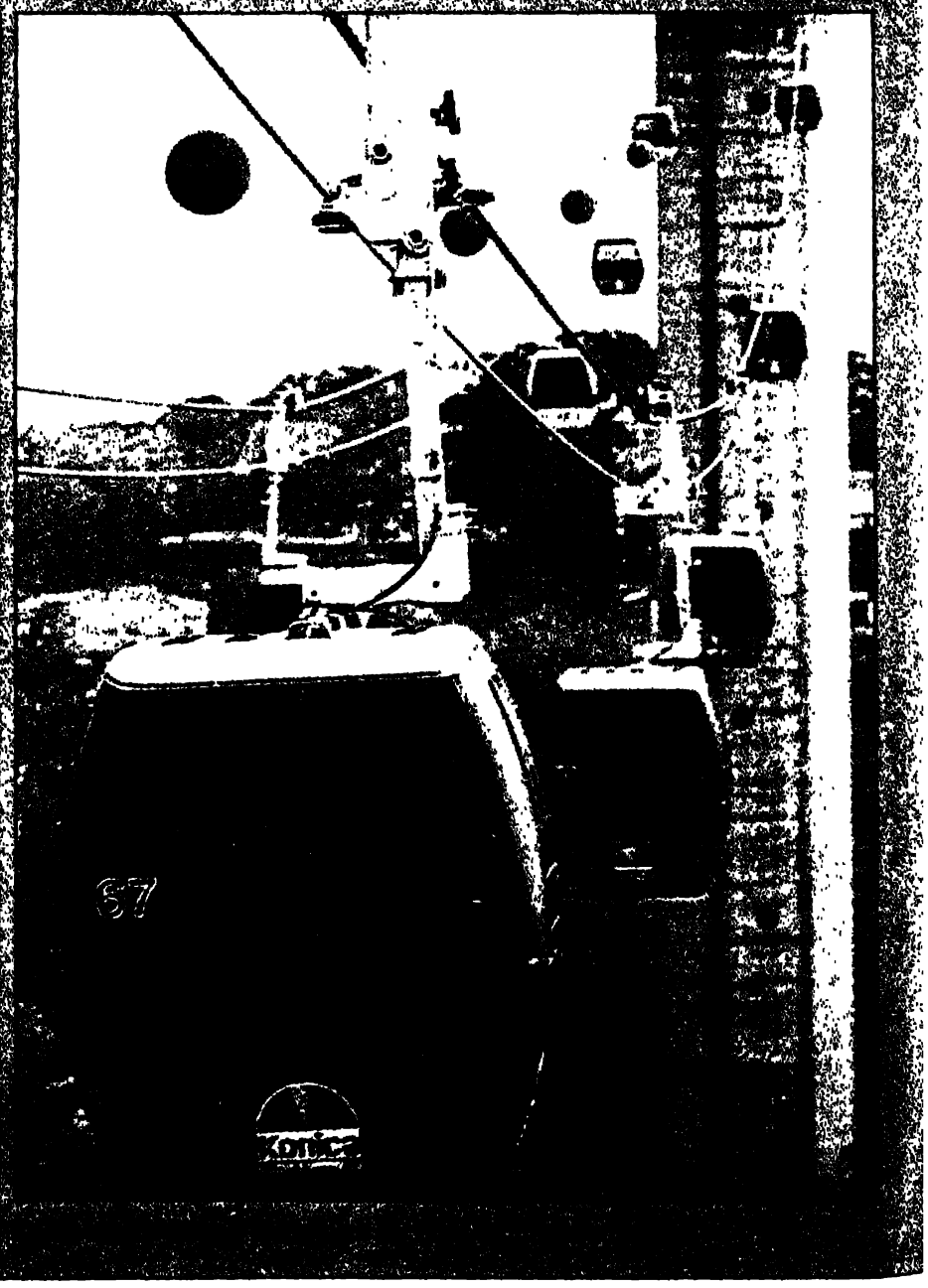
It also helps that almost everyone in the city has a job--and a reasonably well-paid one at that. Accommodation is relatively cheap, while food is both plentiful and inexpensive, so people can maintain a reasonable standard of living. And disposable incomes appear to be high as well, if one goes by the number of locals flashing their credit cards at the shopping malls that dot the city.

Running a car may be prohibitively expensive, though—but that's only because the government discourages excessive use of private vehicles in an attempt to keep pollution down and the streets relatively unclogged. And until now, at least, the strategy seems to have worked. Unlike neighbouring Bangkok, the traffic in Singapore is manageable even at the worst of times.

There are a number of places that are a must on a visitor's itinerary but your first stop in Singapore sim-

TREASURE ISLAND

If you're in Singapore, then you simply have to visit Sentosa



ply has to be the legendary Raffles Hotel. After extensive refurbishment a few years ago, the hotel is back in business, but tourists are restricted to the public areas. The inside of the hotel and the rooms can only be inspected if you're willing to pay a sky-high tariff.

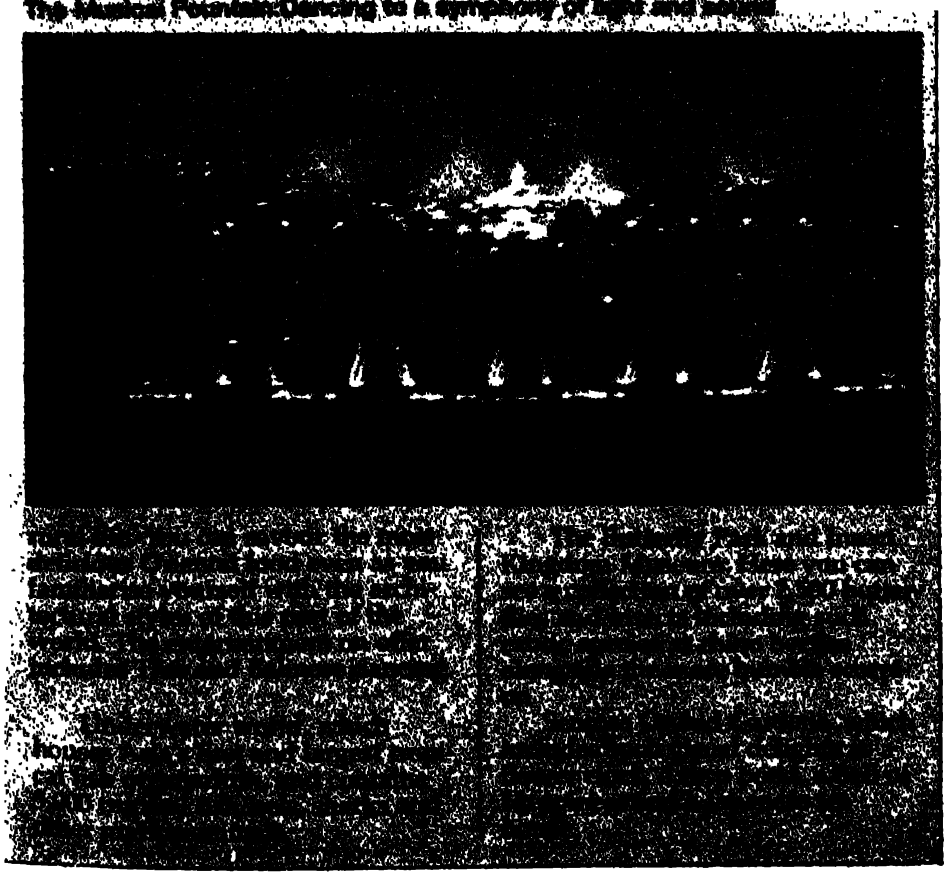
One good way of gaining entry is to dine at the Tiffin Room, the main restaurant of the hotel, which is situated just off the lobby. But keep in mind that casual touristwear will not do here; if you're in shorts, singlets, T-shirts or sandals (in the case of men) the black-suited man at the door will deny you entry.

But once you've been let through by the clothes police, then a great buffet dinner awaits you. The food on offer is Raj cuisine; that is, the kind of food that our British colonial masters used to feast on during their time in India — hence, the name, Tiffin Room. So, you can eat Indian curries along with such English staples as roast lamb or mutton chops, but remember to keep some room for the desserts that are simply out of the world.

For lunch, you'd be best advised to go to the Raffles coffee shop, The Empire Grill, which is opposite the main hotel. With high ceilings from which old-fashioned fans are suspended, and wooden tables and chairs, the outlet has the look of an up-market Irani restaurant. That is, of course, before you peruse the menu, which includes such south Asian delights as *Nasi Goreng*.

Ashly Village on Sentosa Island is a cultural entertainment

The Musical Fountain: Dancing to a symphony of light and sound



The days when Singapore went to sleep at 10.30 pm sharp are long gone. These days, this city boasts of an active night life, which is centred around two major spots, Clarke Quay and Boat Quay. These areas, as their names suggest, are located on the riverfront and have been extensively developed by the authorities.

Here you can feast on satays of every variety, gorge on Indian, Chinese, or South East Asian food, listen to live music, or play cards on the wooden tables laid out on the sidewalks till late into the night. At Clarke Quay, you simply have to stop by at the Charleston Pub, where the primary attraction is a middle-aged Englishman who makes the most amazing margaritas at the bar, and then dons a short skirt and a blonde wig to put on a show that would put the most talented drag queen to shame, to the cheers of inebriated British expats.

Just as there are places that you simply have to visit, there are others that you need to avoid like the plague. At Boat Quay, for instance, steer clear of the intriguingly-named Club Bollywood. The name may seem to embody all the glamour of the Hindi film industry, but the reality is a dimly-lit pub with dismal music and a distinctly unfriendly management. And anyway, quite frankly it makes little sense to travel all the way to Singapore just to hear *'Tu cheez badi hai mast mast'*.

You would be much better off taking the Singapore River Tour which begins at the Raffles landing site and takes you past godowns and shophouses, and old colonial buildings which have been restored by the government. These are juxtaposed against the modern skyscrapers that characterise the city today, and make for an interesting study in contrasts.

And that is, perhaps, the best way to describe the city itself. It's not for nothing that it's called 'Surprising Singapore' in all those tourist brochures.■

FIRST PERSON

MEHNAZ, *the Bombay-based lass, made her musical debut in the album* **Miss India** *which was a runaway hit. This year, she is one of the hot contenders for the Channel V Music Award. Even if she fails to make it to the top, the lady will continue to sing alone or with the likes of Anaida to belt out chart-toppers like* **Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram.**

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Maintaining relationships with people forever.
What is your greatest fear?
Losing those I love most.
Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?
My faith in God.
What do you dislike most in others?
The inability of some to accept their faults and have a more positive attitude towards life.

What objects do you always carry?

My Allah pendant and Sai Baba's photograph

What do you dislike most in yourself?
I am too hyperactive.
What is your most precious possession?
My ability to maintain relationships.
What objects do you always carry?
My Allah pendant and Sai Baba's photograph.
What makes you most depressed?
When I want to be with someone or in some place at a particular time and I cannot do so.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?
My ribs.
What is your favourite word?
Awesome!
What is your favourite journey?
My trip to the USA.
What is your favourite dream?
To go international with my music as an Indian.
What is your nightmare?
Losing my loved ones.
What or who is the greatest love of your life?
Music.
What is your source of sustenance?
Talent and the backing of a good music company.
On what occasions do you lie?
When I am late.
What is your greatest regret?
That I did not learn to play an instrument at an early age.

Rashbehari Das

What has been your happiest moment?
The day my album was released.
What brings tears to your eyes?
Appreciation of my work.

How do you relax?
By listening to music.

What do you envy most in others?
Things that I probably lack.

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

My ribs

How would you like to be remembered?
As a good vocalist from India.
How would you like to die?

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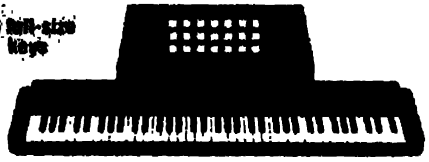

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POST MORTEM

Fair Play

■ In this fast changing world, it is nice to see women making a place for themselves in all spheres of activity — from politics, arts, academics to fashion and industry ('The Women We Love', October 27).

Sonia Gandhi is undoubtedly an admirable personality. Her determination showed in her refusal to accept the leadership of the Congress party after her husband's death. The party begged and pleaded, but she remained firm.

Surprisingly, yet the party revolves around her. So, even if she is not leading the Congress officially, she is its unofficial *netri*.

Priya Paul also represents the bold, new face of the Indian woman: resolute and resilient.

But Aishwarya Rai and Ritu Beri are women of a different genre; they have combined their beauty with their intelligence.

Despite the entry of young, pretty faces as Doordarshan would love to have its newscasters, oldtimers like Salma Sultan will always be remembered and respected. And politics does need fiery women like Renuka Chowdhury to add some spice to politics.

Lastly, Lata Mangeshkar, even having crossed 60, continues to sing for teenage stars on the silver screen. What could be a better testament of the timeless quality of her voice?

As these women have made their presence felt; they will also make their absence felt.

Sweta Sultania,
Calcutta

Lata Mangeshkar : The women we all love to hear

■ It is remarkable how Sonia Gandhi, despite being nowhere in politics, is a name to reckon with in the power circuit.

The impression that we gathered of her earlier was of a shy, *vilaiti bahu* who preferred to live in the shadows of her indomitable mother-in-law and caring husband.

But today, nothing moves in the Congress without a nod from 10 Janpath. And every Congressman knows that without her blessing he will be nowhere.

Surely, there must be more to Sonia Gandhi's personality than meets the eye.

Rabindra Chatterjee,
Calcutta

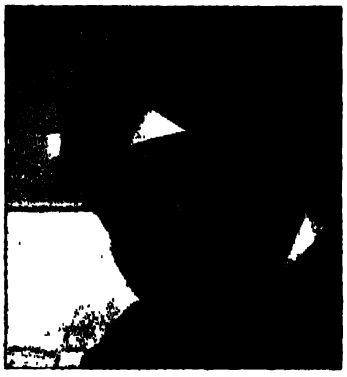
■ We Indians always look for a leader and it is all the more better if it comes in the shape of a *ma*. When Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India, she was revered almost like the mother goddess. She could do no wrong and hence her long rule. Now we have found her daughter-in-law. So what if she is an Italian? She wears the *sari*, covers her head with the *pallu* and looks Indian enough to fit into the role of a *ma*.

Damayanti Sanyal,
Calcutta

■ I am glad you chose Lata Mangeshkar in your list of the women we love. What an amazing personality! Always clad in white with little embellishments, and so very humble, she has been enthralling music lovers for over five decades now and still competes with newcomers in the industry.

Avijit Guha,
Calcutta

INSIDE



Rupinder Sharma

J.J. Valaya

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THE 29-year-old J.J. Valaya may have arrived late, but he has already made it big in the fashion industry. What makes Valaya so special?

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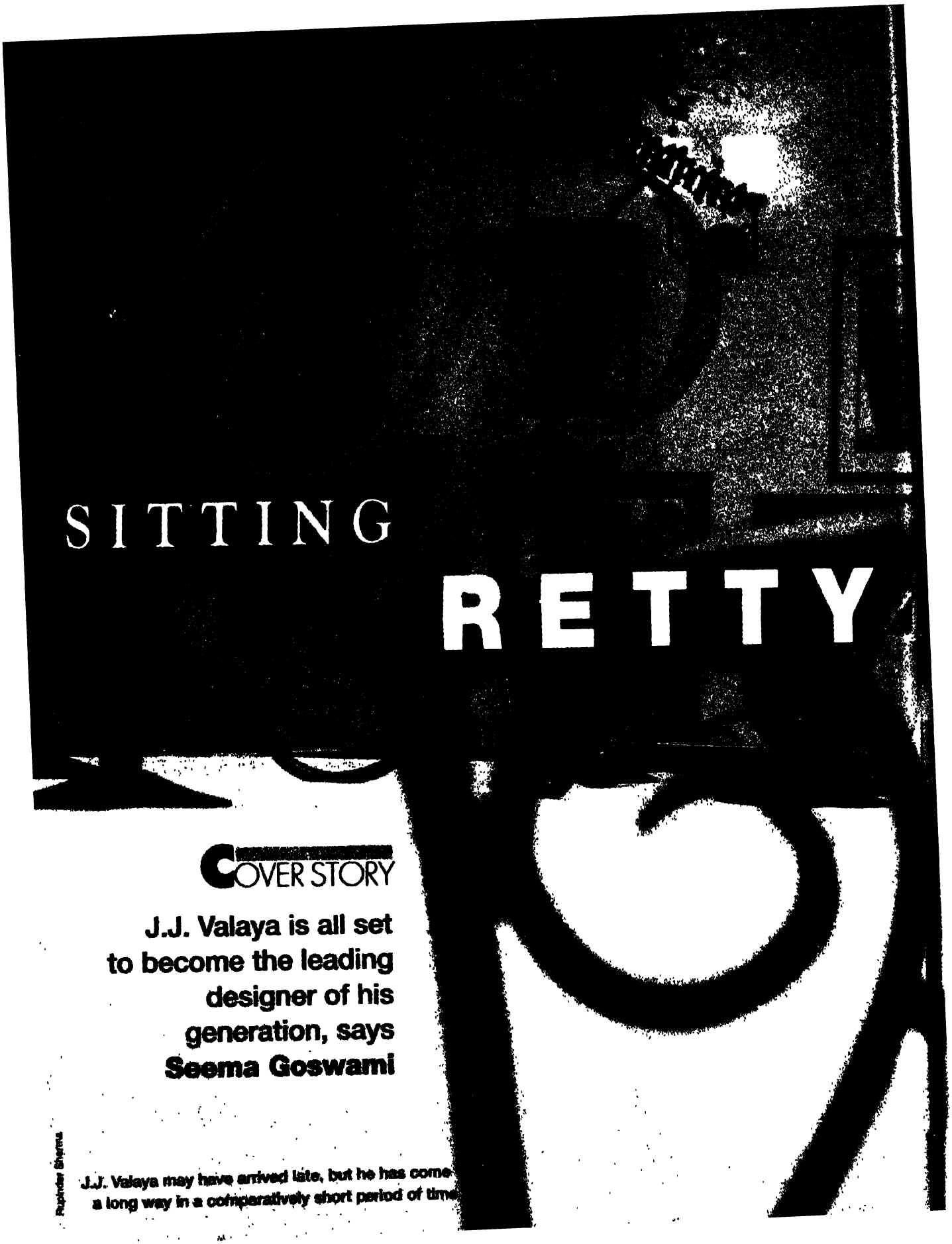
WALTER JOHNSON finally emerges from behind his eponymous label.

SECTIONS

16 TIME TABLE
26 FASHION
30 FIRST PERSON

Cover: Rupinder Sharma



SITTING RETTY

COVER STORY

J.J. Valaya is all set to become the leading designer of his generation, says Seema Goswami

Rajinder Sharma

J.J. Valaya may have arrived late, but he has come a long way in a comparatively short period of time

'If I feel a certain outfit does not look good on someone then I will say so. There's no point in selling something that doesn't suit the client. That's bad advertisement'

It's a streamlined J.J. Valaya who sits before you in the high-ceilinged office of his sprawling Chattarpur showroom. "I have already lost 28 kilos," says the fashion designer with quiet pride, "but I need to lose about 20 kilos more."

This obsession with getting trim makes some sense when you remember that the 29-year-old Valaya is due to get married in February to Meghna Paul, seven years younger than him at 22. The couple were introduced to each other by their parents and hit it off immediately. The engagement followed six months later and in another couple of months, Meghna will bid Jalandhar goodbye for good and shift to Delhi as the new Mrs Valaya.

Suggest this to JJ or, to give him his full name, Jagsharan Jit Singh, and he is quick to issue a disclaimer. "Oh no!" he says, "this has nothing to do with my getting married. I just felt that I had become far too heavy. I would get all out of breath even if I climbed a flight of steps. So, I decided that it was time that I got into shape."

Even now, he says, his shape is far from perfect, but then, he loves good food too much to give up on it altogether. "The way I look at it," he says, "is that we have only one life, so we must live it to the full. But, at the same time, we have to live it sensibly." So, despite the weight loss, JJ's resemblance to pop singer Daler (*Bole Tara Rara*) Mehndi endures and Valaya acknowledges this with a wry smile.

But say this much for JJ: he pulls his weight in the fashion world, holding his own against such top-division talents as Rohit Bal, Abu Jani and Sandip Khosla, Tarun Tahiliani, Shahab Durazi and Suneet Varma. And this, despite the fact that Valaya belongs to the second generation of fashion designers — a league in which Ritu Beri and Rina Dhaka keep him company.

He may have arrived late, but JJ has come a long way in a comparatively short period of time. And you only have to visit his JJ Valaya Life showroom to realise that. Situated in a large complex in Chattarpur, this houses an art gallery, a restaurant — serving Greek food among other things — and a flower shop, in addition to an enormous boutique which showcases the designer's clothes, shoes, shawls, tapestries and furniture. Hence the name: JJ Valaya Life. "This place," explains the designer, "deals with all aspects of life. In fact," he says, with an expansive gesture that encompasses his entire shop, "this is Life the way I see it. There are no boundaries to creativity, so why should I impose any artificial limits on mine?"

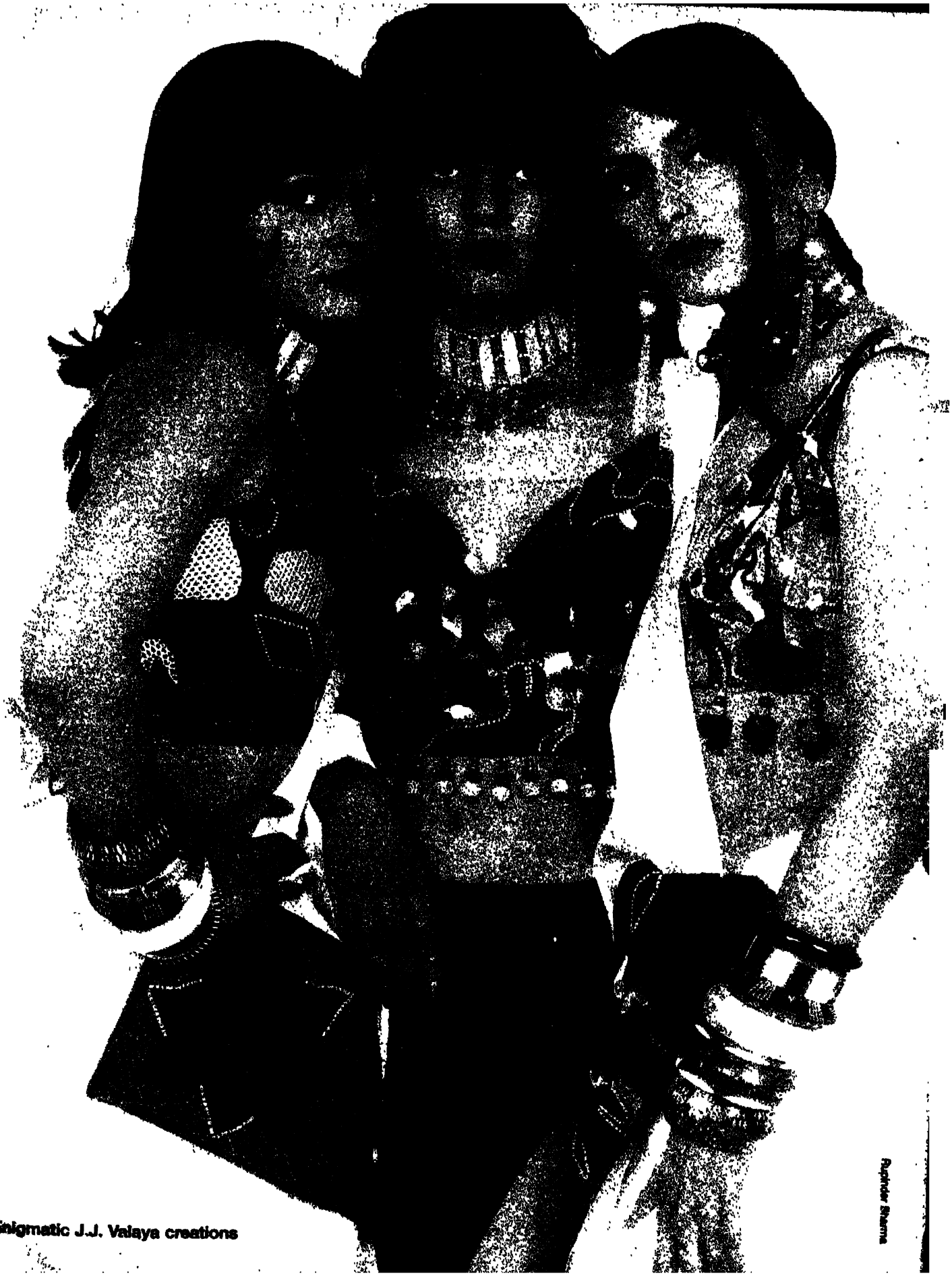
So, Valaya makes everything that you could possibly need for an elegant look. There is wrought-iron furniture for your living room, which can be paired with some exquisitely embroidered cushions; there are silk tapestries that could grace the walls of your home; carpets that are heaven to look at as well as walk on; curios for your coffee-table or the mantlepiece; hand-made shoes that can be recreated in your size; shawls and scarves to liven up even the most boring of outfits; and then, there are the clothes.

There is both men'swear and women'swear on offer here; in both Western and Indian designs. Men could choose from the *bandhgallas*, the granny-collar shirts, single-breasted suits and flowery prints that would do Versace proud.

For women, the choice is a little more restricted, though. The Westernwear line only occupies one rack, and comprises a velvet collection. The clothes are in one size only, but can be made to order in your's. The rest is Indianwear: *salwar kameezes, sari* ensembles, *lehenga cholis*; all of which are embroidered and embellished to within an inch of their lines.

The prices are equally impressive. If you want to shop here, think nothing of dropping between Rs 25,000-45,000 for a single outfit, though the accessories are more reasonable. You can pick up a good quality silk *pashmina* shawl, for

A Valaya outfit



Rajinder Sharma

Enigmatic J.J. Valaya creations

'must say that Rohit Khosla gave me tremendous support'

instance, for only Rs 5,700 — a bargain, by any standards.

But despite the pricing, JJ's faithful clients continue to drive to the outskirts of Delhi to check on his latest designs. And if they are savvy enough to make an appointment with the designer well in advance, he will be there in person to escort them around the shop and advise them on their purchases.

Says Valaya, "I'm not into hard sell. If I feel that a certain outfit does not look good on someone then I will say so. There's no point in selling something that doesn't suit the client. That only makes for a bad advertisement for the designer."

JJ has his own ideas about how he wants his showroom to be perceived by people. "I want a visit here to be a complete experience," he says. "You come, you buy some clothes, have lunch at the cafe, buy some flowers and then you drive back."

Fashion was not JJ's first career choice. An army brat, he was born in Jodhpur in 1967, and then moved around from city to city, as and where his father's postings took the family. The Valayas finally settled down in Chandigarh, where JJ acquired a commerce degree. He then decided to do his chartered accountancy, but dropped out after a year.

"I was 20-years-old at that time," he remembers now, "and I didn't know what to do with my life". But there was a spark of creativity within him. "I was good at oil paintings" — so Valaya decided to try his luck at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) which had been opened a couple of years earlier.

Rupinder Sharma

J.J. Valaya: Not into hard sell

But why fashion? Valaya explains, "I thought that this would be a profitable way of using my creativity. I saw how well fashion was doing abroad, and thought this success would replicate itself in India."

In retrospect, this was probably the most sensible decision JJ ever made. In 1990, while still at NIFT, he won the *Prix de Incitation*, an award instituted by Air France, for the best design entry from India — an outfit designed in cream for a polo spectator. That same year, Valaya began working with Rohit Khosla, the man who pioneered the fashion revolution in India, for his summer training.

"I didn't take a salary from Rohit," says JJ today. "I was just there to observe and adapt, and I learnt an enormous amount doing that. And I must say, that Rohit gave me the most tremendous support. He was always there for me."

But wasn't there a danger that he would be too influenced by Khosla's style? That he would begin to ape the senior designer, albiet unwittingly?

"There is a rub-off effect," admits Valaya. "And it was there in my first collections. But that only happens before you develop your own style, and I did do that after two collections."

The collection that brought Valaya to the notice of the fashion cognoscenti was his graduation collection at NIFT. This was the time when there was great unrest in Punjab, so JJ, a Chandigarh boy at heart, decided to do a collection on the theme: Peace. This was done entirely in white, in a knit-mix fabric for which Valaya won the Thapar-Dupont award.

And no sooner had JJ graduated from NIFT, than he decided to launch his own name label at the age of 24, with one master, one embroiderer and one tailor. "Everyone thought that I was mad," laughs Valaya. "And that I would get gobbled up by the big fish. But that didn't happen, and today I employ 160 people in my factory."

Not that establishing himself in the fashion business was easy. Not by a long shot. Says Valaya, ``The only person who encouraged me was Rohit Khosla, who even came over to my studio. Everyone else treated me as this Johnnie-come-lately who was trying to make it big."

According to Valaya, the fashion world in Delhi is essentially a very closed society. And almost everyone in this charmed circle has known the others for years, they have gone to school together, grown up together. And when they see an `outsider' trying to storm that bastion, they don't take to him too kindly. But then, says JJ in a philosophic vein, ``If you're in food, fashion or the arts, then back-stabbing is very common. You just have to ignore it, and create your own world."

Even today, when JJ is an established name in the business, and perhaps a better brand than some others he would rather not name, he still hasn't managed to break into the fashion set. ``I am friendly with a lot of them," clarifies the designer, ``but I am not friends with anyone. But then, I would rather have it that way."

Valaya insists that he wants to keep his personal and his professional life in separate, watertight compartments. He would rather spend his evenings at his Defence Colony house, listening to music and eating good food, ``I'm basically a homebody," he says. ``And I pride myself on keeping a good home. In fact, when people come over they can't believe that there isn't a woman at home, who keeps it looking so good."

That will, of course, change in February, when Valaya gets married, and Meghna takes over the reins of the household. But that, insists JJ, is all that she will be allowed to do. There is no place for her in his fashion empire, he says

'f you're in food, fashion or the arts, then backstabbing is very common. You just have to ignore it, and create your own world'

A J.J. Valaya design

Gorgeous *zari* work from Valaya

firmly. His personal life cannot be allowed to infringe on his professional one.

But this compartmentalisation is not always carried forward to its logical end. Some of Valaya's clients — Nafisa Ali, for instance, who modelled the showstopper during one of his shows — are his friends as well. But these are the exceptions to the rule. On the whole, says the designer, he doesn't know who buys his clothes. "And when I see someone wearing my clothes at a party or a function," says JJ, "I get a very funny feeling."

These days, Valaya sells his clothes at several stores across the country. In Calcutta, you can buy his designs at Ogaan, in Bombay he sells at Ensemble and Vama, Bangalore's premiere store, Ffolio, stocks him as well, as do Ogaan, Signature and Heritage in Delhi. And then, of course, there's JJ Valaya Life in Chattarpur, where you can get a piece of the designer's talent to decorate either your person or your living room.

In addition, Valaya supplies the export market as well. In fact, as much as 40 per cent of his turnover is for such international destinations as England (where he sells at a Beauchamp Place boutique owned by an NRI businessman) and the Middle East (Riyadh and Dubai).

And for each of these markets, JJ has to vary his look. As he explains, "In

'n the Middle East you can't have clothes that show the midriff. So, you can't design *cholis* for that market. Also *churidars* are not accepted there, so you have to vary the designs'

Valaya experiments with Western designs

'I want to make the kind of pieces that you can pass on to your daughter; the kind that become family heirlooms. I'm not ready to do simpler things at the moment'

Rupinder Sharr

the Middle East, for instance, you can't have clothes that show the midriff. So, you can't design *cholis* for that market. Also *churidars* are not accepted there, so you have to vary the designs accordingly."

Valaya, however, accepts that there is not much variation in the Indian high fashion scene; designers continue to make the same *sari, salwar, lehenga*, season after season. But JJ is not willing to blame designers for this.

"The Indian market is not ready for innovation," he says in defence of his breed, "in fact, 70 per cent of the Indian fashion industry revolves around weddings, festivals and the NRI market. And in these segments the only thing that sells is traditional designs. And since commercial considerations rule the market, it would be foolish to rebel and try to do something different."

So, does this mean that he will continue to make the ornate, sometimes overdone, clothes he has sold all along?

Says Valaya, "I want to make the kind of pieces that you can pass on to your daughter, the kind that become family heirlooms. I'm not ready to do simpler things at the moment."

This could change, however, as JJ is only too willing to concede. In a couple of years he plans to launch a ready-to-wear collection, which will be considerably cheaper, though Valaya means to maintain his standards of quality. To reduce the costs, he will experiment with fabrics and prints, instead of going in for cut-rate fashion.

"This is the direction that Indian fashion must take if it means to survive," says the designer, whose *couture* customers include such Delhi celebrities as Feroz Gujral, Madhu Trehan, Kavita Bhartiya, Maheep Singh, and of course, Nafisa Ali. Abroad he sells to European and Middle-Eastern royalty, and he adds rather endearingly, "to David Bowie's lawyer."

Like most fashion designers, Valaya's pet phobia is plagiarism. According to him, his designs have been knocked off all too often, and once, most famously, by a colleague who will remain unnamed. But JJ doesn't want to get into litigation, no matter what the provocation. Live and let copy, seems to be his motto.

There are some designers whom he does admire, though. Tarun Tahiliani, Abu and Sandip, Shahab Durazi, Rohit Bal remain personal favourites, but adds Valaya, "In terms of style, none of these people could even touch Rohit Khosla."

About himself, JJ is far more circumspect. Fighting shy of rating himself, he will only say, "What I like most about the way that I've come along is that there has been a steady evolution. Every year I have moved on to do different things."

And, no doubt, he will continue to do so in the decades to come. After all, at a year short of 30, J.J. Valaya has a lot of fashion left in him as yet. ■

EXTRACT

A Matter of FAITH

Matin Khan's second book, Gods On The Run, *is set against the background of the Bhopal gas tragedy. But it talks of a different kind of poison as well: the poison that people are made to imbibe in the name of religion. Khan, who was born and brought up in Bhopal, says that this novel is a way of repaying his debt to his home town. But, as the following extracts show, he has managed to do much more than just that with this*

Extracts from Matin Khan's new novel, Gods on the Run

Pimp III

It was a different Bhopal now. Before the merger of States, one found a contentment among the population and affluence in the lifestyle of the zamindars and jagirdars. This was not restricted to horse riding and hunting alone but covered a wider spectrum of idiosyncracies which almost embraced foolishness. They would train roosters and rams to fight and then hold tournaments to determine which rooster or ram was the best fighter. One whose rooster would win went a notch higher in the esteem of others. Then, there was kite flying and pigeon fights in the air. Such activities and the consuming desire to be known as the best f----in town found little time for education. Indeed, there were schools but even in schools the conversation centred around these subjects which the sons of zamindars and jagirdars would narrate and the other boys hear with awe and delight.

As independent India pushed itself forward, Muslim feudal society, buried in the cocoon of its idiosyncracies and illiteracy, found itself receding backwards. When the zamindari and jagirdari systems were abolished, many found themselves too lazy to work on their land which enabled migrants from other states to buy land and houses at cheap prices.

Begum had only two things left. Her family jewels and her regal looks. At first she lived off her jewels and after she had sold all of them, only her looks remained. It was then that she woke up to the present and her plight. It was difficult for her to give up her lifestyle and she became a willing victim to the desire of men.

She was a favourite of every man she lived with but only as long as he

Extracted from *Gods On The Run*
By Matin Khan
Published by Alka Paperbacks
Price Rs150

did not have enough of her till his wife found out Soon Begum found that the invitations which came to her by the dozens had dwindled. It was then that she met Kalua "Give me a chance," said Kalua, "and I will set you up in a way that instead of waiting for invitations from men you will find them licking your feet." "F----off," had been her stock reply to him.

Begum didn't hate Kalua merely because he was a pimp She felt repugnant that a Hafiz who could recite the Quran had turned into a pimp. "Allah will never forgive you Kalua," she had told him one day "So Allah is your God?" asked Kalua, an amused look on his face "Yes," snapped Begum, "Allah is my God." "Suppose your mother was a Hindu, then you would be vehemently claiming that Bhagwan Ram is your God and suppose she was a Christian you would be saying Hail Mary's and kneeling in the pews of churches praying to Jesus and the Father who art in heaven "You know Begum the umbilical cord which is cut when a child is born, is never emotionally severed The child grows up in the shadow of the womb" Begum protested but Kalua went on, "You don't even know all these Gods and Goddesses and messengers have come from an area as large as a thumb nail impression on the map of the world from the Nile valley to the Indus valley. Is it that the people in other parts of the world followed the straight path? Or is that we who inhabit the area between the Nile valley and the Indus valley are such rascals, such evil bastards that all gods and goddesses and messengers of god had to converge here from time to time to bring us back to the straight path of good?" "Where have you learnt all this Kalua?" asked Begum. "From life, Begum There is no better teacher than life," he replied.

Kalua saw Begun falter and ran up and held her arms to steady her. They were on the outskirts of the city He walked her to a clearing amongst the foliage and made her sit "I'm feeling sick Kalua," said Begum. "Lie down for a while and you will feel better," he replied. He took his jacket off and placed it under her head to serve as a pillow Begum suddenly screamed, gasping for breath. Slowly the screams started repeating with an interval of shortening durations Kalua recognised it as labour pains. He had heard those voices emanate from the houses of pregnant whores in his neighbourhood of Laxmi Talkies. He wanted to help her but couldn't, and ran shouting for help "Doctor," he shouted, "midwife". Nobody even glanced at him as an avalanche of people kept hurriedly running past him

Begum screamed again, this time in agony and then all was quiet. A few moments later he heard a child's cry, and ran towards her

"Kalua," said Begum, her breath coming in short gasps, making it difficult for her to talk. "Don't talk, relax," said Kalua. "You'll get well soon." She looked at him, her eyes blurred. "I've met many people," she said, "men of wealth, status, position but they were all men. You are the only human being I ever met in my life and so I leave to you all I have," her finger pointing at the new born Her hand went limp and fell Only her eyes kept staring at Kalua. He closed her eyes and was sobbing as he cut the umbilical cord which tied the child,a girl, to her dead mother with a stone.

"You bitch," he shouted, "I bore all the insults that you heaped on me You called me a pimp, a whore's son, a guttersnipe and now this final insult? You have left behind your daughter to me knowing that I cannot make anything except a whore out of her. And I will be d_. if I do it."

The last one saw of Kalua was with a little bundle tucked under his arm He deliberately threw it into a moving truck full of people One of the persons inside the travelling truck found the bundle land onto his lap

And nobody in Bhopal ever heard of Kalua again

***

Parsi-III

That evening Khursheji shaved for a second time during the day He did not want anyone to detect the white stubble which had started increasing its presence on his cheeks He shaved the right way The razor sliding down to his chin and then he ran it from the chin upwards He had a neat moustache, which he trimmed At least the moustache, he thought, resembled Clark Gable's and smiled

He took quite some time in the bath scrubbing himself from top to toe He looked at his armpits and wanted to shave the underarm hair.

It was a long time now that he kept seeing her One day she was sit-

ting by his side caressing his chest, and her hand crept up to his underarm There was a surprised expression on her face which seemed to be saying, "I like your underarm hair You don't even have to trim it" Khurshetji immediately came out of the bathroom He heard her voice again as he was dressing up. "Half the time you are in the bathroom and half the time you spend in the kitchen" Khurshetji did not know what to do with the girl She always came back to him which made him deliriously happy that someone loved him When she didn't, he would drink himself to sleep

One morning the voice woke him up with a kiss on his cheeks "Good morning," said the voice "Good morning," he replied and before he could open his eyes the voice snapped angrily, "Why do you look like this and talk like this in the morning" "How?" he asked "Like you have been drinking," she said He had a hazy picture of her She would come when she wanted, not when he willed or prayed for her to come The priest had called it a hallucination whereas the doctors dubbed him paranoid But Khurshetji continued to believe she was something spiritual -an apparition his loving guardian angel

On reaching Mr Postwala's house, he entered the compound and knocked on the door Jamshedjee opened the door and welcomed him in. Even before Khurshetji's arrival. he had broached the subject of marriage to Gulu "What will happen to you, papa?" she asked "We'll always stay together," he replied "But doesn't he love his father and mother as much as I love you? Doesn't he have anybody? Will they not miss him?" "No he has no one" replied her father "How does he look? How old is he? Is he as marvellous as you? As boyish papa?" asked Gulu

He didn't have the heart to tell his 25-year-old blind daughter that the man was a more than middle-aged hunchback

He had of late been having dizzy spells One night he had blanked out, on another he suffered a stroke of breathlessness which forced him to see a doctor He was frantic in his search to find a husband for Gulu "If I die, there will be no one to look after her," he felt Gulu, whenever she cradled his gaunt face in her hands, would run her fingers along the wrinkles, and brush them upwards but said nothing The boyish face and school boyish hair remained in her eyes but her touch told her that the face was now gaunt with sunken cheeks lined with wrinkles

"He is a very nice human being," he said, adding, "an upstanding man any Parsi mother would be proud of to call her son." As they walked into the room Khurshetji kept staring at her—speechless She was beautiful, indeed very beautiful Jamshedjee introduced Gulu to Khurshetji Inspite of knowing that it could annoy her father, Khurshetji went and sat by her side "Your daughter, Mr Postwala, is very beautiful I'll feel honoured if you allow me to marry her" As he said this, his hand dropped on hers and clasped it She put her other hand on top of his "I can't even tell you how handsome you are, Mr Khurshetji, because I can't see" The marriage between the hunchback and the blind girl took place in the privacy of a house as did the wedding reception It consisted of a lavish Parsi meal which was shared by the three of them

"Papa," she said after the dinner, "I promise you I'll be a loving, caring devoted wife But Papa, you will always be the love of my life" Jamshetjee was leaving for Nasik that night "I will be back in a week's time," he told them. "Papa," said Gulu, "Before you go may we hear a song from you." "I am sure Khurshetji knows how to sing better," repiled her father "I can't even croak in tune," was his reply Jamshetjee cleared cleared his throat and sang.

Beautiful, beautiful brown eyes,
Beautiful, beautiful brown...

It was her favourite song. As he neared the end of the song, both Gulu and Khurshetji joined in the singing

Down through the bar room, he staggered. And fell down by the door.
And the very last words that he uttered
I'll never see brown eyes no more.

All three of them had tears in their eyes but for different reasons Khurshetji thought of his mother's rich, deep brown eyes. Jamshedjee

for Gulu and Gulu because her own liquid brown eyes could see no more.

As they were retiring for the night, Gulu asked him, "Khurshetji, would you like to call me by a new name?" He thought of a few and, said "No Gulu, your name fits you perfectly."

They lay on the bed in a deep embrace. Their breath started to come sharp and fast as the passion of their kissing increased.

Even though swamped with passion her conscience kept tugging at her. "I was not blind all my life," she thought, "and I know how normal human beings look." Whenever she embraced Jamshedjee, his back was flat. What was this big lump on Khurshetji's left shoulder? She ran her hand from where it started to the top and down to the other end. It was a hump. Was Khurshetji a hunchback, she wondered, even as she responded to his kisses. Papa had never hed to her, why then did he not tell her? Was Papa also like Mama, fed up of his blind girl that he had forsaken her to a hunchback? But whatever now, she thought, he is my husband. His physical deformity made her feel sad for him and yet it turned her on. She was seized with a passion she could never believe she was capable of. From a docile participant she now became the aggressive partner running her hands all over his body as though trying to learn all about his physicality and passion and manhood.

"What is your favourite colour?" asked Khurshetji. "Pink," she replied. Passionate pink. Khurshetji started looking for a pink condom in the pack.

Suddenly, there were screams and shouts from outside. "Gulu, will you see what is the reason for this shouting?" he said. She walked up to the window, looked out and turning back replied, "You know very well that my eyes can't see love." "Let them shout," he said. "Let's go to bed."

They snuggled close to each other. Their breath warm on each others face. Suddenly there was no breath on their faces, no air in the room, only poisonous fumes from a chemical factory in the vicinity of the railway station.

And an unopened pink condom on the bed.

***

Christian-III

The next morning, Mary rang up his office. She was very agitated.

"I must see you," she said.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Mother's taking me to Calcutta tomorrow. She says that she has found a match for me and wants me to get married." "I'll come and see you in the evening," he said, but did not go.

Even before evening could arrive, liquor emboldened him to ring up the Mother Superior. It was Mary on the line instead. The moment she heard his voice she knew what was coming.

"What's the matter?" she asked, though knowing intuitively what it was. "You don't want me to go to Calcutta do you? I won't."

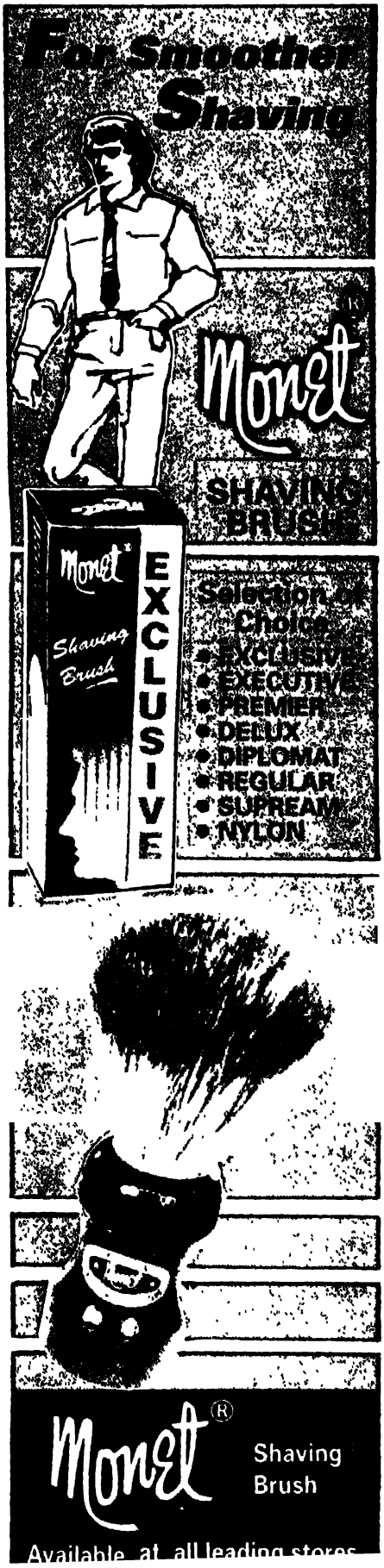
"Yes Mary I don't want you to go."

"The liquor also gave his emotions full freedom to lose control. He sobbed like a little child repeating over and over again, "Don't leave me alone Mary. Please don't. Have you ever thought what will happen to me without your love Mary? Please Mary, please don't leave me alone."

The next morning he went to the convent instead of office. The Mother Superior looked sternly at him and asked, "Why is Mary refusing to go to Calcutta? Don't you want the child to have a family, a family you know she's never had?"

"I am going to church and will be back by lunch. Please think about it and convince her that she has to go." "I will," he replied.

It took a long time for him to convince her. "Even if I go, remember he'll only be a husband. Y...



always be my love." "Remember you've promised me. There never will be any other girl in your life again. I can bear my husband to be with another woman but I can't bear another woman to be with you. Oh shit! I feel so guilty I'll have a family but you won't have anyone, Martin."

"I'll always have you Mary," he replied

"I'll always be there," she said and started sobbing and it took a long time for him to console her.

Mother and child returned from Calcutta within five days. Mary was inconsolable. Mother Superior was tense "The good Lord alone knows," she said, "what's happened to Christians these days Before they ask a girl's hand in marriage they ask for a fortune first"

The next morning Mary arrived at the flat and handed Martin an envelope.It was an interview call from the railways. "I thought it was a cheque," he said

"Greedy man, just because I give you the pay cheque first before Mother puts it in the bank. You only think of cheques The only problem is that the interview is at Itarsi. I'll be all alone Martin," she said.

"I don't think so," he replied.

She stared at him in disbelief. "You mean to say that you who never take me anywhere will come with me to Itarsi"

"No." he replied I won't But take my soul with you It will keep you from being nervous"

Mary was due to return the day after, by the Grand Trunk Express Martin went shopping in the afternoon, for fish, fowl, vegetables, and, of course, rum.

As he was climbing the stairs to his flat, he heard a group of young men, assembled below the staircase, laughing and talking

"You know what," one voice said aloud to the others, "There was this girl in college called Mary. Her parents really should have named her 'Easy' She keeps coming to this old chap upstairs Dunno what she sees in him that I don't have" "Aw, shut up, will you," said another voice. He's as old as her father."

"Yes," said the third. "But he regards her as the Holy Mother Mary herself She's some Virgin, this Mary. She has a gala time with the doctors and technicians at the hospital I pity the poor old bastard" Martin stood on the landing where he always waited to see her arrive, hearing every word carefully He remembered occasions when she said that she'd ring up and never did because of pressure of work she would explain She also did not want him to ring her up

He turned and thumped up the staircase. He kept the provisions in the fridge and started drinking

It is getting to be five Mary should have been here already, he thought

Dusk and Mary arrived together. She rang the bell as was her wont and opened the door.

"I have come to return your soul," she said "Throw it into some corner," he said. "I don't need it anymore."

"Are you angry, baba, because the train came late?" she asked.

"F__ the train," he growled in reply "What's the matter with you?" she asked.

"Nothing," he said, "nothing "Nothing's the matter. You know what Mary," he said filling his glass, "everyone's the same I feel like a condom except that I have not been used only once I have been used and discarded again and again Lorraine was older than me and see what she did to me. Frankie was my friend. You who are younger than me always said, 'You are my love Martin I'll never forsake you' Even you were not honest in our relationship The reward of the faithful is always betrayal." His voice slurred with liquor had an edge of tears to it "I've fought against it all my life Now I can't It has conquered me It's an awful load like oncoming death to realise that your old age has been stabbed in the back by your young love God bless you"

Mary kept patiently listening, knowing that he was piss drunk. No amount of words could get him out of it

She had to somehow shock him out of his drunken stupor and self-pity at the betrayals once and for all. She walked up to him and slapped him hard, repeatedly.

The violence in him again took an about turn focussing itself within. He looked at her, his glazed eyes brimming with tears

She held him. "Why are you doing this to yourself?" she sobbed

"I am not doing anything to myself," he replied. "I am giving as much of myself as I can and am taking the betrayal on myself You know I have always been with you Mary even when you said you didn't need me, I still found a way to be by your side didn't I?" He started singing off-key. *'Even if every drop of rain/would have a tongue/I couldn't tell/the measure of my love'* Suddenly he stopped "Even you will leave me

and want to forget my love Go on try to forget me. Try your best You may not love me now You may hate me. But you can't forget my love nor can I. We are a part of each other's life Even when they bury me I'll live, not as a photograph in your album but in your heart as the love of your life"

He drank the last drops of the alcohol straight from the bottle and continued, inspite of Mary's sobs "You've found young new educated rich friends everywhere What's an old friend Mary, an old shoe easily discarded?"

All of a sudden he stood up and walked unsteadily to the bathroom. "Handsome man, very handsome man" Finding Mary's reflection in the mirror he asked, "there was a glow to my face Mary, where has it gone? Why has it left my face Mary?"

Mary couldn't take it anymore She pounced on him, slapping him, crying and talkig at the same time "You know you're all I have Martin. I prayed to god to make you love me I lit a candle at dusk every Thursday. What did I not do? You want me to go down on my knees and say I love you Martin? The past is dead. Why can't you wake up to the present? Why do you think that I will also betray you? Do you want me to die to prove my love? I am

willing even to do that for you Martin" "Past perfect Mary Present unperfect I have always been the past; no a pastime for everybody Mary," he said, adding, "a fill-in-the-blanks, a stopgap When no one's there that old buggar Martin comes handy."His voice was lost in a scream outside the window followed by another and then it seemed that the entire locality was screaming in pain

Mary ran to the window to find out the reason She couldn't make out anything except that everyone was running.

She looked at the old man who was staring at her with glassy drunken eyes His intense love for which she had prayed to god, which had suffused her being with happiness was now suffocating her If she left him and he died, she could begin a new life If he lived, he would never forgive her Maybe, he would forget her forever, she hoped, for the betrayal

The left-behind girl opened the door and ran into the crowd, running for safety, leaving behind the only man she claimed was her love

And even as she ran, she knew she could never really run away from Martin. He would always be a part of her She ran past the Railway Club towards the station climbing the stairs and descending on the western side Every step she ran forward kept kicking Martin back into the past Inspite of the conscious effort he kept emerging from her subconscious, a twinkle in his eye and a grin on his face teasing her, "leaving me alone? Go on try Mary" Her eyes blurred with tears as she kept running Everything seemed to be growing hazy Everywhere she kept seeing Martin Looking for her, putting her to sleep, waking her up with a kiss and tea, waiting for her with an icecold water bottle as she came out from the examination hall, teasing her, fighting with her; waiting, crying, loving, kissing, even in lifts and on staircases and on Mother's bed. She couldn't remember an occasion when Martin did not stand by her. Even when she said, "I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore He just looked at her, his eyes imploring Can you really forget me Mary, he had asked I want to, she had insisted Can you forget our togetherness, our love, he asked I'll try, she had said, wanting to hurt him so much that he went out of her life forever

She had tried She was running away from him and she had failed She turned and inspite of the pushing, jostling crowd making it difficult, ran back muttering to herself over her tears, "Oh Martin, what have I done? I can't leave you Martin You are a part of me Please forgive me "

Martin had com eout of his stupor He felt thirsty and called out for Mary There was no reply, he shouted for her There was still no reply. Only the screaming and shouting of voices which came from outside He ran like a mad man from room to room, shouting her name Her purse was still there on the table What had happened to her? He flung open doors, banged them, even looked under the low hung bed. "God no," he said "What had she said. I am willing to die to prove my love? Oh God, no, please, " he shouted, "Please don't let anything happen to my Mary" Mary stood in the doorway, the wind blowing the short hair on her forehead like so many little commas. She had heard everything

She was full of remorse for having run away and happy to have come back to discover how much she meant to him He could not see her, his back was turned "Martin," she shouted, running to embrace him

He turned slowly "Mary," he cried out and started coughing He was gasping for breath Suddenly he crumpled taking Mary with him to the floor Mary raised herself on her elbows and slowly fell across his chest— lifeless Their bodies forming a cross on the floor ■

TIME TABLE

All arrival and departure times are for Calcutta

Days of operation using 7-day code: ① MONDAY ② TUESDAY ③ WEDNESDAY ④ THURSDAY ⑤ FRIDAY ⑥ SATURDAY ⑦ SUNDAY

(As these pages go to press one week in advance, readers should check with respective airlines and railways for last minute change in timings)

FLIGHTS

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AGARTALA					
IC 741	0750	1 [illegible]	IC-742	1015	5
609	0900	4 [illegible]	IC 711	1205	1, 4, 7
IC 743	0945	[illegible]	IC-744	1205	[illegible]
IC-743	1300	1 3 4 5 6 7	IC 744	1520	1, 3 4 5 6 [illegible]
AHMEDABAD					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2 4	M9 145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC 716	1620	1 5 7	IC 716	2150	1 5 7
AIZAWL					
PF 401	0645	1 [illegible] 3 4 5 6	PF 402	1355	2 4 5
			PF 403	1635	1 3 6
BAGDOGRA					
IC 721	0945	1 2 4 5 7	IC 722	1210	1 3 4 5 7
D2 161	1330	1 3 [illegible]	D2 163	1600	1 [illegible]
BANGALORE					
IC-771	0600	daily	IC 772	1140	daily
9W 511	1400	daily	9W 512	2150	daily
IC 773	1815	1 5 7	IC 771	1240	[illegible]
BHUBANESWAR					
D5 402	0700	4 6	D5 401	1230	3 [illegible]
CD 544	1830	1, 3 5	CD 543	1500	1 3 5
IC 769	1615	2 1 6	IC 770	2000	2 1 6
CHENNAI (MADRAS)					
D5 402	0700	4 6	IC 965	0615	1 2 4 5 6
IC 966	0905	1 2 4 5 6	CD 543	1250	1 3 5
CD 544	1110	1 3 [illegible]	CD 544	1930	1 3 5
CD-544	1830	1 [illegible] 5	[illegible]	1955	daily
D2 172	1610	1 3 [illegible]	D5 407	1[illegible]5	2 5
D2 174	1[illegible]05	2 4 6 7	IC 766	2020	daily
IC 765	1510	daily			
DELHI					
IC 963	0700	daily	M9 303	0820	daily
9W-902	0645	daily	9W 901	0830	daily
M9 404	0920	daily	AI 642	0925	1
IC 40[illegible]	1[illegible]	daily	IC 95[illegible]	0[illegible]	1 [illegible]
IC 851	1830	4	IC 403	0845	1 [illegible]
M9 402	1945	daily	M9 401	1900	daily
9W-9[illegible]	1[illegible]	daily	9W 911	1[illegible]	daily
			IC [illegible]4	0[illegible]	daily
DIBRUGARH					
D2 152	1220	2 4 6 [illegible]	IC 702	1020	1 3 5 7
IC 701	1240	1 [illegible]	D2 [illegible]	1620	2 4 6 7
DIMAPUR					
CD 957	1145	2 4 6 7	CD 2[illegible]	[illegible]	2 3 6 7
PF 301 305	0615	2, 4	PF 404 [illegible]	[illegible]	2 4 [illegible]
GUWAHATI					
IC 703	0750	1 4 7	IC 704	1100	1 3 5
D5 601	0[illegible]	1 [illegible] 6	[illegible] 240	1110	daily
PF 301	0[illegible]	1 3 5	9W 51	1[illegible]	daily
IC 220	1000	daily	PF 402	1[illegible]	daily
9W-611	1[illegible]	daily	IC 214	1[illegible]	[illegible]
IC 215	1100	[illegible]	D[illegible]	000	daily
HYDERABAD					
9W 511	1100	daily	IC 775	1[illegible]	2 5 7
IC 777	1700	1 5 7	IC 776	2000	1 5 6
IC 769	1615	2 4, 6	9W 512	2150	daily
IMPHAL					
IC 255	0800	1 4 5	IC 256	1250	1 4, 5
IC 212	1140	2 6	IC-213	1540	2 6
IC 214	1100	3 7	IC-713	1530	3 7
JAIPUR					
M9-304/145	0850	1 2, 4	M9-145/301	1900	1 2 4
IC 715	1620	1 5 7	IC-716	2150	1 5 7
JAMMU					
M9 304/119	0850	2 4	M9 128/301	1900	1 2 3 4 5 6
JORHAT					
CD-257	1145	2 4, 6 7	CD-257	1550	2 4 6, 7
9W 621	1010	3 5	9W 622	1320	3 [illegible]
LILABARI					
PF 301 403	0645	1 [illegible] 6	PF 304/302	1635	1 [illegible] 6
LUCKNOW					
IC 812	1[illegible]0	1 3 [illegible]	IC 811	1915	[illegible]
MUMBAI (BOMBAY)					
			IC 6[illegible]	0650	daily
9W 2[illegible]	0715	daily	D2 101	0930	daily
IC 5[illegible]	0730	daily	9W 201	0945	daily
D2 102	0930	daily			
IC 725	0950	2 4 6	IC-726	1615	2 4 6
IC 71[illegible]	1650	1 5 7	IC 716	2150	1 5 7
AI 409	1930	[illegible]	AI-408	1730	[illegible]
9W 212	2100	daily	IC 74[illegible]	2050	daily
IC [illegible]3	1915	daily	9W-211	1925	daily
IC 104	2005	daily	D2 103	1135	daily
NAGPUR					
IC 763	1655	2 4 6	IC 764	2000	2 4 [illegible]
PATNA					
IC 725	0950	2 4 6	IC 726	1615	2 4 6
D5 406	1330	3, 5	D5 408	1845	1 5
IC 612	1530	1 3 [illegible]	IC 611	1915	1 3 5
PORT BLAIR					
CD 295	0530	1, 3 5	CD-286	1100	2 4 [illegible]
RANCHI					
IC 725	0950	2 4 6	IC 726	1615	2 4 6
SILCHAR					
IC 253	0300	1 6 7	IC 254	1040	3 6,
IC 255	0800	1 4 5	IC 256	1250	1 4 5
TEZPUR					
IC-[illegible]3	1140	2 6	IC 213	1540	2 6
VARANASI					
D5 406	1330	3 5	D5 408	1835	3 5
VISHAKHAPATNAM					
D5 402	0700	4 6	CD 541	1030	1 3 5
CD 542	1110	1 3 5	D5 401	1230	3, 5

FLIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
AMMAN					
RJ-185	1445	4	RJ 184	0700	1
AMSTERDAM					
KL 876	0325	[illegible]	KL-875	0930	7
BANGKOK					
KB 105	0855		KB 106	10.0	7
KB 105	1[illegible]5	4	KB-106	1.46	[illegible]
IC 731	0300	2 [illegible]	TG 313	1240	1 3 6
			IC 732	1410	2 5
IC 856	1105	4 7	IC 856	1730	4 7
TG 314	1355	1 3 6			
AI 306	1910	5	AI 309	1825	6
BUCHAREST					
RO 076	2300	5, 7	RO 075	1200	5, 7
CHITTAGONG					
IC-225	1130	3 7	IC 226	1350	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
BG-698	1735	2 5	BG 697	1655	2 5
DHAKA					
BG-092	0850	4 5	BG 091	0810	4, 5
BG 092	1150	1 2 3 6 7	BG-091	1110	1 2 3 6 7
IC 723	1400	1 2 3 5 7	IC 721	1520	1, 2, 3 6 7
BG 094	1805	1 2 3 5 6 7	BG-093	1825	1, 2 3 5 6 7
BG-094	1910	4	BG-093	1830	4
BG-096	2100	1 5	BG 095	2020	1 5
DOHA					
Q7 061	1430	6	Q7 060	1330	6
DUBAI					
BI 107	1100	4	BI 106	0730	7
KATHMANDU					
IC 747	1315	1 2 4 5 6	IC 746	1615	1 2 4 5 6
LONDON					
BA-142	2115	3 7	BA 143	1515	3, 7

Departures			Arrivals		
Flt No.	Time	Days	Flt No.	Time	Days
MOSCOW					
SU-538	2200	4	SU 537	1030	4
NAIROBI					
KB-106	1105	7	KB 105	0810	2
KB 106	1425	5	KB 105	1710	4
SINGAPORE					
BI 108	0630	7	BI 107	2000	6
SQ 415	2345	2, 5	SQ 416	2230	2 5
SOFIA					
LZ 504	1750	4	LZ-503	1650	4
TOKYO					
AI 306	1910	5	AI-309	182	6
RANGOON					
IC 227	1530	4 7	IC-220	1955	4 7

AI Air India ● **BA** British Airways ● **BG** Biman Bangladesh Airlines ● **BI** Royal Brunei Airlines ● **CD** Alliance Airlines ● **D2** Skyline NEPC ● **D5** NEPC Airlines ● **IC** Indian Airlines ● **KB** Druk-Air ● **KL** Royal Dutch Airlines ● **LZ** Balkan Airlines ● **M9** ModiLuft ● **PF** Vayudoot ● **RA** Royal Nepal Airlines ● **RJ** Royal Jordanian Airlines ● **RO** Tarom Air Transport ● **SQ** Singapore Airlines ● **SU** Aeroflot ● **TG** Thai Airways International ● **9W** Jet Airways ● **Q7** Qatar Airways

TRAINS

EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Delhi-Kalka Mail**	6 15	2312
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Amritsar Mail**	7 35	3006
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Mumbai Mail** via Allahabad	13 15	3004
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Gaya Varanasi Dep Wed Thurs & Sun Arr Tues Wed & Sat	16 15	2382
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Poorva (New Delhi) Express** via Patna Dep Mon Tue Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Fri & Sun	10 15	2304
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Gaya Dep Mon Tues Wed Fri & Sat Arr Mon Tues Thur Fri & Sun	10-45	2301
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Rajdhani Express** via Patna Dep Thurs & Fri Sun Wed & Sat	12 50	2306
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Jodhpur Express**	4 40	1308
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Shatabdi (Bokaro Steel City) Express** Dep. & Arr. Except Sunday	21 10	2010
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Himgiri (Jammu-Tawi) Express** Tri-Weekly Dep Mon Fri & Sat Arr Tues Wed & Sat	11 35	3074
5045	[illegible]	**Guwahati Saraighat Express** Dep Tue Wed & Sat Arr Tues Fri & Sat	12 25	5046
5049	[illegible]	**Gorakhpur Express** Dep. & Arr. Thursday	11 35	5050
5047	[illegible]	**Purbanchal (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tue Mon Wed & Fri	4 15	5048
3009	20 20	**Doon Express** via Grand Chord	7 00	3010
3007	9 45	**Udyan Abha Tootan Express** via Main Line	18 10	3008
3039	21 00	**Delhi Janata Express**	5 15	3040
3049	15 10	**Amritsar Express**	15 20	3050
3019	21 50	**Kathgodam Express**	11 55	3020
3021	16-00	**Mithila (Raxaul) Express**	5-00	3022
5650	17 35	**Kamrup (Guwahati) Express**	6 30	5660
3317	6 15	**Black Diamond Express**	21 25	341
3029	17 11	**Coalfield Express**	10 20	3030
3035	18 20	**Asansol Express**	8 45	3036
3231	21 05	**Danapur Express**	6 30	3232
3071	22 30	**Jamalpur Express**	5 10	3072
3015	9 55	**Santiniketan Express**	15 40	3016
3017	5-45	**Rampurhat Express**	21 45	3018
1159	15 25	**Chambal (Gwalior) Express** Dep Mon Tue & Thurs Arr Mon Thurs & Fri	7 55	1160
9305	15-25	**Shipra (Indore) Express** Dep. Wed Sat & Sun Arr Sun Wed & Sat	7-55	9306
3327	14 30	**Shaktipunj (Chopan) Express**	4-30	3328
1181	15 25	**Chambal (Agra Cantt.) Express** Dep Fri Arr Tues	7-55	1182
Up	**Time**	**Sealdah**	**Time**	**Dn**
3141	13 40	**Teesta-Torsa Express**	6-35	3147
3143	19-15	**Darjeeling Mail**	8 45	3144
[illegible]	20 15	**Lal Quila Express** via Main Line	7 15	3112
[illegible]	6 25	**Kanchanjunga** (Landing) Express	20 35	5658
3153	22 00	**Gour Express**	5-15	3154
5663	20-00	**Katihar Express**	4 15	5664
3151	13 45	**Jammu-Tawi Express**	15 50	3152
3133	20-55	**Mughal Sarai Express** via SBC Loop	12 30	3134
3103	18-50	**Bhagirathi (Lalgola) Express**	10 25	3104
5285	12-40	**Ganga Sagar (Gorakhpur) Express** Dep & Arr Tues Thurs & Sat	1 25	5286

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

Departure Up	Time	Howrah	Arrival Time	Dn
6003	20 15	**Madras Mail**	5 55	6004
8002	19 20	**Mumbai Mail** via Nagpur	8 20	8001
2860	17-25	**Gitanjali (Bombay) Express**	15 [illegible]	2859
2021	6 06	**Shatabdi (Rourkela) Express** Dep & Arr Except Saturday	23-06	2022
8034	20-30	**Ahmedabad Express**	5 30	8033
8036	10 45	**Kurla Express** via Nagpur	16 20	8039
2841	14-00	**Coromandel (Madras) Express** via Cuttack	12 20	2842
7003	7 56	**Falaknuma (Secunderabad) Express**	19 40	7004
6511	22-35	**Bangalore Express** Dep Sunday Arr Sunday	12 45	6512
8013	17 30	**Tata Steel Express**	10 20	8014
8011	6 50	**Ispat (Sambalpur) Express**	23 35	8012
8005	20 40	**Sambalpur-Rayagada Express**	5 00	8006
8015	21 25	**Ranchi Hatia Express**	6 20	8016
8007	22 00	**Puri Express** via Cuttack	5 30	8008
8400	19 00	**Sri Jagannath (Puri) Express**	8 40	8410
2821	6 15	**Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) Express**	22 05	2822
8045	19 15	**East Coast (Hyderabad) Express**	15 20	8046
8017	16 45	**Purulia Express** Dep Except Saturday Arr Except Sunday	12-05	8018
8079	23 20	**Tirupati Express**	4 15	8080
1030	15-45	**Azad Hind (Pune) Weekly Express** Dep. Sunday Arr Friday	5 15	1029
2421	16-40	**Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Sunday only	16 10	2421
2422	11-05	**New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express** (via Howrah) Saturday only	10 45	2422
[illegible]	[illegible]	**Guwahati - Howrah - Trivandrum Central Express** Wednesday only	[illegible]	
	14 10	**Trivandrum Central - Howrah - Guwahati Express** Monday only	13-45	6321
	14 10	**Cochin Harbour Terminus - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Thursday only	13 45	6313
6314	22 35	**Guwahati - Cochin Harbour Terminus Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Visakhapatnam) Saturday only	22 35	
6324	22 35	**Trivandrum Weekly Express** Dep. & Arr. Tuesday	13 45	6323
6316	22-45	**Cochin Harbour Terminus Express** (via Visakhapatnam & Howrah) Dep & Arr Friday	13 45	6315
6520	22 35	**Guwahati - Bangalore City Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Monday only	[illegible]	-
	14 10	**Bangalore City - Guwahati Weekly Express** (via Howrah & Cuttack) Saturday only	13 45	6519

ENQUIRIES For round the clock information of Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, please dial 2203545-54 for in-coming trains, 2203535-44 for all other information For information about reservations on Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway trains, dial 2203496-3500 (from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 2 pm on Sundays and gazetted holidays). In addition, dial 1331 (for recorded information on train running), 131 (regarding train operations) and 135 (regarding reservations). Train service enquiry at Sealdah 3503535/37
Interactive Voice Response System (5 am to 9 pm everyday from Monday to Saturday; 5 am to 5 pm on Sunday): For reservation status, dial 136 (computerised), Dial 2203496 (manual enquiry).

SKETCHES

WAR GAMES

And the names who play them

This week: Ratikant Basu Vs Subhash Chandra Goyal

It all began: As soon as Basu was hired by Rupert Murdoch to take over Star TV's Indian operation Basu, who had already turned Doordarshan around, giving Zee TV a run for its money with his Metro Channel, was determined to replicate that success in his new job, no matter what it took

And what did it take?: For starters, it meant increasing the quantum of Hindi programming, and showing such serials as *The Bold And The Beautiful* and *Baywatch* in Hindi as well as English And despite the criticism that this move attracted, Basu succeeded in his objective. ratings of the channel doubled. Once that limited objective was achieved, Basu could turn his attention to other pressing matters And first on his list was the Subash Goyal/Zee TV problem

Subhash Chandra: Attacking Star TV

What exactly was the problem?: In Basu's view, Star TV had got the short end of the stick in the agreement it had struck with Zee a few years back. According to this agreement, Zee Telefilms, a software company which is owned by Goyal, would sell programmes to Asia Today, a company jointly owned by Murdoch and Goyal, at prices that would be fixed by the channel According to Basu, there was an inherent conflict of interest in this situation as Goyal was both the seller and the buyer. And the only loser in this agreement was Murdoch, because he would be paying inflated rates to Zee Telefilms

Ratikant Basu: Looking for a better deal for Murdoch

Basu's solution: Was not to throw Zee off the Star network, that would be self-defeating But Basu was determined to re-negotiate the agreement that had been struck between Zee and Asia Today, so that Murdoch got a slightly better deal

Was Goyal willing?: Not really In his view, the agreement had been reached in good faith with none other than Rupert Murdoch himself And there was no reason to rescind or re-work it now

Goyal's view: Of the situation went further According to him, it was Star that was acting in bad faith by going in so aggressively for Hindi language programming. In Goyal's book, this territory had already been marked out by Zee, and Star Plus was needlessly encroaching on it As a consequence, while Star's ratings went up, Zee was constantly losing ground to it.

Did Basu accept this?: No way In his view, Star was only doing what any other company would do in the circumstances—trying to increase its market share And if that affected Zee adversely, well then, that was too bad, wasn't it?

Will Basu succeed in controlling Goyal?: Difficult to say Goyal has mounted a new attack on Star, through the information and broadcasting ministry, where Basu's successors are envious of his multi-crore salary package

And how did he manage that?: Basu hopes to get Murdoch to invest $ 400 million in a Direct to Home (DTH) operation that would cut out the cablewallah, and make Star supreme. But Goyal's pals at the ministry want to pass an ordinance making it illegal to own DTH dishes. Also, they are drafting a broadcasting bill, which will restrict foreign ownership of TV companies to 30 per cent There is no way Murdoch will invest $ 400 million for 30 per cent of the equity

What will this achieve?: The idea is to convince Murdoch that to survive in India he needs Goyal And that Basu is a liability.■

BEJAN DARUWALLA

Aries
March 21 - April 20

Ganesha says hard-work fuses with fun and that is rare indeed. The spotlight will be on partnerships public image, work, connections and definitely a change in the nature and scope of your work which will influence you deeply in 1997. Health needs care and that goes for your dear ones.

Taurus
April 21 — May 20

Journeys, collaborations, ties, partnerships and even pilgrimages could well be your lot now and the next 14 days. You can take a lead on your rivals. You do gain by the written and the spoken word so use them as a weapon. If there is some inexplicable discomfort around December 22 take steps.

Gemini
May 21 — June 20

Accent is on finance joint funds, insurance, legacy wills, lottery and games of chance. Buying and selling of home, vehicles and crockery should be useful and interesting. Have a hobby. You can socialise extensively as friends go all out to help you and put you at ease. Make the most of this exciting phase.

Cancer
June 21 — July 20

This is your chance to swing it, be it romance or finance. People will pay heed to you. Finish what you start and do plan a trip. Give your thought to an important relationship which needs to be extended or closed. It clamours for a final decision. You must communicate with verve and vigour.

Leo
July 21 — August 21

You are in for a round of hardwork, though it is Christmas, cakes and all. One thing or another leads you on. Financially and familywise, this is a good week. But health could be the main culprit. It would be best to focus on creativity and style. Travel plans will have to be made.

Virgo
August 22 — September 22

Time to make a go of things and win the game. You will be working and enjoying with equal fervour. A domestic adjustment is featured and probably, you have been working on it. You may tour a garden, a museum, a library, an art centre, another city or district. Your friends will prove their worth.

Libra
September 23 — October 22

Property and office affairs have your attention. Also, you will be into improving your work prospects. At the same time, you will enjoy and have a nice time, though with the niggling doubt that much remains to be done. There's money to be made and friends to be called and the departed to be remembered.

Scorpio
October 23 -- November 22

Trips and ties may be a cliche, but they describe accurately just what the week will be all about, asserts Ganesha. Learn to see situations, people, places for what they really are and thus you will not be the fall and foolish guy. Home and family will also dominate your week. In other words, you will be busy.

Sagittarius
November 23 -- December 20

The highlights are finance, family, and a possible get-together. However, all of it may not be quite trouble-free, so make an alternate plan if you want to be comfortable and happy. Opportunities do exist to make friends and socialise. It is the health factor that may cause concern.

Capricorn
December 21 — January 19

This will be a good Christmas in the sense that you will be able to make the most of it, despite all the limitations and hassles you will be having. This is a week of joint endeavours and emotional bonding, so get set for it. Keep your cool if your mate does not see eye to eye with you. Kids give joy.

Aquarius
January 20 — February 18

You will have to put in just that extra bit this Christmas if you want to set it up in a splendid fashion. People are likely to blow hot, blow cold. Journey and work might still demand your time and talent. Home influences will also be very demanding. It would be best to strike a balance and find some time for yourself.

Pisces
February 19 — March 20

This is time of creativity and joy despite numerous pressures. The accent should be on children, hobbies, food, music, hobbies, versatility, office work, decoration, renovation, doing errands and getting it done. Pisceans are adaptable and can take it in their stride with a smile.

BIRTHDAYS

December 22: **Sun square Saturn, moon trine Uranus will cause upsets on the workfront more than the strictly personal front.**

December 23: **The Mercury position means you will have to activate your lines of communication and transport, or there could be trouble.**

December 24: **This full moon favours an emotional approach to life and love. The domestic scene will decide many issues. On the workfront there are new possibilities.**

December 25: **No strong aspect. You will have the liberty and luxury of being all that you want to be. Finances and relationships are definitely emphasised. Time to prepare a blueprint for the future.**

December 26: **Moon opposition Neptune-Jupiter means care in dealing in the others and not to be overconfident or completely isolated or reticent.**

December 27: **Moon trine Saturn, opposition Uranus signifies mixed blessings but it is certain you will have the energy, personality and dynamism to push ahead.**

December 28: **Moon trine Venus will lead to money, harmony and beauty influencing everything you do. A change in your work pattern will do wonders.**

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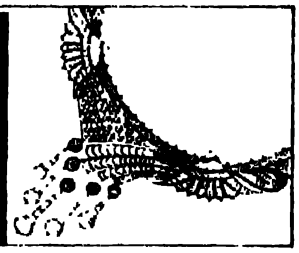
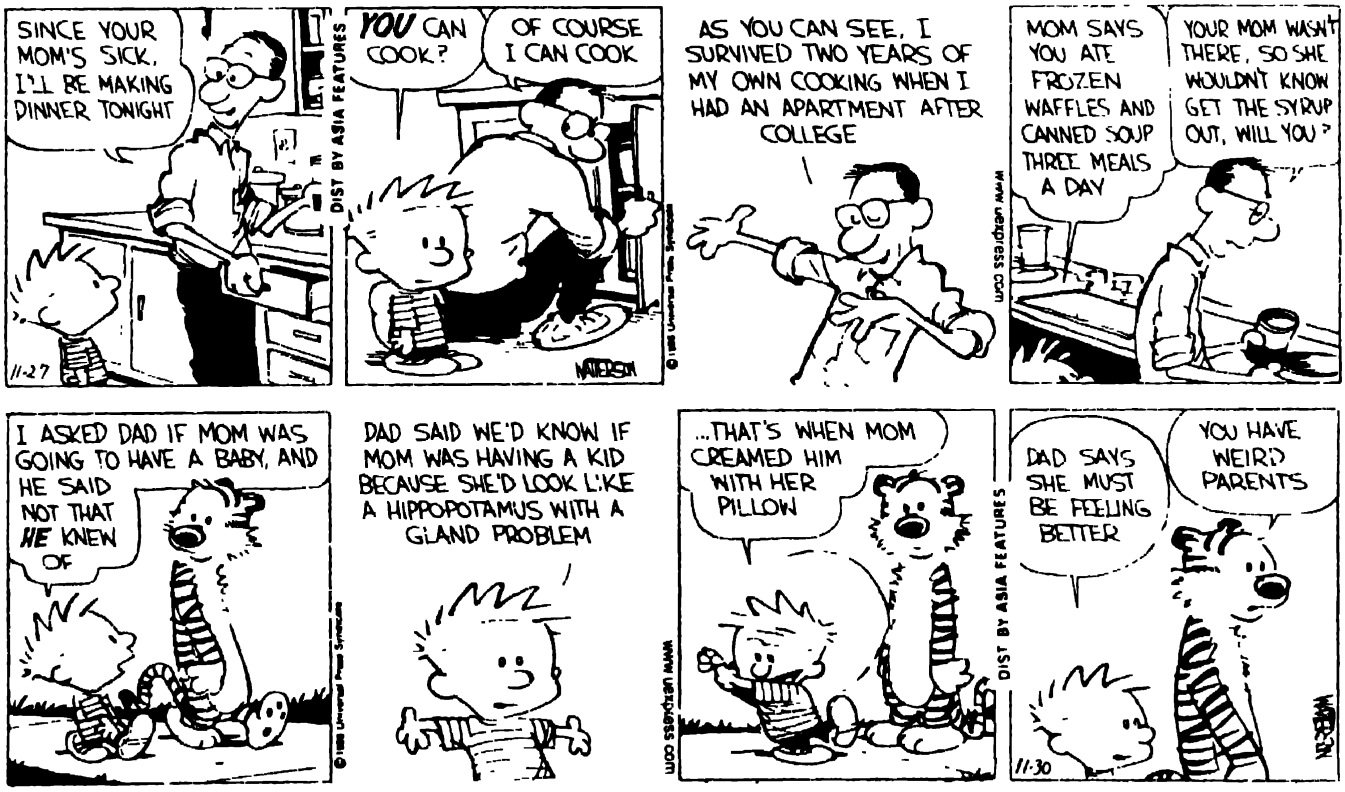
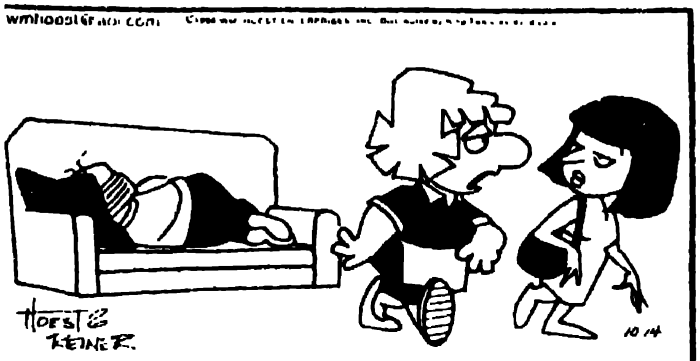


ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBES ■ WATTERSON

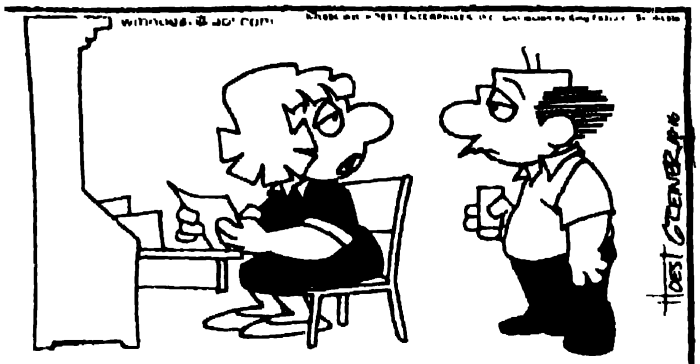


THE LOCKHORNS

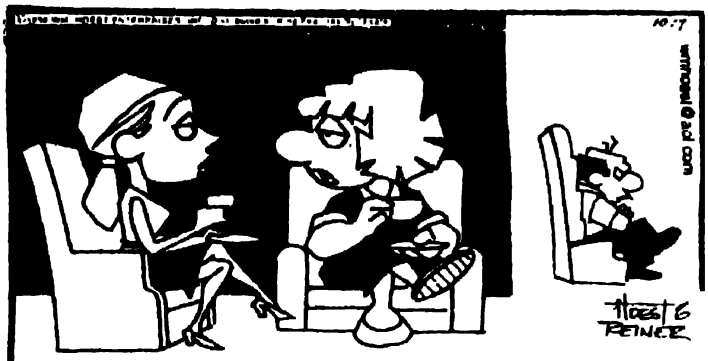


"LEROY HASN'T SLOWED DOWN. HE'S STOPPED."

"IT'S A CLASS-ACTION SUIT FROM EVERYONE WHO'S EVER EATEN HERE."

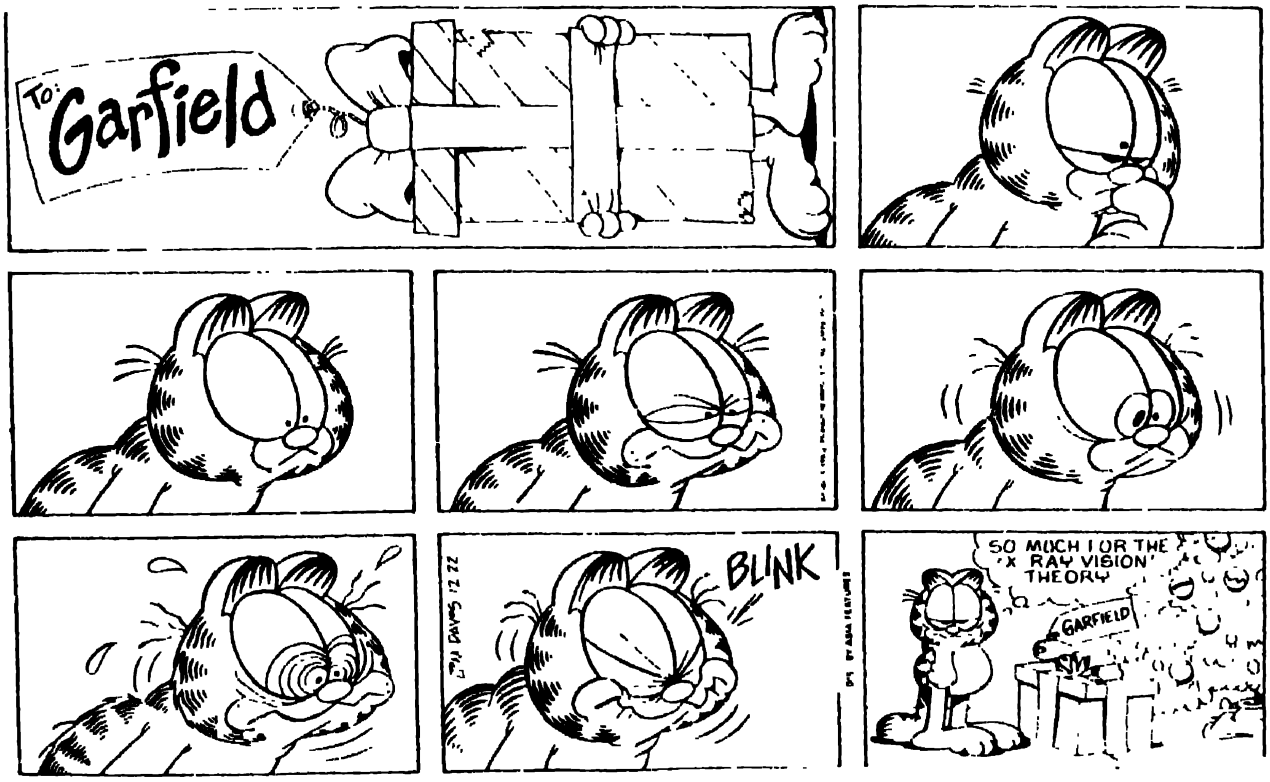


"BETWEEN THE INCOME AND THE OUTGO, WE'RE SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE."

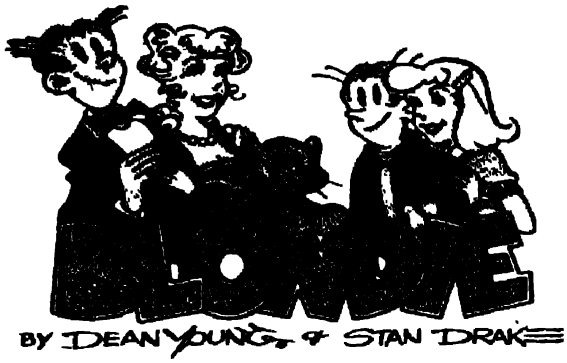


"I HAD AN ACCIDENT ... FIRST THE AIRBAG EXPLODED, THEN LEROY."

GARFIELD ■ JIM DAVIS

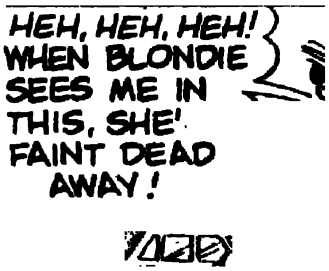


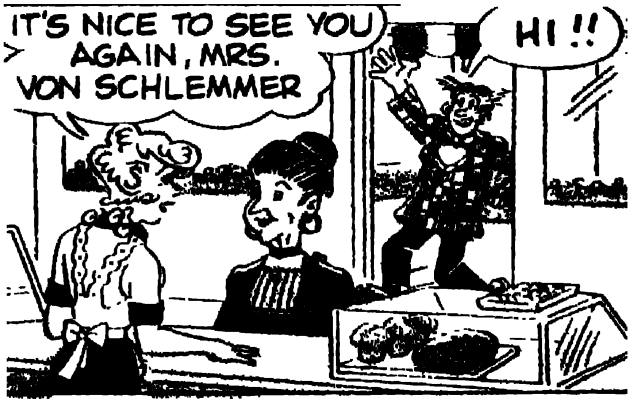
THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAUPEEP

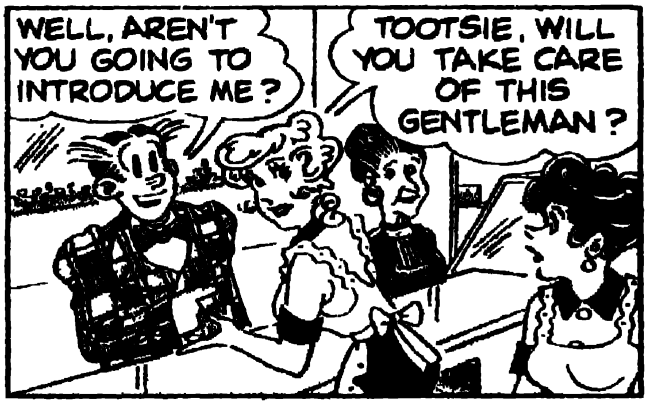

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & STAN DRAKE

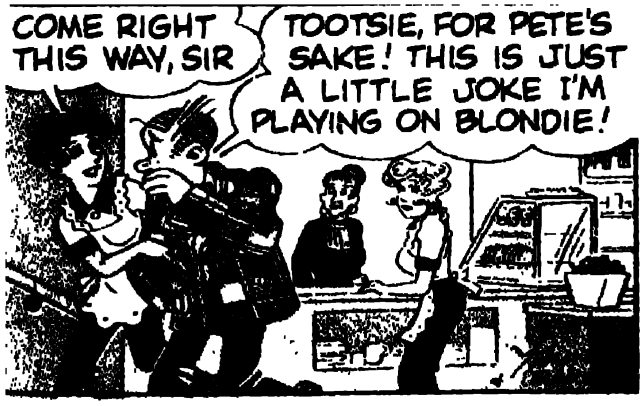
OH BOY! COULD I EVER PLAY A GREAT JOKE ON BLONDIE WITH THAT BEAUTY!
THRIFT SHOP

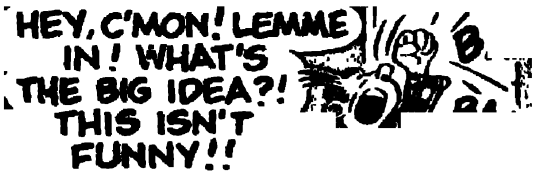
THIS IS THE UGLIEST JACKET I'VE EVER SEEN
IT'S BEEN REDUCED TWICE... IT'S ONLY $5
THRIFT SHOP


HEH, HEH, HEH! WHEN BLONDIE SEES ME IN THIS, SHE' FAINT DEAD AWAY!


IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MRS. VON SCHLEMMER
HI!!


WELL, AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE ME?
TOOTSIE, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS GENTLEMAN?


COME RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR
TOOTSIE, FOR PETE'S SAKE! THIS IS JUST A LITTLE JOKE I'M PLAYING ON BLONDIE!


HEY, C'MON! LEMME IN! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?! THIS ISN'T FUNNY!!

Walter Johnson: Emphasising on eminently practical fashion

Walter Johnson finally emerges from behind his eponymous label. Anita Bhasin reports

FASHION

an for All Seasons

The one fashion designer who doesn't have any hang-ups in sporting an alligator on his T-shirt is the reclusive Walter Johnson. Unlike his peers, he has no reservations about displaying a label other than his own on his person. In fact, this fashion designer is so low profile, that few people are aware that there is a man behind the eponymous brand. And that, despite the foreign-sounding name he's all Indian and is firmly rooted in the capital—you can touch down at his studio in Okhla, the industrial belt of Delhi, after an arduous trek.

Recently, Johnson had his first solo showing (which was also his first ever show for the domestic market) with all the frills associated with a fashion-do—a five-star venue, cocktails, the best-looking models sashaying to and fro, and snatches of music including, *He's an Indian*.

Ask why it's taken him seven long years to make a public appearance in an era when most designers are creations of media hype, and Johnson smiles enigmatically. "I wanted my clothes to do all the talking," he says. But with the ready-to-wear market burgeoning, Johnson decided that it was time he declared himself.

Johnson's forays into the Indian domestic market may have begun only a few years ago, but the design-

er has been associated with the garment industry since 1971 when he began his journey into the field of design with the Indian Handicraft Board. It was there that he worked closely with his guru, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, the czarina of Indian culture, who guided him through the nuances of diverse themes. From product development he moved to *couture*, being influenced by all the things he dabbled in: costumes, pottery, gunmetal, shawls and carpets.

Working with these traditional handicrafts enriched his knowledge, expanded his horizons and cleared his vision towards art and the craft of designing. Today, in fact, the industry story goes that Johnson is perhaps one of the few designer professionals who can teach his master craftsmen and *karigaars* a few new tricks. The young designers who he has taken under his wings claim that Johnson is a perfectionist who extracts the best from his people to ensure greatest results.

His expertise has today landed him on the boards of premier fashion institutions of the country. Students of the National Institute of Fashion Technology, where he is a consultant, look up to the designer as a guru. Johnson is also on the board of academics at the Pearl Academy of fashion. With so much on his plate it's not surprising when he sighs and says, "If the week had eight days, I'd work on all eight." However, he's a stickler for spending time with his family, despite work pressures.

Around the early Seventies when Johnson set foot on the scene, the export market in garments had boomed and Johnson found himself exporting his designs to Europe, the US and Southeast Asia under his own brand name, Walter Johnson. And since then, he has had little occasion to look back.

Walter sells high fashion garments to these markets, not just positioning himself as a *durzee* to the West as is the norm amongst exporters. Johnson spends most of his time on R&D, visiting fairs, working with fashion forecasts and innovating print technology. In fact for his Fall '96 collection, he has worked largely with fabrics and prints developed in-house and sourced locally, using Computer Aided Design systems for print and textile designing, pattern marking and grading. According to Johnson, all good fashion must begin with a keen fabric base for "if your fabric is good then 90 per cent of your battle is won."

If Walter Johnson has been associated with menswear in the country since the label hit his two exclusive signature showrooms in Delhi, in the West he is known for his women's fashions. And surprise, surprise, children'swear too.

So, why did he launch a men's range for the domestic market and introduce women's garments only as an after thought last year?

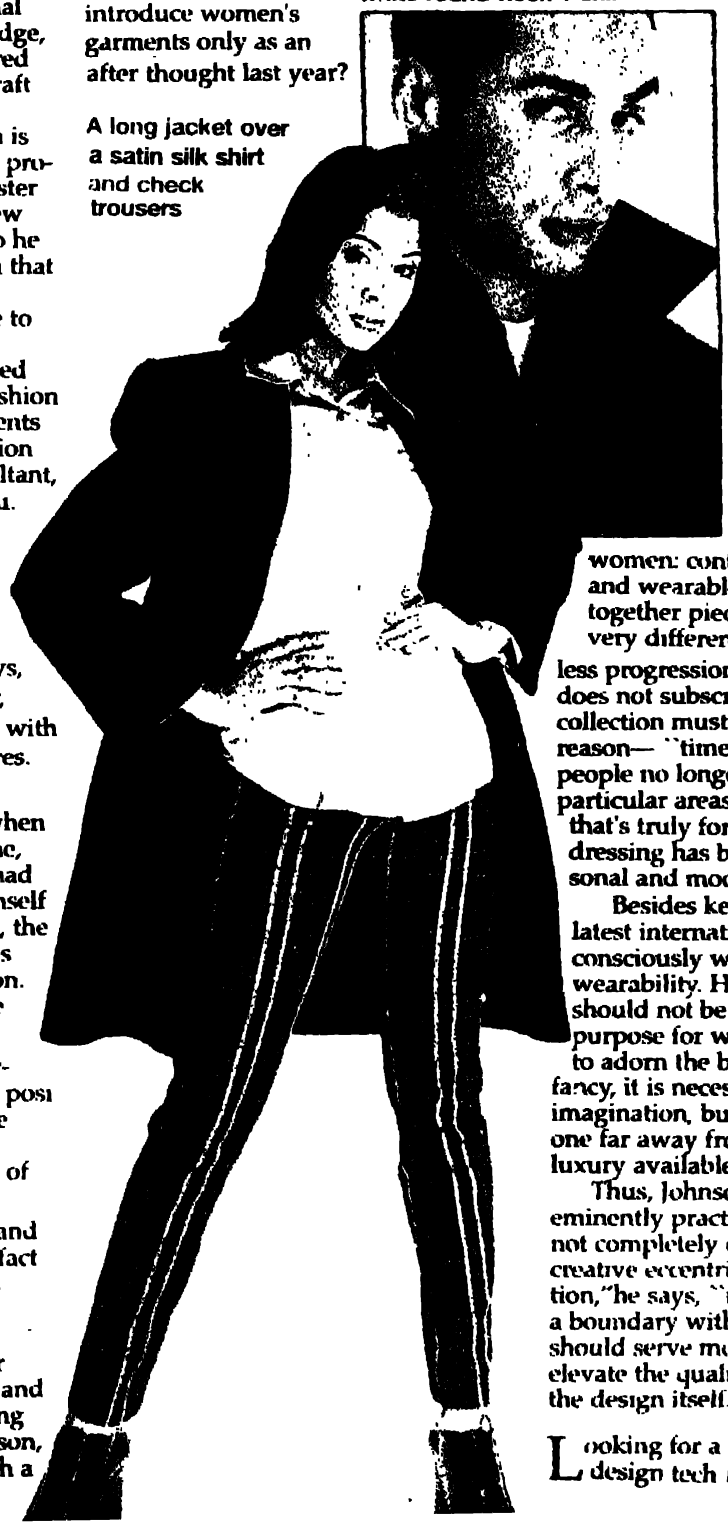
Johnson explains, "While researching for men's fashions in the country I found that the scope for men's shirts, trousers and jackets was unimaginative and very limited. So I thought that I would design for men first."

His first fashion show, however, was a melange of designs for both men and women: contemporary, chic and wearable. The show put together pieces derived from very different sources into a seamless progression of items. Johnson does not subscribe to the view that a collection must be segmented. The reason— "times have changed and people no longer slot dressing into particular areas. There's very little that's truly formal, or casual, as dressing has become completely personal and mood driven."

Besides keeping an eye on the latest international designs, Johnson consciously watches his clothes for wearability. He says, "A garment should not be far removed from the purpose for which it was created— to adorn the body As for flights of fancy, it is necessary to stimulate the imagination, but too much of it puts one far away from it. Besides, it's a luxury available to few."

Thus, Johnson's emphasis is on eminently practical fashion, which is not completely devoid of a touch of creative eccentricity. "The inspiration," he says, "rather than defining a boundary within which to create, should serve more as a platform to elevate the quality and richness of the design itself."

Looking for a different approach to design techniques in the country,



Black zip front T-shirt over a white round-neck T-shirt

A long jacket over a satin silk shirt and check trousers

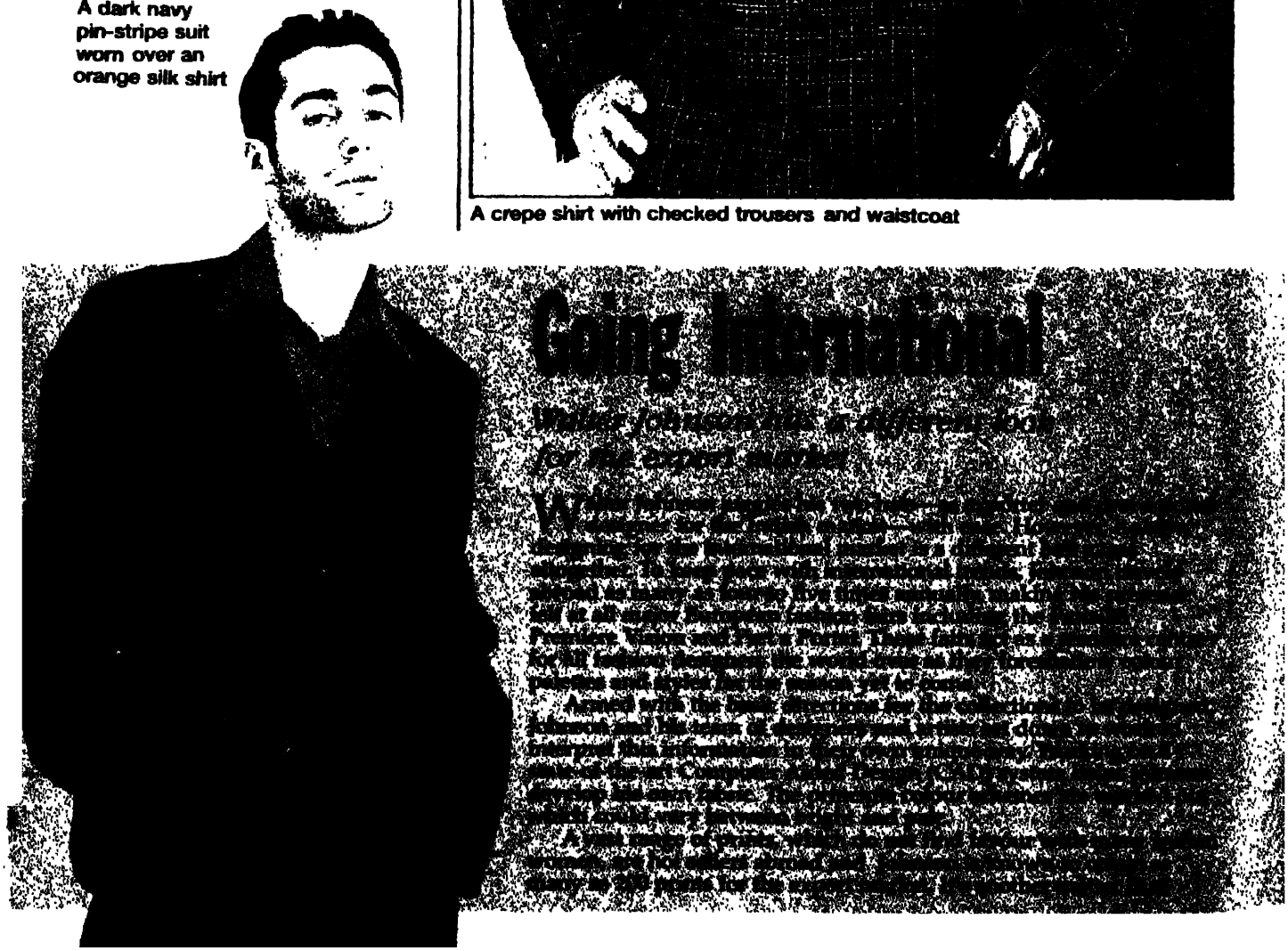
A sleeveless evening dress

Johnson's Fall collection extensively explores the possibilities of mixing fabrics, colours, textures and treatments. The first line in the series of five, Sicily, borrows from the rugged, romantic look of the Forties thriving on the lifestyle of the Mafioso. Blacks, browns, navy, greys, tobacco and coffee with contrasting reds, blues and yellows. The fabric base varied, with pin-striped worsted fabrics along with solid neutrals, silks in dark and light and cotton in strong contrasts. Slim cut jackets with shirts, and trousers with blazers added a dash of difference. Two tone black and white shoes, ties, cravats, hats, cuff-links and suspenders were among the accessories for the collection.

Models Madhu Sapre, Colleen Khan, Sonilika Oberoi and Noyonika Chatterjee among 30-odd others, pirouetted on the catwalk in garments from the 'Indian Snapshots' line, which juxtaposed the bizarre with the real, the fun with the fine and the rustic with the urbane. From

A crepe shirt with checked trousers and waistcoat

A dark navy pin-stripe suit worn over an orange silk shirt



the coarse textures of plain wool and corduroys to the softness of velveteen, suede and lycra twills, 'Indian Snapshots' plays with various textured designs—velour, dupion silk, *ikat* prints and brocades to add a touch of elegance.

Next on the show was the very strict and severe lines of Johnson's 'Military' line in camel, khaki, olive, green and black in flannel, twill and knits. These were matched with soft woollen fabric felts and suedes to give a feel of comfort. The accent being on simplicity, with woollen prints to lend that touch of softness to an otherwise severe look. Jackets and coats are teamed with breeches, trousers and skirts while shirts and sweaters form the basics. Berets, brass buttons, leather boots and braids complete the picture.

The 'Attic' then delved into grandma's closet, with its old objects, pictures and junk. Patchwork embroideries, blacks, whites, dusty tones and bright colours dominated this line. Miniature checks and stripes and paisleys existed side by side while knits with old fashion cables and high necks in patchwork, lace and velveteen made for that age-old look. Waistcoats, cardigans, evening gowns and overcoats formed part of the collection, as did cameos, pocket watches, old cameras, embroidered purses with lacy strings and odd bits and pieces.

The last of the collections revived the artistic splendour of the Mughal Raj where only the finest, the most luxurious would do. Brocades, silks, satins, chenille and velvets enhanced the evening look. Overall, a collection that doubled up for both casual and formal wear.

"Mine has been a quest for a good product that should leave the customer satisfied. My research revealed that price too is a very important factor for selling clothes in the market," says Johnson. So, Walter Johnson trousers can be bought for anywhere between Rs 450 at the lower end and Rs 1,500 at the higher side while suits can be picked up from Rs 4,000-10,000 (reasonable when designer jackets alone are priced at Rs 10,000 upwards) and shirts for Rs 350-1,000. And Johnson may yet fulfill a dream to get into *janta* clothing and bring his garments into the volume market.

Competition doesn't worry him. "While I'm not afraid to admit that the competition in the market is very stiff, on the other hand there are 950 million people in this country. Let the consumer decide and have the benefit of the vast choice available to them," he says.

And as Johnson goes public he has innumerable ideas up his designer sleeves. Your children are to be his next target. Garments for the tots are to be launched next; so his signature studios can grow to be a one-stop-shop for the entire family ■

Short jacket and knee length skirt in tweed with a black lycra T-shirt

SHAMSHAD HUSAIN, 47, *has bee[illegible] brush to canvas for nearly three decades [illegible] these years have seen him emerge from the shadow of his illustrious father Maqbool Fida Husain. The shy, reticent artist's primary concern is the human form while the subjects of his canvas are people and happenings from everyday life.*

What is your favourite journey?

By train, bus and truck to Bastar, M.P.

What is your idea of perfect

Live and let live peacefully.

What is your greatest fear?

Separation.

Who or what has been the greatest influence in your life?

My parents and Sabba.

What do you dislike most in

others?

Talking unnecessarily.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

When I don't paint for long.

What is your most precious possession?

Seema and Atifa.

What objects do you always carry?

My handbag and a sketch pen.

[illegible] expressed?

What do you dislike most on your appearance?

Excess fat.

What do you dislike most in yourself?

When I don't paint for long

What is your favourite word?

Love.

What is your favourite journey?

By train, bus and truck to Bastar, M.P.

What is your favourite dream?

To keep painting.

What is your nightmare?

Terrorism and blackmailing.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

My children.

What is your source of sustenance?

Painting and sculpture.

On what occasions do you lie?

Don't remember.

What is your greatest regret?

March 23, 1995 and May 20, 1996.

What has been your happiest moment?

May 16, 1970.

What brings tears to your eyes?

Suffering.

How do you relax?

Together with family and friends.

What do you envy most in others?

Living happily together.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a good human being.

How would you like to die?

Peacefully.

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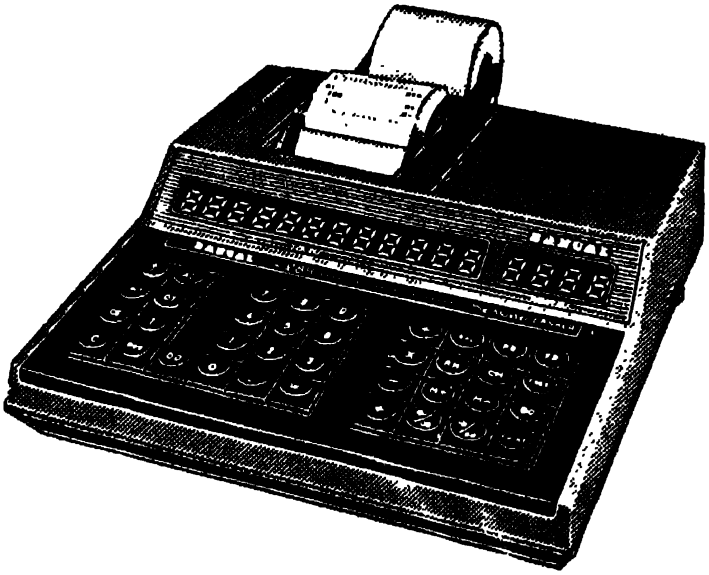

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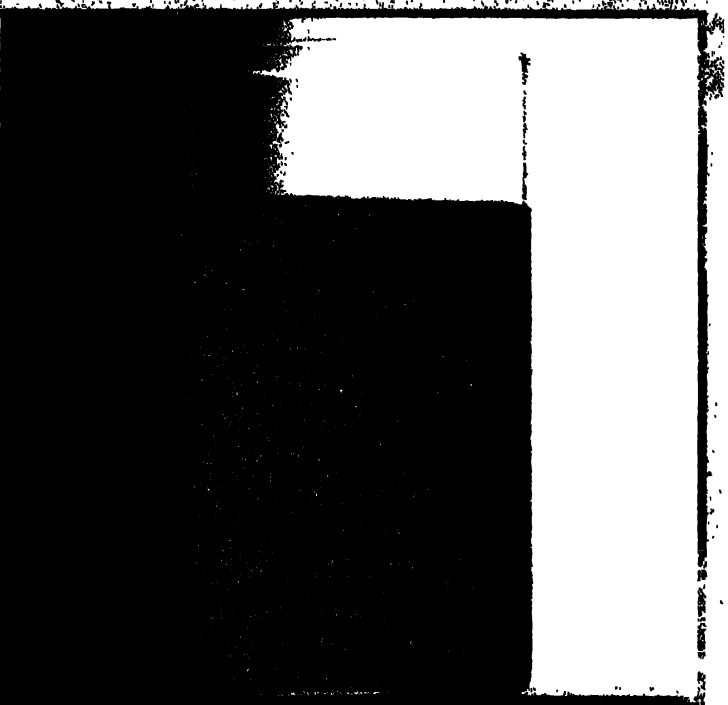
Ordinary 'Blue' forms sediments in water creating dirty blue patches on your clothes.



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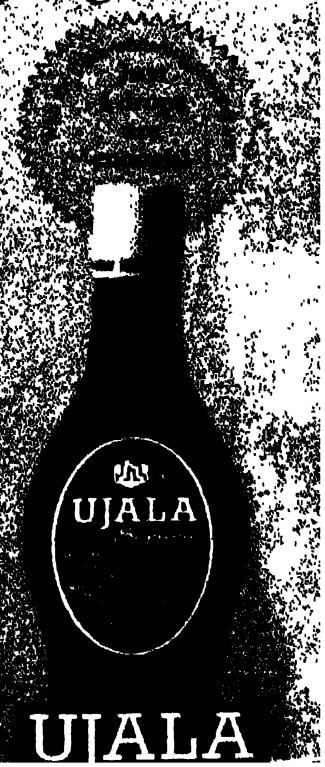
Ujala's New Scientific Fabric Whitener.

Age-old blue can never give you spotless dazzling whiteness because it forms sediments in water leading to dirty streaks and spots on your clothes. Ujala, with the power of V+, is a real and the only whitener which actually [illegible] your clothes look like new.

[illegible]

[illegible] whitening agent alongwith a micro dispersion catalyst V+, so that it gets dissolved uniformly in water and is instantly absorbed by freshly washed clothes. Within seconds Ujala's special whitening power starts working. The result? Dazzling, never before whiteness.

So, why put up with the [illegible]